

“Hospitality is Presence: Be Christ’s Presence”

Genesis 2:7-9; 15-18

10/6/24

Christians have been gathering on Sunday mornings for almost 2000 years celebrating Jesus Christ lives and lives in us! Most Christians celebrate Christ alive by inviting people to His Table.

Come join us at Christ’s Table. Christian hospitality is literally Christ’s presence. Jesus wants you to be His presence in the world. Hospitality takes Spirit-led work.

This goes back to the second creation story in Genesis 2. This story teaches us a lot about hospitality and what God wants for us. From the beginning, God wants us to be partners. Life is a gift. The garden is a gift. We are to conserve nature and cherish our environment. Even in paradise there is work. Work is good for the soul but not overwork; rest is the sabbath. God wants us to be partners with each other to offer hospitality.

Let’s hear what it takes to be Christ’s hospitality with each other in Romans 12:9-18.

Right out of the gate, what Paul writes is impossible without Christ’s Holy Spirit empowering us. Even when we pray and worship frequently to be changed into Christ, we will fail. That’s what makes life so confusing. Even the best of us fails, except Jesus Christ. That’s why we worship Jesus. We know we are not Him, but we want to be like Him. Can I get an Amen? We want to be Christ’s hospitality.

Now let’s merge what we heard about God’s purpose for us in Genesis and Romans. Each day is a gift to make the garden better. From the start, our purpose is to be together with God. When things get bad, Christians believe it is better than nothing at all. God didn’t have to create. The creation is for us. Creation, planet earth, is hospitality. Each day is to offer hospitality to the stranger.

Hospitality is working the garden. We don’t just work the garden for ourselves, we work the garden for each other and future generations. Our purpose is to keep the place tidy. Studies show that a cluttered room makes us feel anxious.<sup>1</sup> To be Christ’s presence, we must keep the place uncluttered. Not only is this good for our own souls, it is good for the souls of those we invite into our house. So, let’s also keep this place looking tidy.

We Christians are also to keep the planet uncluttered and tidy. Whether you believe in climate change or not, the insurance adjusters do, and we Christians are called to tend the garden. Do what you can to conserve the environment. We want to share the joy of hiking and biking, hunting and fishing! When Christ returns, we want to be ready with a tidy planet.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.apa.org/news/podcasts/speaking-of-psychology/clutter>



# *Newlonsburg Presbyterian Church*

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Genesis teaches us that even in Paradise there is work. We are made for meaningful work! The work in Romans is mending relationships. Work is good for the soul, but not overwork. If I start feeling a little down, I work by exercising. I was frustrated with schoolwork the other day, so I went out to my orchard and worked. But not overwork. The Lord commands we must rest once per week. That's the whole point of the very first story of the Bible. Not even God works seven days a week. Keeping sabbath means you can worship, you can have fun, but no productive work.

Don't overwork, don't overcommit. When I hear parents' schedules with kids it makes me anxious about how much parents are trying to do. Many ask Hope and me how we do it. Why aren't our boys anxious and seem relaxed. We don't overcommit. Each boy may pick a sport per season, an instrument, and church. That's enough. Unless your children are begging you to do these travel teams and you thoroughly enjoy it as family time, I don't understand the point, the goal, or the endgame of most extra-curriculars. Hospitality is not anxiety. Christ's presence is non-anxious.

Finally, God wants us to be partners with each other, including our enemies. Paul believes the Christian extends hospitality to the stranger because the Christian knows the stranger is a child of God. The Christian knows that once we were enemies of God and yet God lives for us and forgives us as Jesus Christ. Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5:19, "In Christ, God was reconciling the world to Himself..." The Church's life and mission are a joyful participation in Christ's ongoing life and work.

Love,  
Pastor Curtis