



## Practicing Radical Hospitality

*That's exactly what Jesus did. He didn't make it easy for himself by avoiding people's troubles, but waded right in and helped out. "I took on the troubles of the troubled," is the way Scripture puts it. Even if it was written in Scripture long ago, you can be sure it's written for us. God wants the combination of God's steady, constant calling and warm, personal counsel in Scripture to come to characterize us, keeping us alert for whatever God will do next. May our dependably steady and warmly personal God develop maturity in you so that you get along with each other as well as Jesus gets along with us all. Then we'll be a choir—not our voices only, but our very lives singing in harmony in a stunning anthem to the God and to the Savior Jesus! So reach out and welcome one another to God's glory. Jesus did it; now you do it! (Rom. 15:3-6)*

Hospitality has been a part of faith practices for a long time. From Abraham and Sarah in Genesis 18 to Jesus, who was a person of great hospitality. He went to the homes of people of questionable character for a meal, invited them into the kingdom, offering himself so that our lives would be better and more abundant. His hospitality was unconditional.

- What is radical hospitality to you?

My cousin was pregnant with her 2<sup>nd</sup> child. Her first, a three-year-old daughter, was so excited about the soon coming arrival of their family. Addi made space in her room, decorated pictures, told stories of what it would be like to have a new sister. And when Zoey arrived Addi held and kissed her while smiling with extreme pride. Then she looked up at her mom and said, "She's great! Can we put her back now?"

From the mouth of babes.... We can get a clear and alarming view of how we, as a Christian community, can be toward new comers. There is no doubt we want them. We invite them. We make a bee-line toward them when they first enter the Sanctuary. And then, when we don't know what else to do, we smile, affirm them, and then hope God will 'put them back.'

- Does this seem like an unfair indictment of Valley Ministries or the Christian community? Explain why or why not.

Matthew 25:35 tells us that when we welcome strangers it is like we are welcoming Christ. Hebrews 13:2 says when we show hospitality to strangers that we have often entertained angels without knowing it.

- Do you think the level of hospitality in VMMCC or the Christian community would be different if we recognized each visitor as an angel unaware?

In fact, according to Romans 15:4-11 we should welcome others for the soul purpose of glorifying God.

One source indicated that to be radical means to step out and take a risk. Perhaps that was Jesus' point when he encouraged us to go the extra mile or turn the other cheek. Not to practice masochistic faith, but to take a risk that in doing so, we may welcome and accept another soul into the dominion of God.

- How might we better practice radical hospitality?
- What are you willing to do differently?
- What do you hope to see differently?