

THE INVITED HOSPITALITY CHALLENGE



During the 'Invited' series, we are challenging everyone to practise hospitality towards someone from a different cultural background by inviting them round for a meal or out for a coffee, to share some time and your stories together, and to build friendship.

Peter knew what it was to be excluded and also to exclude others (see Galatians 2:11–16), so his words carry weight: *'Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.'* (1 Peter 4:8–9)

Some people have a particular gift of hospitality, but we can all be hospitable and we can all keep getting better at hospitality.

There are many excuses we can think of for not practising hospitality – eg:

- *I can't afford it...* but it doesn't have to be expensive, it doesn't have to be a 3 course meal. Keep it simple, do a 'bring & share', team up with someone else and share the cost.
- *I'm not very good at cooking...* but, again, simple is fine! The aim is not to compare ourselves with others and be under pressure to produce gourmet food – the aim is to welcome others into our homes and spend time with each other over a meal.
- *I don't have the time...* but if we get the importance of the biblical command to practise hospitality, we will make time. Again, keep it simple and plan ahead!

- *My home is too small...* but that doesn't mean you can't practise hospitality. It's about time together rather than the perfect setting. Or you could team up with a friend who has more space, or invite people into your social spaces, such as the coffee shop or a restaurant.

The important thing to remember is that hospitality isn't about perfection, it's about opening up your home and your life to get to know each other and build community. It doesn't have to be dinner – it can be breakfast, coffee, lunch, afternoon tea, pudding, drinks, bring & share, going out somewhere...

Practising hospitality is really important in a diverse church as it helps to break down stereotypes and barriers, to understand each other more fully and to build genuine friendships and community.

Will you take up the Invited Hospitality Challenge?