

Message Notes

EMBRACING THE STRANGER

Part 4: The Stranger at ENCOUNTER

Acts 2:42-47

October 14/15, 2017

Pastor Mark Riggins

1. If I want to embrace Jesus, I must make room for guests in my life.
2. The New Testament teaches that Christianity is the faith of open hands, open hearts and open doors.

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. – Act 2:42-47

3. People may not remember the food or the furniture in our home, but they will never forget how they felt when we invited them in.
4. Hospitality isn't about our house, it's about our heart.
5. For many church guests, the welcome matters more than the worship.

2 specific ways to make room for guests in your life:

- 1) Invite each other into our homes
- 2) Greet and welcome people at ENCOUNTER

"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with Me." – Revelation 3:20

"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, He will sit on His glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on His right and the goats on His left. "Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed by My Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and You gave Me something to eat, I was thirsty and You gave Me something to drink, I was a stranger and You invited Me in, I needed clothes and You clothed Me, I was sick and You looked after Me, I was in prison and You came to visit Me.' "Then the righteous will answer Him, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You something to drink? When did we see You a stranger and invite You in, or needing clothes and clothe You? When did we see You sick or in prison and go to visit You?' "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for Me.' – Matthew 25:31-46

Discussion Questions
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1. What stood out to you from this weekend's message?
2. We looked at the early church's practice of meeting together and eating meals in each other's homes. When someone invites you into his or her home, describe how that impacts you?
3. What are some of the barriers in our culture to having people into our homes?
4. Acts 2:46b "*They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts.*" The fuel of hospitality moved the early church forward. How does having someone into our home fuel our faith?
5. Mark said, "For many church guests, the welcome matters more than the worship." Can you describe what makes you feel welcomed at church?
6. Could you describe one way you could help guests (strangers) feel welcomed at ENCOUNTER?
7. Jesus said, "When I was a stranger, you invited Me in." As we wrap up this series where we've discussed Strangers by Ethnicity, Displacement, Culture, and at ENCOUNTER, what are some ways you sense God may be leading you to embrace the stranger?