

## **A QUICK AND PRACTICAL GUIDE TO HOSPITABLE AND MEANINGFUL CONVERSATIONS.**

Romans 12:1-13 ESV

“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness. Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.”

Hebrews 10:24-25 ESV

“And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”

Remembering that we have all been welcomed by God- through His mercy and grace in sending Jesus- is the foundation of true hospitality.

Biblical hospitality is not about you. It is about showing the character of God. Our God always has time for us, He is always approachable (Matt. 7:7-11), and He welcomes all to His presence- rich & poor, popular & lonely, old & children, involved & outcast. (Matt. 11:28, Mark 10:14-16, James 1:27) When we practice simple, open-handed hospitality, we get to join in inviting others into the freedom and grace found in Jesus!

Keep it simple! It doesn't have to be complicated. In fact, our hospitality should let those around us know that they are capable of being hospitable too! It's so easy to

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get distracted by selfish expectations and insecurities or ideas of a perfect spread of food and drinks. Love others. Focus on them. Take a true, caring interest in their story, heart, thoughts, what makes them laugh, etc.

Don't be afraid to express weakness or vulnerability. Identifying with others in humility is a gateway to forming trust and it allows others to share as well!

As you prepare to host a group or a family, make sure to spend time in prayer before they arrive at your home. Here are a few starting places for prayer if you need help:

- Pray for each person coming by name, and that they would feel welcomed and loved.

- Pray for the peace of Christ to reign; for there to be honesty, humility, and sincerity.

- Pray that your tendency to make everything perfect would be replaced by a willingness to admit your imperfections and allow space for the Spirit to move.

- Pray that you would be given the strength and flexibility to add margin in your mind and heart for new people, deep conversations, and possibly new needs.

As you welcome groups into your home, here are some great questions that can help bring about fun and meaningful conversations! Keep in mind that it helps to start with an ice breaker question and move toward a heart-level question. You will know your group, so take the liberty to pick the questions that fit your group and the season you are in.

### **Ice Breaker Questions:**

What's your favorite thing that you have done this year?

What is something in your house that you want to get rid of but can't?

What's your favorite road trip snack?

What is one thing you could be a professional in?

What is a quirky or unusual fear you have?

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

What is the biggest mess you have ever had to clean?

What book or story has had the biggest impact on you (aside from the Bible)?

What is one thing you are looking forward to?

If you could learn one new skill, what would you want to learn?

### **Daily Life Questions:**

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What or who does your schedule revolve around?  
Where does your time go when you get to choose?  
What is something you have learned about yourself over the past couple of months?  
What conversation topics do you get most excited about?  
When you wake up in the morning, what is on your mind?  
Think about a close spiritual friend. What do they do that encourages you?  
How are you leaving room for others who love you in your life?  
What does it look like for you to spend time in the Word?  
What adjustments would you need to make in order to make room for spiritual community in your life?  
What scares you most about living in community?  
What do you find yourself grumbling about?  
What tools or resources have helped bring the Word of God to life for you?  
Do you know your neighbors names? What would it take for you to meet them and learn more about them and offer them hospitality?

### **Heart-Level Questions:**

As you grow older, what is one quality that you hope to retain (besides a sound mind)?  
Do you know what your spiritual gifts are? Are you using them for the Kingdom?  
What is one area of your life where you need to be strong & courageous?  
How has comparison kept you from obedience?  
In what area is comfort preventing you from taking a step of faith?  
Think of a person who you struggle to get along with? What is one thing you can appreciate about them? Or how can you see them the way God sees them?  
What impression of yourself do you try to pass on to others?  
What would it look like for you to take off a mask and be deliberately honest with your community?  
What do you hate? What should you hate?  
If you are a believer, you are called to offer your body as a living sacrifice. What is one thing that you feel the Lord is calling you to give up (sacrifice) right now? This could be a thing, an emotion, a selfish desire, a relationship.

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## **Family Dinner Ideas & Questions**

The questions below can be used when hosting other families or just with your own immediate family. These are meant to get conversation flowing, create laughter, and hopefully extend the time you spend around the table!

When kids are involved, it's important to ask open-ended questions. This helps to avoid the simple 'yes' or 'no' response.

Describe the best family trip you have been on?

What family tradition do you love?

If you could be an animal for a day, what would you be?

If you could have one superpower, what would it be?

What are some of your favorite things that God created in nature?

What is something you are really good at?

If you could build your entire house out of one food, which food would you choose?

What is one thing that you would like to thank God for?

Would you rather have a nose that never stops growing or ears that never stop growing?

If you had wings, where would you fly?

Who is someone you admire right now? Why?

### **Ideas that can make family dinner meaningful:**

Create a 'special plate' that can be set in front of one person at the table. A simple decorated paper plate works great! You can spend the meal each telling one thing you love or appreciate about that person. The other kids can help serve that person their meal to make it extra special!

Rose & Thorns- Each person can share their 'thorn'- something that made them unhappy or disappointed that day. Then each person shares their 'rose'- something that brought them joy that day. If you have older kids, you can call his 'Happy Crappy'!

Relocate Dinner- choose a different spot to enjoy your meal! This could be a picnic blanket outside, a homemade blanket fort, a quick drive to a pretty area.

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Theme Night!- Pick something simple that your kids can dress up in. While you are preparing dinner, it might be a great time for them to get dressed up for dinner! (super hero, camo, fancy, cowboy, fiesta, sports, hats, crazy socks, inside out, wacky)

Use time around the table to read Scripture together. You can choose a short passage to try and memorize together or read a favorite passage. Consider that the reverence of a real Bible versus a phone app is visually more meaningful and memorable.

Invite neighbors or friends to join you for a progressive dinner. Choose one house for the main course and one house for desserts (add more courses for more participating houses). Choose an activity, game, or funny question to ask when it's your turn to host.

If you still have daylight, you could go on a walk after dinner. Good and natural conversations happen while moving! As an immediate family, this can be a great time to meet neighbors or pray over neighbors as you walk past their house.