

w/b 27th September 2015 **SERVICE IN ACTION** -

Practising Christian Hospitality in the modern world (Dave Webb-Peploe)

"If there is any concept worth restoring to its original depth and evocative potential, it is the concept of hospitality. It is one of the richest biblical terms that can deepen and broaden our insight in our relationships to our fellow human beings." Henri Nouwen

PASSAGE: GENESIS 18 vs 1-8

The Three Visitors

18 The LORD appeared to Abraham near the great trees of Mamre while he was sitting at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the day. ²Abraham looked up and saw three men standing nearby. When he saw them, he hurried from the entrance of his tent to meet them and bowed low to the ground.

³He said, "If I have found favour in your eyes, my lord, do not pass your servant by. ⁴Let a little water be brought, and then you may all wash your feet and rest under this tree. ⁵Let me get you something to eat, so you can be refreshed and then go on your way - now that you have come to your servant."

"Very well," they answered, "do as you say."

⁶So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah. "Quick," he said, "get three seahs of the finest flour and knead it and bake some bread."

⁷Then he ran to the herd and selected a choice, tender calf and gave it to a servant, who hurried to prepare it. ⁸He then brought some curds and milk and the calf that had been prepared, and set these before them. While they ate, he stood near them under a tree.

LAUNCH

- Think of a social situation recently where you arrived and felt immediately at home. What was it about the situation which made you feel this way?
- Think of a situation where you felt uncomfortable or ill at ease. What factors contributed towards this feeling?

DISCOVERY AND UNDERSTANDING

- List the different ways in which Abraham displayed outstanding hospitality from this passage.
- Abraham overcame a number of barriers (circumcision, age, noonday sun) in order to show hospitality to his guests. What sorts of barriers do we encounter? How can we overcome them?
- Humility and respect for his guests were key aspects of Abraham's welcome. In what ways are these character virtues undermined in our society?
- Read through the following passages:
Matthew 11:28-30; Mark 10:13-14;
Luke 5:27-32, 9:10-17, 19:1-10, 22:7-30, and 24:13-35.
What does each passage reveal about Jesus' practice of hospitality?

- Review the explicit New Testament teachings on hospitality (Romans 12:13; Hebrew 13:2; 1 Peter 4:9; 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8).
Who is responsible for hospitality? What do we learn about its practice?
- Out of all these scriptures which one speaks to you the most powerfully and why?

APPLICATION

- What plan of hospitality does God have for your life?
Pray for an opportunity for you to fulfil it.
- Pray for non-Christian friends that they may experience the hospitality of God through Jesus Christ.