

he extended hospitality by inviting other tax collectors, a group generally despised by the Jewish population. But in the home of Levi, himself tax collector, they felt safe. This home was a place where they belonged.

How did an encounter with Jesus bring healing in Levi's home (verse 31)? Are there individuals in your life who feel rejected or unsafe that you can welcome into your home? In what ways might they encounter Jesus' healing touch if you invited them in?

Sometimes we underestimate the opportunity we have to facilitate an encounter with God. It may be as simple as opening our heart and our home to those around us. When Jesus moves into our home, the Kingdom of God makes its way into the Kingdom of earth.

WRAP-UP

When we give our lives to the Jesus, we are declaring Him to be Lord over all of us, every aspect, including the place we call home. A home devoted to God has three purposes: discipleship, hospitality and healing. Discipleship in our home isn't limited to teaching our children about faith, it extends all who enter. Family, friends, neighbors or strangers should learn of the Good News of Jesus when they enter our homes. And because God has generously provided a home for us, we should extend hospitality and invite others to share meals and fellowship with us there. But for those who need a place to be safe, seen and loved, our home can be a safe harbor and a place to encounter God's healing touch.

MEMORY VERSE

46 They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity -- Acts 2:46 NLT

Challenge-

If you are looking for a resource to keep God's Word before you, "when you are going to bed and when you are getting up", check out Lectio 365, morning and evening devotionals. <https://www.24-7prayer.com/resource/lectio-365/>

Three Purposes for the Home No Longer Strangers - Week 5

INTRODUCTION

In this series we have explored the many ways and places where our faith connects us to others. We have seen how our relationship to God creates a relationship with the family of God, the body of believers and The Church. But our faith should form the basis of who we are in every aspect of our lives, and so in this study we consider how we express our faith in our homes in ways that connect us to others. Some may try to separate their religious and secular spheres. But doing so is guaranteed to undermine the position of God in your life. We should seek to make our homes a place of discipleship, hospitality and healing for all who enter there.

Ice Breaker

If a guest entered your home today, how would they recognize that you are a Christian?

Key Passage

Acts 5:42 And every day, in the Temple and from house to house, they continued to teach and preach this message: "Jesus is the Messiah."

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. A Place of Discipleship

4 "Listen, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. 5 And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. 6 And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today.

- Deuteronomy 6:4-6 NLT

7 The real children of Abraham, then, are those who put their faith in God.

- Galatians 3:7 NLT

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 forms the basis of the daily prayer recited by observant Jews called the Shema. It begins by declaring the place God

occupies in our life. But this scripture isn't limited to Jews alone, those who put their faith in God are called Abraham's children, and so this applies to us.

Why is it important that we first love God with everything we have before we commit to following His commands? What happens if we try to follow all the commands without having any love of God? What moves you to love God?

The Lord alone is our God. This means nothing else competes for supremacy in our lives. Our relationship to God forms the basis of how we live out our faith, moment by moment, no matter where we find ourselves.

*7 Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up.
- Deuteronomy 6:7 NLT*

This verse says we are to repeat God's commands to our children. Were you raised in a home that shared their faith between the generations? What practical ways can you pass along your faith to future generations? What would you consider challenges to your being able to share your faith with your children (or the children in your life)?

42 Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah. - Acts 5:42 NIV

24 Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. 25 He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervor and taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the baptism of John. 26 He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately. - Acts 18:24-26 NIV

Who was being discipled in the homes in these verses?

The homes of the early believers were places where the Good News of Jesus was shared with others. Discipleship in the home was not limited to the nuclear family.

2. A Place of Hospitality

*42 All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer...46 They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity-- 47 all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.
- Acts 2:42, 46-47 NLT*

*9 Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.
- 1 Peter 4:9 NIV*

As the early church began, we find them involved in four areas: teaching, fellowship, meals, and prayer. While some of these may take place in various settings, fellowship and meals likely involved extending hospitality to fellow believers. Their time together was marked with joy and generosity.

Do you share a meal with other believers on a regular basis? How does that time together deepen your fellowship differently than studying together or worshiping together? If you haven't already, set a date to eat together with others- consider inviting them to your home.

Welcoming others into our home is an extension of offering it to the Lord for His purposes. Just as the Lord has been generous to us in providing for our needs, we can extend generosity and hospitality to others as an extension of God's love.

3. A Place of Spiritual Healing

27 After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Levi sitting at his tax booth. "Follow me," Jesus said to him, 28 and Levi got up, left everything and followed him. 29 Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them. 30 But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law who belonged to their sect complained to his disciples, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" 31 Jesus answered them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. - Luke 5:27-31 NIV

We have often referred to belonging as a place where we feel safe, seen and loved. In this story, Jesus saw Levi. In response to Jesus' invitation,