

Unexpected Hosts or Unexpected Guests or Both

Texts: Exodus 20: 1, 8-10, Genesis 14: 17-20, Genesis 18 (To get a sense of context you might want to also read Genesis 17. I am assuming you know the story of Genesis 19.), Luke 10: 25-37. (Luke 10 is actually three stories about hospitality. You might want to read the whole chapter to get context)

Hospitality –

1. Welcomes the outsider, the stranger, or the vulnerable traveler.
2. In every story but one there is a possibility of some sort of danger or disaster
3. Beings who are hospitable make a choice to take personal risks.
4. A primary core value of a hospitable person, locale, or choice is that they are safe for the guest but also for others of the environs.
5. Nurture is involved.
6. Guests can be any sort of being.
7. There are often unexpected results or blessings.

******The Great Dismal Swamp******

Some Lenses to Consider:

1. Context
2. Language
3. Location of story in a series; what are the texts or stories around the one we consider?
4. Spiritual stages or places of the writer, the people in the stories, the intended audience.
5. Intention of the writer; for instance, the focus of both Moses and Paul to create communities that represented God.

I am the Lord your God who brought you from the land of Egypt; from the house of slavery....

Remember the Sabbath day to set it apart as holy. For six days you have permission to work; to follow your business or occupation. The seventh day is a Sabbath to Yahweh (with whom you have a covenant relationship), the plural One of majesty and power. On the Sabbath you will not do any work, you, your son, your daughter, your male servant, your female servant or your cattle or the resident foreigner who is within your gates. Exodus 20: 1, 8-10 (New English Translation)

1. What are the qualities of hospitality that God was exhibiting to the children of Israel in Sinai?
2. What are the similarities between this and the hospitality of Eden?
3. How does the idea that God is providing hospitality in the desert affect your reading of the commandments that follow?
4. What do you think were the various stages of spiritual or moral development of the people who heard these words spoken at Sinai?
5. How do you think those stages affected reactions to the commandment?

Genesis 14: 17-20

1. What is the context of this story?
2. How does the meaning of Melchizedek's name and the name of his location affect your understanding of what his hospitality may have been offering Abraham?
3. What would have been the meaning that Melchizedek came out of his village/town to feed Abraham?
4. How is this story different from other Biblical stories of hospitality you have read?
5. At what stage of his spiritual development do you think Abraham was here? Why?

Genesis 18

1. This story of a day's hospitality takes place between two major events. Why is the story placed here? Do you think it is just about chronology?
2. What do you think are the unexpected results or gifts of this act of hospitality?
3. Did Abraham take any personal risks? If so, what were they?
4. What lesson or gift was there in Abraham's negotiation during this visit?
5. What do you think of the interactions of the visitors with Sarah?
6. Are there any parallels in your own life?

Luke 10: 25-37

1. There are three stories that touch on hospitality in this chapter or section of Luke's good news. Why do you think Luke put the Good Samaritan's hospitality where he did?
2. This is a compare and contrast story of hospitality. What do you think the Samaritan's stage of spiritual development is? The Priest's. The Levite? Why?
3. What risks did the Samaritan take?
4. What do you think is the Samaritan's gift or blessing in his acts of hospitality?

Of these three stories:

1. Which one do you like the best? Why?
2. Which is most frustrating? Why?
3. From which one did you learn some something new or see something from a different angle?
4. Any of them scary?
5. Any of them a comfort?