

# Meeting 8.3



**Module 8 outcome: The disciple realizes the joy of creating belonging in the family of God.**

**DISCUSS** your responses to the essay “Making Room” using the following prompts as a guide:

1. What were your first thoughts as you read the essay? What stood out to you?
2. Evangelism and hospitality are often misunderstood in our culture. How would you define each of these terms? Has your understanding of each shifted over time? If so, how?
3. We introduced the Greek word *philoxenia*. It’s translated as hospitality; to receive a stranger as a guest. Perhaps you’ve heard the word xenophobia before. It comes from the Greek term *xenos*, which means “stranger” or “guest”, and *phobos*, which can mean “fear” or “flight.” It essentially means “stranger fearing.” Xenophobia is defined as, “fear and hatred of strangers or foreigners or of anything that is strange or foreign.”

Consider every kind of “difference” you can think of between yourself and others. Think about cultural, political, and religious differences, but also differences in personality, lifestyle, etc. Have you ever experienced a fear of the “other”? If so, how? Who makes you uncomfortable? Who do you avoid? Why?

4. Pastor Jon Tyson said, “The credibility of our faith depends on the quality of our hospitality.” Do you agree? Why or why not?



5. In Romans 12:13 Paul writes, “When God’s people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality.” This specifically commands disciples to keep their doors and hearts open to the needs of God’s people; in other words, other believers.

What does this tell us about the nature and value of Christian community in the family of God? How does this contrast with the attitudes you observe in our culture? What does our relationship with Jesus give us access to?

Paul specifically instructs Christians to open their homes to other Christians. Does this mean when it comes to nonbelievers, we can close our doors? (Think back to what we’ve learned about evangelism.)

6. Pause and ask God to help you clearly remember a time when you were an outsider, and someone welcomed you in. Perhaps you can clearly remember when you became a Christian; when you moved from outside the family of God to in, or time spent in another country or with people outside of your culture. Maybe you’ve experienced a season of loneliness, and in the midst of it, found a friend, or needed something, and a stranger’s generosity met that need directly.

When have you been an outsider, and who invited you in? When have you been the recipient of a gift of generosity? What difference did that make in your life?

*If this applies, consider writing that person a letter right now, or reaching out to them with a text or phone call. Thank them for welcoming you in, and helping you when you needed it.*

**ASSIGNMENT:** Practice hospitality. This week the disciple will take deliberate steps to practice hospitality. Choose the path(s) you will take and come ready to discuss your experiences with your discipler at your next meeting. Choose one practice, or all three, or commit to another specific step God seems to be nudging you toward. Choosing just one is fine, but ask yourself, “Could I do all three?” If no, why not?



## **PRACTICE 1: PRAY**

Marjorie Thompson explains that, “When we intercede for others in prayer, we welcome them into our inmost sanctuary of compassion. We participate in the spacious hospitality of God’s grace for each person. Since hospitality has a special place for the stranger, praying for our enemies (inside or outside the church) is a most fitting expression of the heart’s hospitality.” Who will you intercede for daily for one week?

## **PRACTICE 2: CROSS THE THRESHOLD**

Alan Hirsch writes, “If every Christian family in the world simply offered good conversational hospitality around a table once a week to neighbors we would eat our way into the kingdom of God.”

Identify someone in your life who feels like an “other”, where some sort of invisible barrier exists between you, and invite them across your threshold (figuratively or hopefully, even literally). Reach out to them and offer a meal or coffee, and then simply just talk together. The gesture does not need to be grand, just genuine. Break that invisible barrier in the name of Jesus. If the first one or two people you invite refuse you or can’t make it, find someone else.

## **PRACTICE 3: MAKE ROOM FOR GENEROSITY**

Ask God if there is any way you are withholding generosity from someone by not giving what you can. Where are you keeping extras for yourself instead of sharing with those who don’t have access to what you do? How can you make more room for generosity?

