



# The Prayer Room

---

Brought to you by the Good News Bearers  
Issue No. 17

## HOSPITALITY, FOR GOODNESS' SAKE!

**Bible Text: 2 Kings 4.8-17** - We invite you to read this Bible story for yourself. The story is about the prophet, Elisha, who lived and spoke God's word to the people of Israel long, long years before Jesus was born. He was like a 'circuit riding', traveling preacher. But, maybe the story is even more about a woman who helped Elisha, made a temporary 'retreat' for him in her home, and tended to his needs. This unnamed woman lived in the village of Shunem, near Nazareth. She was married to a wealthy, older man, and had no children. Elisha out of gratitude, used God's power to grant her the gift of a son. As the story unfolds, we learn that she had neither wanted nor expected anything in return for her kindness. She had helped Elisha solely out of concern for his needs.

**Hospitality for goodness' sake!**

**In Elisha's world, and ours, hospitality often comes with a goal:** get new members; make us feel good; praise from others; a sense of accomplishment; relieve feelings of guilt.

**WHAT DOES IT MATTER?** The Coffee Break Bible Study Group will find this reason cited in their February 1<sup>st</sup> lesson, "If we only help when it gives us good feelings, for instance, we may leave people unaided if that warm-feeling vibe doesn't extend from them. When our motivation is to meet our needs, the 'other', of whom Jesus spoke may remain uncared for or unwelcomed."

**IS OUR HOSPITALITY FOR GOODNESS' SAKE?**

**Our 'goodness' lies in Jesus Christ and is reflected by the example he set for us.**

In the coming week, won't you join us in examining and praying about the goals that lie behind our own hospitality, both as individuals and as a faith community? Consider including the following petitions in your prayers this week.

Dear Lord, help me to look into my heart and mind, to take an honest look at myself and at my church community. Am I alert to the presence of others in my daily life, not just family and friends, but strangers and newcomers, in my church life as well as my personal life? Do I look to see what they might need? Lord, help me to be more aware of those who come into my life, and of their needs. Whose welfare and needs am I really looking after when I DO offer hospitality? Help me, Dear God, to be like that Shunemmite woman, giving out of an open and honest desire to help. Teach me to give 'for goodness' sake'. Lord Jesus, you are our 'goodness'. Help us follow your example, acting in genuine love for the sake of others. You took that love all the way to the Cross. Help us to take it through each day and to those who need it.

In your name we pray. Amen