



Mastering the Art of Christian Hospitality

10 Ways to Host Instead of Entertain

Adapted from

Practicing Christian Hospitality | How to be a Gracious Host

by CRAIG FORD

In the book *Still Living By Faith*, Annie May Lewis writes the following:

Entertaining says, "I want to impress you with my beautiful home, my clever decorating and my gourmet cooking." Hospitality says, "This is not mine. It is a gift from God, and I'll use it as he desires."

I've been to homes where I was entertained. The ambiance was nice. The surroundings were exquisite. But, the atmosphere was stale and cold. I've also been to homes where I was hosted. The walls were stained with crayon marks. The chair I sat on wobbled. But, the atmosphere was warm and welcoming. Which do you think was better? I would rather host than entertain.

1. **Keep It Plain** – Hosting is about the experience, not the presentation. Prepare a meal that allows you time to visit, not one that takes you away from your company.
2. **Be Authentic** – It is truly liberating to present your true self to people. Often times we become so used to wearing masks that we can never truly be ourselves. Remove the masks and let people see the true you – warts and all.
3. **Request A Dish** – When you have company, it is completely appropriate to ask them to bring something.
4. **Announce the Desire to be Informal** – When you are inviting people into your home, let them know you want to have them over so you can get to know them. It won't be fancy, but we'll have some time to visit.
5. **Smile, Joke, Tell Stories** – One of the things I love about visiting people in their homes is sharing stories. Make the atmosphere casual and relaxed.
6. **Use Your Regular Dishes** – There are some occasions to break out the good stuff. However, the more formal the china, the more formal the setting.
7. **Ask for Help** – After you eat together, don't be afraid to say something like, "Alright, men, you're on dishes duty and we'll clear the table." If people are offended by the idea, then you're probably not going to be friends for a long time.
8. **Show Pictures** – Pictures are a great way to share your life with someone. They stimulate stories and they encourage conversation.
9. **Prepare the Kids** – When you have kids, hosting can be difficult. Still, if your kids know the expectations and boundaries, things will be easier for everyone. In our house, the kids typically share in the table conversation and then go play when we retire to the living room.
10. **Pray** – Ask God to allow you to be a conduit of his blessing. Ask him to help you touch the people who enter your home. When your hospitality ministry is clear, then practicing hospitality will be simplified.

Read more: <http://www.moneyhelpforchristians.com/practicing-christian-hospitality-how-to-be-a-gracious-host/#ixzz2R2vJey6G>