

The Hospitality Of God

Ponder: God entertaining guests.

Scripture: “You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over” (Psalm 23:5, NKJV).

Both Old and New Testaments commend hospitality, though the Old Testament does not contain that specific word. When the Hebrews writer exhorted his readers to “entertain strangers,” he used a compound word meaning “to show hospitality (literally, “love of strangers”). He concluded, “for by so doing, some have entertained angels unwittingly” (13:2). No doubt the inspired author had in mind the incidents in Genesis chapters 18 and 19 when Abraham (18:1-8) and Lot (19:1-3) demonstrated hospitality to The Angel of the Lord and the two angels who accompanied Him.

Though “love of strangers” is the etymology of the word hospitality, the meaning is by no means limited to those we don’t know. Peter exhorted fellow-Christians to be hospitable to one another (1 Peter 4:9).

Have you ever thought about God practicing hospitality? Indeed, the Lord practices what He preaches! In the fifth verse of his renowned twenty-third psalm, David shifted from portraying himself as a sheep in God’s flock to being a guest at God’s table. And what a spread must have been on that table! No doubt King David had hosted some excellent banquets for honored guests and friends. But here, David himself is God’s guest! David has already made known that with the Lord as his shepherd, he lacks nothing. The same is true with the Lord as his host. There is no shortage. His cup runs over!

The Lord anointed David’s head with oil. While it is true that David was literally anointed with oil as he became king, the context here is not coronation, but hospitality. A good host gave his guests oil for their heads. Simon the Pharisee snubbed Jesus as he omitted this and other mannerly acts (Luke 7:46).

God prepared this table “in the presence of (David’s) enemies” (Psalm 23:5). Fierce foes fought David strenuously, but they were powerless to keep God from blessing him. Our God still blesses His people in spite of Satan’s best efforts.

God has invited you to be His guest at a great spiritual banquet (Luke 14:15-24). An even greater one is yet to come (Revelation 19:9). Accept His invitation! Don’t miss out on the hospitality of God!