

# Ideas for a Hospitality Fast



## What's a True Fast?

*Is it not to share your food with the hungry  
and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter--  
when you see the naked, to clothe him,  
and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?  
ISA 58:7*

God's Word calls Christian believers to "practice hospitality" (Romans 12:13). Unfortunately the idea of "hospitality" has been watered down to a matter of candle-lit dinners or cozy quarters for "special guests."

True biblical hospitality is radical and requires courage, because it involves putting a welcome mat out to any and all-comers. It involves learning how to listen, how to be inconvenienced, how to let your private spaces be invaded by the needs of others.

True hospitality is especially concerned with strangers, people in need of direction, shelter, comfort, encouragement, honor and respect. You can see why it takes practice.

If fasting is something you do to develop your sense of urgency to pray, then practicing true hospitality is one of the best ways to do that. Want to go on a 40-day practice session? Here are some ideas to help you get thinking in new ways about hospitality:

- School is coming to an end, but still in many areas of the country the lunch room in public schools is a good place to practice true hospitality. Lunch monitors need help in "policing" lunchroom behavior but you can do more than that. Take an opportunity to volunteer in a lunch room and see what kind of openings you have to relate to the children/teens. A consistent, firm and loving presence can make a huge impact to provide security in what is often times a threatening environment to teachers and students alike.
- How about going to your local Salvation Army, half-way house or abuse shelter and find out from the directors what person or family could use some positive contact in a local home. Invite them to your home on separate occasions so that you can focus on one family at a time – giving them individual care that they don't normally receive. Seek advice from the director about anything you should be careful to do or not do.
- Does the youth group threaten you? Get with your youth director and let him/her know you would like to have the youth over for a special dinner. Find out what their favorite "eats" are, and let them know what they will be having. Arrange with your youth director to provide a small activity that will help them to get to know you and you them. Write a note afterwards to let them know you enjoyed getting to know them and having them in your home.
- Have a church family with lots of kids? Often times these families do not get asked over for dinner due to their size and the "activity" that is involved. Invite a family over and arrange a meal that will include them all – try to have one large table (or tables put together) so that adults and children are all together enjoying a meal. Remember the meal does not have to be fancy.
- Check with a local nursing home about meal times. Join a meal time at a nursing home and offer to help the staff in attending the needs of residents. Your presence alone will be an

encouragement. Talk to the folks that can communicate and find out about them by asking where they grew up, what they used to do, their favorite activities as a child or as an adult. Have a list of questions before you go if you are apprehensive.

- Check with your pastor about a family that often calls for food or money aid from the church. Find out where they live. Invite them over to your home for a meal and get to know them. Establish a friendship – not a “hand out” relationship. This may be a challenge. Talk to your pastor or a Christian social worker to help you know how to establish a healthy contact. You may have to provide transportation for a family in this situation.
- Have a couple in your church that you know is struggling in their marriage relationship? If you are a couple with a healthy marriage, have this couple over to your home (several times) for dinner, games, a movie and allow time to talk and interact. Ask the Lord to help guide the conversation and see what happens in helping towards healing their marriage. Pray for them daily.
- Contact your local “Meals on Wheels.” They are often looking for drivers to deliver meals to shut-ins. This can be a good way to establish relationships with those who can not get out.
- Put your name in at your local Pregnancy support Center or Spouse Abuse Center to be called if a family is in crisis and needs a place to stay. Find out from them what kind of accommodations are minimal. Also, let them know what you can offer as far as accommodations, transportation, meals, etc. Even if you can’t provide everything that is needed, the center may be able to coordinate your services with another volunteer.
- Often the elderly don’t get out a lot because it is a “big undertaking?” Identify someone or some couple, an invite them into your home for a social evening of dinner and conversation. Make sure you know all their needs. Reassure them about the transportation arrangements. Make sure you ask what they would like for dinner, and let them know in advance what you will be serving so they can relax and also anticipate their time. A drive after dinner will often make a nice finish to their day.
- Do you have a local university or college in the area? Contact their foreign student office and see if they can give you the names of students that would enjoy being in an American home for a meal. The majority of foreign students that attend US schools have never been inside of an American home.
- Do you have an ethnic church in your area? Make arrangements to get together as sister churches for a potluck dinner and a time of fellowship. Have a time of singing in their language where they teach you the songs.
- Is there an attendant in the airport, a janitor in a local business, etc. that does not speak English very well? Try to strike up a conversation enough to show concern about their needs. Imagine what you might need if you were working in a foreign country with limited language skills.
- Is there a child in your child’s school that has just moved into the area and does not speak English? Ask your child’s teacher about their situation. Arrange to meet the family sometime at school function or when they pick their children up and then invite them over to your home for a meal as a family. Make attempts to learn their language – you don’t have to be “a wiz” – just show enough interest in them to try.