

A Welcoming Family
Genesis 18:1-8
8/17/10

Introduction: The Bible teaches us that we should be hospitable to others (**Matthew 10:42**). It gives examples of many who welcomed individuals into their homes. Sometimes the guests were acquaintances, but other times they were total strangers. Rebekah invited Eliezer who was unknown to her (**Genesis 24:25**). Luke tells us that Christ was welcomed to the home of Mary (**Luke 10:38**). Today we are going to look at another family who welcomed total strangers. Their actions should serve as an example for us to be a welcoming church family.

Verse 1

The Appearance

The “him” in this verse is Abraham. Just as the Lord appeared to Abraham, the Lord appeared to us when the Word (Jesus Christ) was made flesh (**John 1:14**). For some of us, He is standing at the door of our hearts waiting for us to let Him in (**Revelation 3:20**). *Are we going to let Him in?* The text tells us that God visited him by the plains of **Mamre**. This place had great significance in Abraham’s life. This is where he had made his home and had built an altar showing his devotion to the Almighty God. From the preceding chapter, we find that God appeared to Abraham after his act of **obedience** through the circumcision of his entire household (**17:27**). Likewise, if we expect God to appear and communicate with us, we must have a relationship with Him, and be found worshipping and obeying Him. This should be done not only in church, but where we live. Here, the Lord visited Abraham while he was sitting at the door of his home. Likewise, Jesus called Peter and Matthew while they were fishing and collecting taxes. Some people may think that God only speaks to us while we are taking part in a “religious” activity or that He only visits/talks to us in a **miraculous** and spectacular manner. But, such thinking puts false limitations on God. God always wants to speak to us, but, He often finds us too busy. We should not fit Him in our schedule, but build our schedules around Him on a daily basis (through prayer and reading of the Word). This pleases and honors Him. Why was Abraham sitting near the door? This was partly to cool and refresh himself. Also, he was watching and waiting for travelers who were passing by with the **intention** to provide rest and refreshment for them. Like Abraham, are we looking (expectantly) to bless others (**Matthew 22:39**)? When was the last time we blessed someone or invited someone to our home? Let’s not be so heavenly-minded that we are no earthly good to others.

Verse 2

The Acknowledgment

When Abraham saw the three men, he acknowledged their presence by **approaching** them. These were heavenly beings who had taken on the form of flesh (human beings) so that Abraham could see them. The bowing was not in worship, but a **civil** manner of greeting. We are told he “ran” towards them without expecting any good from them or even knowing their status. Remember, Christian love is not exclusive, but **inclusive**. He did not wait for them to come to him, but instead, he took the first welcoming step. Do we do the same when we see new people in this house (of God)? When people visit New Bethel do we acknowledge them with a smile, hello or hug or do we avoid them by not making eye contact or walking the other way? Our **presentation** should not push people away, but draw them (**1 Peter 4:9**). Let Abraham be our example. He stepped out of his comfort zone. Let us do the same and reach out to all. Abraham was visited by three heavenly beings (“three men”). We never know when we might have a similar experience (**Hebrews 13:2**). By his behavior, he made them feel welcome. Does our behavior make others feel welcome in God’s House?

Verses 3-8

The Attitude

These verses show us the attitude of Abraham (and Sarah). Abraham realized he was God’s servant. We see that Abraham is requesting and **pleading** for the visitors to stop and give him the opportunity to serve them. Even though it was going to require work on Abraham’s part, he desires to wash their dirty feet, provide rest and refreshment to their bodies so they could continue with their journey. We should realize that many among us are weary and need refreshment to their souls. The Bible says we are the body of Christ (**Romans 12:10**) (**Galatians 6:2**). When we share and serve, we are showing that we care. Apostle Paul says true love “seeketh not her own” well being. That type of love wants to give to others rather than receive from others (**1 Corinthians 13:5**). Abraham knew his guests’ need. How many of us are aware of the needs of others? Often times people will not share with us unless we ask and are willing to listen (**1 John 4:21**). Once he got their **approval** (5b), Abraham fervently prepares the meal with the help of Sarah. In verses 6 and 7, four times the variation of the word “**hurry**” was used (“hastened,” “quickly,” “ran,” “hasted”). This conveys that he placed great importance to meet the needs of the men. What an attitude! The quality of calf he selected was generally used for grand entertainment and occasions fit for a king. The Bible tells us that **genuine** faith produces good works (**James 2:14-17**). Some people desire to do good to others, but fail to follow through and some desire to show off or out do someone else. But, God is pleased with those who genuinely desire to do good and actually do it. The next time the Holy Spirit prompts us to do good to others, let’s not wait on it, but act on it immediately (**Proverbs 3:27**). Do not put off for tomorrow what we can do today. **We are Family!**