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Homesteader - July 8, 2014

## Hospitality - Where Everybody Could be Your Friend

Hospitality - Welcoming, Friendliness, Warmth, Kindness, Cordiality, Generosity, Openness

Have you ever been in a world where everyone could be your friend? Have you ever experienced a situation where 2 complete strangers became friends in a matter of a day? How about in a matter of hours? How about in a matter of less than 20 seconds?

I've seen it. Sure we've all made friends with someone over time. We can even picture making friends with someone in a day. Maybe even in a matter of hours.....but in less than 20 seconds? Yes.....it happened at Menard's one evening in the month of May....2 little girls, probably each around the age of 5. They were with completely separate parents. One says to the other...."Hi. Want to be friends?" The reply, "Sure!" Next thing, they are walking around holding hands. As we were driving away, we saw them waving good-bye to each other.

You're probably saying well, that's because they are kids, only 5 at that. Yes, you could be right....then again, we could be making a Big Mistake. Are we going to say, that making friends just isn't that easy. Friends in 20 seconds - that just can't happen. Is that a problem we should recognize in ourselves, or in others? If I can offer my opinion, I think it is enviable. I know some people like that; everyone wants to be their friend.

Unfortunately, not all of us have developed that skill. In fact, there are some who are quite shy,

If the answer isn't the same, whether you are the stranger or not - then there's some degree of inconsistency present. We aren't being fair with ourselves if we think it's always the "other" person's responsibility.

Should the results be any different at a table? What if you sat at a table, and everyone else sat at a different table? How would you feel? Would you come back? Would you give the crowd another chance? What if you saw a stranger sitting by themselves at a table - would you be willing to be the 5 year old friend? Would you share a cup of coffee & a cookie for 10-20 minutes and take the chance of finding a friend?

What do we really care about hospitality in a world filled with strangers where everybody could be your friend? (Reminds me of the Gospel of Matthew 25:40, "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for the least of these brothers (and sisters) of mine, you did for me.")

God's blessing to all, especially my 5 year old friends!

Pastor Brian Peterson - Cedar Bluffs, NE

## 221st General Assembly-Detroit

introverted, prefer to keep to themselves, or at least prefer to keep to the friends they already have. I can even be that way. That can be most unfortunate. We should be willing to risk a handshake, and a "hello" to see if someone could be a new friend. Maybe it will take more than 20 seconds.....so what? The risk is not making a friend, because you already have too many??? That's absurd.

Have you ever felt alone? Do we remember what being "alone" feels like? If a stranger walks into a crowd where all the people seem to know everyone else, and you were part of the crowd, would you be willing to say "Hi" and introduce yourself? Some of us would not.....If not, would you wish *someone else* would be brave enough to "break the ice," and start the conversation? Or would you wish the person, *standing there by themselves*, should be the bravest of all?

What if *you* were the *stranger*? Would the answer still be the same? Who should respond - you the stranger, or someone from the crowd? Who should welcome whom? Who should initiate the greeting? Who would reach out the hand of friendship and say, "Hi. Want to be friends?"

cont'd...



Homestead Presbytery - Rev. Richard Wyatt, Rev. Greg Bolt, Pam Carrier, Erik Hall, Cheryl Rennick, Rev. Ray Meester (not pictured, Rev. Jen Strickland)



Rev. Greg Bolt - Nebraska City, NE

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