



# abclinks

connecting personal and small group studies with this week's sermon

For the sermon on July 19-20, 2008

## this week's coreverse

**Share with God's people  
who are in need. Practice  
hospitality.**

**Romans 12.13 NIV**

## usingabclinks

### Personal Bible Studies (inside pages)

- Personal studies explore Scripture passages related to this week's sermon. They are broken down into three or four days. Some days, you will simply read, meditate or think about a passage from scripture. Other days, you'll be asked to dig into a passage through reading, studying and answering questions.

### Small Group Discussion (back page)

- Small group questions that connect with the sermon and your personal Bible study. This series of questions acts as a funnel to help your group discussion flow in a purposeful point.
- If you are not in a small group, contact one of our small group staff members for more information on ABC Small Groups or go to [adabible.org](http://adabible.org)>ministries>small groups.

See [adabible.org](http://adabible.org) for abclinks archives.



## Part One of a Five Part Sermon Series

### "Hospitality and the Renewed Mind"

*"Today, we are drifting away from each other. Incivility is on the rise. A larger portion of us admits to having few close friends. We easily recognize the living rooms and kitchens of sitcom characters but have never seen the inside of the home of the family living next door. We are increasingly isolated. We have lost 'Refrigerator Rights.' Our self-identities are much more difficult to forge apart from a strong network of significant others who care about us."*

Author Will Miller posted these thoughts on his website, [fridgerights.blogspot.com](http://fridgerights.blogspot.com). He's the author of the book, *Refrigerator Rights*, in which he challenges us to have such hospitality that people feel free to open our fridge to find something refreshing... without the need to ask and without either of you feeling awkward or uncomfortable. How many people in your life have "refrigerator rights"? Miller's contention is hospitality is a lost art in American society, today. We have grown increasingly private. In the past, our homes were places where community gathered. Now, they are fortresses protecting us from the others around us. In a quest to practice what he's preaching and to grow in his passion for hospitality, Miller and his wife moved. Here's another blog posting.

*"Sally and I relocated from a big, beautiful yet remote home to an older, downtown neighborhood.... We were a bit worried about losing some of our coveted privacy from our stressful jobs, but took the chance. Once we moved we jumped into the activities of the neighborhood and began the slow process of becoming friends with new people. The biggest surprise to us is how hungry people are to get involved if you give them an easy opportunity and make it pleasant. To that end we tried a cool new approach last month. I went to Home Depot and bought one of those outdoor, enclosed fire pits. I assembled it with my neighbor Jeff and when finished we lit a fire and sat and had a beer. It was in a small sitting area in front of our house. A few minutes later another neighbor, Joanne, wandered across the street and sat with us. Soon her husband Tom came out along with his visiting daughter. And then another, and another. Several brought their dogs. Within two hours there were 21 people who just came, brought their own beverage, kids and dogs, and we sat around until 10 pm talking and laughing. It was so popular I did it again this past Friday night with the same results.*

*Getting connected is not instantaneous. It is a process that begins slowly and grows just as slowly - not through a lot of intense emotional bonding - but rather by engaging in shared activities over time. Take some initiative. Build a fire and they will come."*

The Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 12 that we are "to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God." He also says that in order to fully do that, our minds may have to be renewed. In other words, we may need to think differently about certain things. One of those things Paul mentions later in the passage is hospitality. He challenges us, as he did his first readers, to open our homes to others, even strangers.



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# daily readings



## dayone

Read Romans 12.1-2

Paul begins this section of Romans with the word, "therefore." He's making a transition from his long description of God's work in our lives (chapters 1-11) to our response to His goodness and grace. What is Paul's thesis statement? What things are we to do?

This is an incredible passage to lock away in your memory banks. Spend 15 minutes memorizing it. You'll use these words sometime soon!

## daytwo

Read Romans 12.9-13

In these verses, Paul gives us some very practical ways to "offer our bodies as living sacrifices." Some of these may need to be "renewed" in our minds; in other words, we need to think differently in order to grow in them.

How about hospitality? How do you need to grow in your love of strangers and your willingness to open your home, yard and life to others?

## daythree

Read Romans 12.14-20

Hospitality means to love strangers. In Paul's day, that meant to be willing to open your home and feed someone who was traveling through your town. But, Paul also talks here about how we are to view our enemies.

How does the concept of hospitality and loving and praying for your enemies mesh? Do they? Why or why not?



# small group discussion



## leanin

Describe your home growing up. Other than your family, who hung out there? Was your home open or closed to others? Explain.

## lookdown

Have someone read Romans 12.1-2. Have someone else read Romans 12.9-20. How does the second passage relate to the first? Why are verses 1-2 important to verses 9-20?

Camp out on the phrase, "practice hospitality." (v. 13). Define hospitality. What did it mean in Paul's day?

## lookout

Discuss the Will Miller paragraph at the top of the front page. Do you agree that "we are drifting away from each other" and "... are increasingly isolated"? How have you seen this to be true in American society today?

## lookin

Tell of a time when someone's hospitality made a large impact in your life.

The full meaning of hospitality is "lover of strangers." How does this impact your view of what it means to open your home to others? What is your current comfort or discomfort level with this? Why?

Is your home, schedule and perspective open to others, perhaps even to strangers? What needs to be "renewed in your mind"?