

## Welcoming and Caring for New Friends

### Thinking it through 1:

- The joyous challenge we have.
  - Visitor OR **New Friend?**
  - What might it be like to come into CCD for the first time?
  - What do we want for our new friends?
    - To Encounter God
    - To hear the gospel preached and to know Jesus personally
    - To feel welcome
    - To continue growing in the Lord and becoming a part of this church family.
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### Groups discussion 1:

1. Imagine you're a visitor. How are you feeling as you approach the building and enter the church?
  
  2. How can we meet those concerns?
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### Thinking it through 2:

- The traps we could fall into:
    - Visitor Fatigue
    - Large Church Complacency
    - Personal Reticence
    - "They're an SEP" – **S**omeone **E**lse's **P**roblem
  - We all need to be engaged with befriending
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### Group Discussion 2:

1. I'm not very good at approaching strangers. What can I say?
  
  2. Discuss different ways of showing 'hospitality'. And what ways to we have of building relationships and integrating people into the church community?
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### Prayer

"Without intent there is no action; but without action intent means nothing."

**From the Old Testament**

Deuteronomy 10:17–19

When Israel left Egypt (and subsequently) many foreigners joined them for a variety of reasons: security, economy, admiration? God did not turn them away but gave instructions to Israel concerning them.

'Do not oppress a foreigner; you yourselves know how it feels to be foreigners, because you were foreigners in Egypt'. (Exodus 23:9)

'The community is to have the same rules for you and for the foreigner residing among you; this is a lasting ordinance for the generations to come. You and the foreigner shall be the same before the LORD: The same laws and regulations will apply both to you and to the foreigner residing among you' (Numb.15:15-16)

'The LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing. And you are to love those who are foreigners, for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt' (Deuteronomy 10:17–19).

**Into the New Testament**

3 John 1:5–8

'Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality' (Romans 12:13). **Our reason.**

'Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling' (1 Peter 4:9). **Our response.**

'Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it' (Hebrews 13:2). **Our reward.**

Gaius, whose hospitality I and the whole church here enjoy, sends you his greetings. (Romans 16:23).

'Dear friend (Gaius) you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers and sisters, even though they are strangers to you. They have told the church about your love... We ought therefore to show hospitality to such people so that we may work together for the truth'. (3 John 1:5–8).

**Priscilla and Aquila – a home for Christ.**

They are referred to on six different occasions in four different books. Always together.

Paul arrived in **Corinth** from Athens in AD 51: 'There he met a Jew named Aquila, a native of **Pontus**, who had recently come from **Italy [Rome]** with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius [the emperor] had ordered all the Jews to leave Rome' (Acts 18:1–3). Paul lodged in their home and worked with them (Acts 18:3).

When Paul moved on to **Ephesus** he was 'accompanied by Aquila and Priscilla' (Acts 8:18). From here Paul wrote his first letter to the church at Corinth and in his greetings adds: 'Aquila and Priscilla greet you warmly in the Lord, and so does the church that meets in their house' (1 Corinthians 16:19).

After a short stay, Paul left them and when he returned two years later we may assume he stayed with Aquila and Priscilla. During Paul's absence they had helped a young man named Apollos (Acts 18:24–25).

Later, possibly after the death of the emperor Claudius in AD 54 and after Paul left Ephesus in AD 57, they returned to Rome, because when Paul arrived in Corinth around AD 58 (Acts 20:2), in his letter to Rome he particularly mentioned Priscilla and Aquila and 'the church that meets at their house.' (Rom 16:3–5).

According to his correspondence with Timothy they were soon back in Ephesus: 'Greet Priscilla and Aquila and the household of Onesiphorus' (2 Timothy 4:19).

Are you confused at their movements? **Pontus – Rome – Corinth – Ephesus – back to Rome – then to Ephesus again.** But wherever their home was, they were always at home for Christ.

**As a guest house.** Paul had experienced the open home of this couple. See Romans 12:13.

**As a teaching centre.** They took Apollos under their wing and straightened out his theology.

**As a house church.** Possibly in Corinth but certainly in Ephesus and later in Rome.

How can we apply their example to our home?

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