

Speaking to the soul



Hospitality

Don't forget to show hospitality to strangers, for some who have done this have entertained angels without realising it! Hebrews 13:2

In Genesis 18 there is a remarkable account of hospitality when Abraham generously welcomed three mysterious visitors. It was the hottest part of the day and as soon as he saw them, Abraham ran to welcome them. He then encouraged them to rest in the shade of an oak tree while he brought water for them and then he went back to his tent to ask Sarah to prepare bread for them. Abraham had no idea who the visitors were but it soon became clear that God himself had sent them, as they informed the couple of the miraculous news that they, old as they were, would have a son. They had welcomed angels without knowing it.

In the early Church, Christian travellers faced many challenges. Inns were notoriously filthy and expensive and were well known for being centres of immorality. They also faced hostility from their many opponents. It was therefore essential that Christians were willing to open their homes to their brothers and sisters from other places, even if they had never met them before. The writer to the Hebrews reminds them of the story of Abraham and suggests that in doing so they might even be welcoming an angel of God.

Hospitality continues to be a vital way of showing Christian love and care. In recent years, homes have become increasingly used in church life. Good as it is to meet in our churches, the relaxed atmosphere of the home is often the very best place to talk through our needs and the implications of living the Christian life. Home groups for prayer and Bible study are an invaluable way of helping us to grow in faith and to strengthen our relationships with

other Christians. And, who knows, as we do so we might even be welcoming an angel of God.

QUESTION

How have you been able to open up your home to others?

PRAYER

Lord God, we thank you for the precious gift of our homes. Help us to use them generously for you. Amen

Photograph - Spring hopefully

