



In anticipation of the upcoming The UM General Conference (April 23-May 3), the Notes for a New Day devotionals are offered by members of the Central Texas and North Texas Conference delegations.

March 6, 2024

Today's Scripture

Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good. Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other. Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically. Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying. When God's people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality.— Romans 12:9-13 (NLT)

Today's Devotional

"People will forget what you said, forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." — Maya Angelou

As Paul was composing his letter to the Romans, he was living a time of turmoil and persecution. Yet, Paul tells the church in Rome (and us today) to continue to show hospitality regardless of who we were/are serving or dealing with.

The Romans 12 passage serves as a powerful reminder that Jesus is our example of how to love. Not to burst anyone's bubble, but love, real love, is not simply a feeling or sentiment that causes our hearts to go pitter-pat or something best shared in words, over-priced greeting cards, texts or memes. Rather its often best expressed in our action.

When I was a young(er) girl, I would see and hear the mothers in the church speak of and truly exercise radical hospitality when we were having a program or event. They took extra care in the preparations on all fronts. Fresh flowers in the foyer, deep cleaning and polishing, ironing the tablecloths and selecting the meal for the visitors. Everything had to be just right, because we were having visitors "in our house."

What I didn't know then was that this type of effort and care has a name (I just knew it was the right thing to do and was expected). Now I know to call it "hospitality."

Hospitality is by far one of the most significant acts of love, while often being one of the most undervalued. Too often, as we scurry through our daily routines and lives, we mistake true hospitality for common courtesy and/or simply take it for granted.

Paul reminds us that our love has to be real, genuine. True hospitality is but one of the ultimate expressions of love. Can we offer it to those who have hurt us? It is not easy to bless or love your enemies in any form or expression, yet that is what we are called to do.

Exercise is defined as an activity requiring physical effort, carried out to sustain or improve health and fitness. So, ask yourself, why exercise hospitality? Is it to grow in our faith, to get stronger in prayer, to get better at sacrifice? Or is it to better follow Jesus and seek the loving, just and free world God imagines for all people in order to make healthier disciples for the transformation of the world?

—Darlene Alfred, Conference Lay Leader, CTC delegate darlenealfred@ctcumc.org

Today's Prayer For Reflection

Lord, I've often heard the words "don't forget the things you did to get me, to keep me." May we never forget all that you did and sacrificed to "get and keep us." Help us to use whatever gifts we have received to exercise hospitality in love to all who cross our paths.