

Around the Corner  
**The Lord's House**  
*Hebrews 13.02*  
Larry Baird

I would judge I was in sixth grade. My entire immediate family, consisting of four; mom, dad, my brother and I, the “fly fishing family” as one magazine called us, had just finished an afternoon on Furnace Brook up in the mountains outside Rutland Vermont. We had just removed our gear; gotten our rods put away, and were in the car to return to camp. It was then a Plymouth station wagon pulled in behind us with government plates. The occupants got out and ambled toward our vehicle. It was an interesting sight. He was a small wiry man and the dog; a black lab looked enormous beside him. The retriever took up position next to my open window and stuck his nose in, resting his head on the door. His large brown eyes said, “Pet me.” My father, never at a loss for a desire for conversation rolled down his window. At that moment in the late afternoon in those green mountains a wonderful friendship began. The man, we first presumed to be a game warden, was rather Vermont’s chief fish biologist, Russell Lord. After a short conversation we were headed down the mountain to the Lord’s house where we were fed and spent the evening with Russ, his wife Dorothy, and their daughter Martha. Though mother, father, Russ, and Dot have all since died, our family friendship continues and has expanded to another generation. Many meals and long evenings have been spent around the dining room table for over 45 years. This, all because of a single gracious act of hospitality extended to strangers. For years I have thought of the Lords as family.

There are many places in Scripture where we are urged to show hospitality.

Hebrews 13:2 says, “**Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it**”.<sup>1</sup>

Hospitality, you see, is something that has within it the seeds of the miraculous. It is the miracle that happens when strangers become family. This, I believe, is why God encourages it, even demands it, of his disciples.

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<sup>1</sup>*The New Revised Standard Version*, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers) 1989.

My guess is many of you have stories like mine when a single act of hospitality has positively impacted your life, changed it forever, and strangers have become family.

I am saddened to say that in some of our churches hospitality has given way to exclusion, often unintentional, yet undeniably present. The family has become closed and when strangers come by they remain estranged. Perhaps that is one reason in some regions our family is dying.

So let us resolve to work to forever nurture the gift of hospitality in our churches and in other parts of our lives. Let us double our efforts in being open to strangers becoming family. It is one of the most profound and spiritual possibilities God provides us on the journey.