

Sermon Growth Guide



November 16, 2025

Faithful Friends

3 John 1:1-8

Key Verse: 3 John 1:5 “Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers and sisters, even though they are strangers to you.”

Big Idea: Faithfulness to the truth includes loving hospitality.

Foundations

“What is truth?” Pilate asks Jesus. (John 18:38) This is just as difficult a question today as it was when Rome occupied Israel. Fundamentally, truth is not just a set of beliefs, but a person. Jesus is the truth. (John 14:6) Faithfulness to the truth, then, is ultimately faithfulness to Jesus.

As we have learned in our sermon series, faithfulness to Jesus includes obedience to his command to love one another, just as God has loved us in Christ. (John 13:34) In this passage, John, (“the Elder”) is commanding his friend Gaius for showing his faithfulness through loving hospitality. Some traveling missionaries, who were probably concerned to protect the Gospel message by not receiving support from unbelievers (see 1 Corinthians 9), were in need of help. Even though they were strangers, Gaius supported them by giving them food and a place to stay. In this way, Gaius joined in their work for the truth.

In our church, we are familiar with supporting missions financially and with volunteering in missions both here and abroad. But the hospitality of the ancient world was much more personal. It’s good to recognize that our culture is very different from the one John and Gaius were part of. Nevertheless, this is a good opportunity to think what Christ-centered hospitality should look like in our lives. Whatever we do, faithfulness to the truth means that love should be at the center.

Understanding God’s Word

Read 3 John 1:1-8 together.

The opening verses are the formal greeting of the letter. How does John express his love and concern for Gaius?

When you hear the word, “hospitality,” what do you think it means? What images or situations come to mind? How is this the same or different from the hospitality John is commanding?

Applying God’s Word

What is your experience with hospitality, both in receiving or giving it?

We understand that our time and place is different from that of Gaius. What kind of hospitality might show faithfulness to the love of Jesus today? What kind of wisdom do we need to practice hospitality well?

How can we grow in hospitality as a church? How can you grow as a small group, or as an individual in this area?

Witnessing God’s Word

In the book *I Once Was Lost*, Don Everts and Doug Schaupp say that most people’s first step toward Jesus is simply learning to trust someone who is a Christian. Can hospitality to our neighbors be part of that first step? What are some ways you can reach out to those around you through hospitality?