

## Word of the Week: Hospitality

1 Peter 4:8-10, Hebrews 13:1-2

1. Talk about a time when you received excellent hospitality service at a restaurant or a hotel. How did you feel about the experience afterward?
2. Can you recall a time when you felt unwelcomed or ignored or awkward at some kind of event, such as a party, a church service, or some other social occasion? What was that like?
3. Pastor Mark talks about visiting some churches for worship on Sunday morning, where he felt almost invisible. Why do you think people sometimes fail to notice or speak to newcomers at Church?
4. Pastor Mark shares some of the good work Virginia Beach UMC is doing to help make people feel welcomed and noticed: the Parking Lot Team, Greeters, Ushers, and taking time at the beginning of worship to encourage people to greet those around them. Have you experienced these as positive aspects of your Sunday morning experience? Why or why not?
5. Pastor Mark acknowledged that secret worshipers who visited VBUMC last fall rated our congregation as below average in terms of welcoming and friendliness. Why do you think that was the case?
6. Read Hebrews 13:1-2. What does this passage tell us about the importance of welcoming strangers and showing hospitality to people we don't know at Church?
7. Pastor Mark suggests that showing welcoming hospitality to people we don't know is not just a job assigned to Ushers and Greeters, it is the responsibility of everyone who gathers regularly for worship in our sanctuary. Have you ever thought of it that way?
8. Can you recall a time when you intentionally introduced yourself to someone at Church whom you did not know? How did it go? Why is it important to gather the courage to extend ourselves and introduce ourselves to others?
9. Why is it a better idea to ask someone "how long have you been coming to our church?" Rather than ask, "Is this your first time here?"
10. How are we cooperating with the work of God's grace in someone else's life when we extend a hand of fellowship and hospitality to someone in church whom we do not know?

11. Pastor Mark suggests that if you are a member or regular attender, you are not a church customer, you are part of the serving team. How might that change the way you think about Sunday mornings when you come to Church?