

An Open House

Message Notes

Intro/Tension

- **The things God uses** sometimes amaze me..
 - A staff to deliver people
 - A slingshot to kill a giant
 - Five loaves and two fish to feed 5000 men
- **The places God uses** to birth movements
 - A stable to birth the Messiah
 - An upper room to birth the church
 - A home to reach the first Gentile household
- God has always used ordinary things and ordinary places for extraordinary purposes.
- One thing that God has used A TON throughout time is the HOME.
- Think of the miracles that have happened in homes.
 - The home of Rahab
 - The home of the Shunamite woman
 - The home of Obed Edom
 - The gospels are filled with home miracles
- The statistic of how ministry went down in the New Testament
 - Insert picture here.
- God wants to work in homes. Could it be HE WANTS TO WORK IN YOUR HOME?
- We're about to read the story of a woman named Lydia from Thyatira, who allowed God to use her home.

Passage

- Acts 16:14-15 (NLT) 14 One of them was Lydia from Thyatira, a merchant of expensive purple cloth, who worshiped God. As she listened to us, **the Lord opened her heart**, and she accepted what Paul was saying. 15 She and her household were baptized, and she asked us to be her guests. "If you agree that I am a true believer in the Lord," she said, "**come and stay at my home.**" And **she urged us until we agreed.**
- Acts 16:40 (NLT) When Paul and Silas left the prison, **they returned to the home of Lydia.** There **they met with the believers** and encouraged them once more. Then they left town.
- God opened her HEART ? Lydia opened her HOME ? God used her HOME.

- **Here is my claim:** God wants to do WAY more in our homes than we know or allow.
- **Here is the question:** Do you see your home as belonging to you or to the Lord? If it is His house, are you letting Him use it to change lives?

Three Steps To Seeing God Use Your Home

1. An open DOOR of HOSPITALITY

- Hospitality and Louisiana culture
 - Fish fries, bbq, big pot of gumbo, tailgates, attitude.
- Hospitality decline in America
 - Garages replaced curbs, sidewalks, and porches
 - Air-conditioning brought people off the porch.
 - Television moved the family's attention indoors.
 - Suburban design increased physical separation.
 - Busier schedules made interruption feel unwelcome.
 - Fear made strangers seem threatening.
 - Screens gave us connection without proximity.
 - Individualism transformed the home from a place of welcome into a private sanctuary.
- Hospitality and Biblical culture
 - Abraham
 - Leviticus - Leviticus 19:34 (NLT) Treat them like native-born Israelites, and love them as you love yourself. Remember that you were once foreigners living in the land of Egypt. I am the LORD your God.
 - Basis of the New Testament Church
 - Hebrews 13:2 (NLT) Don't forget to show hospitality to strangers, for some who have done this have entertained angels without realizing it!
- Hospitality starts in the heart
 - Open hearts, make open spaces.
 - The word says that "The Lord opened her heart".
 - Closed hearts
 - **Insecurity** — "My home, cooking, or life isn't good enough."
 - **Inconvenience** — "I don't want my plans, schedule, or routines disrupted."
 - **Intrusion** — "I don't want people entering my private space."
 - **Indifference** — "I don't notice—or feel responsible for—the lonely and disconnected."
 - **Individualism** — "My home and resources exist primarily for me and my family."
- Let's make this real
 - Hospitality says "I want you here"
 - Hospitality isn't a passive force, it is active. It is initiating.

- Hospitality isn't just for people that can bless you in return, it is for those who can't.
- The greatest source of your hospitality is an open door, and that starts with an open heart.
- My home is my tool for hospitality!
- I want to celebrate our B-Group leaders who open their home for B-Group
 - Phil and Donna; Donald and Monica; Dustin and Kristen

2. An open TABLE of GENEROSITY

- If hospitality is I WANT YOU HERE, generosity is WHAT I HAVE IS YOURS.
- The table opens what is mine to you
 - When I open my table, I am opening more than my food.
 - The table says...
 - I feel safe with you.
 - My provision is yours.
 - My time is yours.
 - My attention is yours.
 - The table is where generosity becomes tangible.
- The table creates fellowship
 - Acts 2:46 (NLT) They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity--
 - Generosity creates the conditions for fellowship.
 - A meal gives conversation somewhere to sit.
 - The table turns strangers into guests, and guests into friends.
 - We normally eat with people we already love. Jesus often shared meals as a way of loving people who were still far away.
- The table becomes a place of grace
 - What kind of miracles can happen around a meal?
 - Zacchaeus — repentance: A greedy man becomes generous.
 - Matthew — mission: An outsider meets Jesus, then fills his table with other outsiders.
 - The woman at Simon's house — forgiveness: A condemned woman receives grace.
 - Mary and Martha — formation: A disciple learns at Jesus' feet.
 - Emmaus — revelation: Their eyes are opened as Jesus breaks the bread.
 - Peter — restoration: A broken disciple is restored and recommissioned over breakfast.
 - Never underestimate what God can do around your table.
- Put another seat at your table
 - Who needs a seat at your table?
 - The lonely, hungry, stranger, or outcast?
 - A single adult, new family, college student, or neighbor?
- Celebrate the ones who feed from the table
 - Jason Williams; Brandon Craft; Richard and Sonny

3. An open LIVING ROOM of MINISTRY

- Go back to the graph
- Most of this is happening in a living room
- Church can be attending something. Entering a home is entering someone's world.
- NT homes — ministry under a rooftop:
 - Mary's house — prayer (Acts 12)
 - Cornelius' house — salvation / Holy Spirit / baptism (Acts 10)
 - Lydia's house — encouragement / believers gathered (Acts 16)
 - Priscilla & Aquila / Gaius / Nympha / Philemon — church in the home
 - Prayer happened in homes.
 - People were saved in homes.
 - The Spirit fell in homes.
 - Churches were born in homes.
- God has always loved using ordinary rooms for extraordinary purposes.
- Home is not a minor ministry venue in the NT — it is one of the primary environments.
- How I've seen God use living rooms:
 - Personal —
 - House of Ruth prayer
 - Bible study with Sidney
 - My personal B-Group at Al Shanks
 - When I started leading Bethany
 - Bethany — Dickie Collier home remodel
 - Others - Ed Bledsoe living room after living room
- Two questions:
 - Whose living room are you in?
 - Who is in yours?
- God gave you a home to cover your family — but He may also want to use it to reach another one.

Closing

- I think God wants to use your home — just like He used a staff, five smooth stones, a manger, five loaves.
- Who's home is it anyway? Yours or God's?
 - If my life belongs to Jesus, my house does too.
- God, my heart is Yours. My door is Yours. My table is Yours. My living room is Yours. My home is Yours.
- Watch what God can do with an available house.
- Salvation — before God uses your house, He wants your heart.