

Gaius My Host

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

A. Gaius the host of the church

1. Paul's traveling companion with Aristarchus of Macedonia, seized by a mob in Ephesus - Acts 19:29
 - a. Indicates that he is a courageous preacher
2. Gaius of Derbe, a city in the Roman province of Galatia in Asia Minor, in the region of Lycaonia, is named as one of Paul's seven traveling companions who waited for him at Troas - Acts 20:4
 - a. Indicates that he could work well with others and follow directions
3. Gaius resided for a time in Corinth as one of a few people baptized by Paul, along with Crispus and the household of Stephanas - 1Cor. 1:14
 - a. Indicates that he was comfortable working in a troubled congregation with few people
4. Gaius, while living in Corinth, was Paul's host and also host of the whole church - Rom. 16:23
 - a. Demonstrates that for which he became well known, hospitality
5. Gaius settled in Ephesus and was addressed by John - 3John. As Paul's traveling companion, he would very likely settle in with one of the congregations with which he had worked in the past and where he and Paul would have understood he was needed
 - a. Says a great deal about the moral courage and character as Ephesus was the place where he was seized by a mob
 - b. Speaks of the excellence with which he practiced hospitality

B. Gaius background

1. Gaius is a Latin personal name which was the second most common name in Roman history (Lucius is first). The feminine form is Gaia.
2. Gaius is derived from gaudere meaning "to rejoice" (Julius Paris, Concerning Praenomina)
3. The Celtic people adopted and adapted the name as Cae which came to be the modern form of the name Kay
4. He was very likely a Gentile, born in a Roman province, and may have held Roman citizenship like Paul
5. He was baptized by Paul and traveled and quickly began working with him as an evangelist, suggesting he had some familiarity with Judaism
6. John adopted him in the faith similar to the way Paul adopted Timothy, indicating that he was a younger man
7. His reputation for hospitality indicates that he was a man of means enabling him to own a place that could support himself and guests, as well as the whole congregation for worship
8. Some conclude that there was more than one Gaius, but their reasoning is based on assumption and not evidence

C. 3John 1-14

I. CHRISTIAN COURTESY

- A. Greeting with spiritual affection: John prays that Gaius might enjoy good health "just as your soul prospers."
 - 1. With many, the opposite is true. Their spiritual health does not measure up to their physical health.
 - 2. John uses Gaius spiritual health the standard by which the rest of his life in this world is measured - 3John 2; Phil. 1:1-6
 - 3. I have used his greeting in most of my correspondences for 35 years
 - 4. This is even more important in this age of instant communication
- B. Adopting spiritual children
 - 1. 1Cor. 4:15; 1Tim. 1:2
 - 2. It takes nothing away from our biological fathers to acknowledge and appreciate fatherly affection and relationships with older brethren
 - 3. I have had a number of older preachers who treated me as one of their own sons; Almon Williams, Bill Wright, Earl Robertson, Bob Waldron
 - 4. I cannot measure how much influence these men have had in my life. I do know I would not be the man or the preacher that I am without it.
 - 5. Let me encourage older and younger men to be open to this kind of godly relationship
- C. Making preachers part of your family
 - 1. 3John 7-8; Gal. 6:6; Titus 3:13
 - 2. They left the comfort and security of their homes to preach. It is unwise to take money from prospects while trying to make them converts.
 - 3. Be involved with them at a familial level. Gospel meetings; invite them into your home for a meal, keep them in your home during the meeting
 - 4. Consider being individually involved in supporting their work. Both of these principles have Bible precedents. When we support preachers, we share with them in the rewards - Phil. 1:3-7; Matt. 10:41
 - 5. In the first century, persons who did this facilitated the spread of the Gospel as much as the preachers themselves
 - 6. In the present, the lack of personal involvement in the lives of evangelists contributes in part to the low number of men who want to become evangelists
- D. Serving the Lord with distinction
 - 1. The overly private, closed way disciples in this area hide their service to the Lord is based on a mistaken understand of humility, borders on paranoia, and hides the light of Christ from the eyes of the world
 - a. 3John 3-6; Matt. 5:14-16; 1Thes. 2:19-20
 - 2. Are you encouraged by the good examples and kind works of others? How could you be encouraged if they hid them as thoroughly as you hide yours?
 - 3. There is a difference between boasting of good deeds and letting good deeds be seen to speak for themselves - Prov. 20:6
- E. Treat strangers as friends
 - 1. 3John 5 - Note John said Gaius treated brethren and strangers alike.
 - 2. Heb. 13:2; Gen. 18:3; Matt. 25:35; Rom. 12:13; 1Tim. 3:2; 1Peter 4:9

F. Spend time in company with disciples

1. 3John 13-14; 2John 12

2. Texts and calls are ok; personal visits are better

G. Christians make it a point to acknowledge all others

1. 3John 14; 1Cor. 16:19-20 - There is something warm and special about hearing one's own name in the words of another.

2. Some tend to acknowledge friends and brethren only - Matt. 5:47

Conclusion:

A. Hospitality and courtesy allow people to get to know one another and build bonds that will last. C. E. Murphy writes: "In Ireland, you go to someone's house, and she asks you if you want a cup of tea. You say no, thank you, you're really just fine. She asks if you're sure. You say of course you're sure, really, you don't need a thing. Well, she says then, I was going to get myself some anyway, so it would be no trouble. Ah, you say, well, if you were going to get yourself some, I wouldn't mind a spot of tea at that, so long as it's no trouble and I can give you a hand in the kitchen. Then you go through the whole thing all over again until you both end up in the kitchen drinking tea and chatting. In America, someone asks you if you want a cup of tea, you say no, and then you don't get any tea. I like the Irish way better."

B. "Hospitality means primarily the creation of free space where the stranger can enter and become a friend instead of an enemy. Hospitality is not to change people, but to offer them space where change can take place. It is not to bring men and women over to our side, but to offer freedom without dividing lines." (Henri J. M. Nouwen)