

317 11/21/05 Open your home to your children's friends

I recently read the story in Acts 16 about Lydia. Lydia was a prosperous businesswoman who sold purple cloth and dyes to the wealthy. On a Sabbath, she was outside the city gate by the river with some other women. Paul and his companions joined them and began talking to them.

“The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul’s message. When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home.” Acts 16:14b-15a. It seemed like a casual invitation to a group of three traveling preachers.

But wait; let us look at the possible ramifications of that invitation. What if these men were not who they said they were? What if they had evil intentions to steal or otherwise harm once they were in Lydia’s home? And, what would the neighbors say? It is easy to say we open our homes to entertain “angels without knowing it,” (Hebrews 13:2b), but do we really?

I think that one of the most important things that we can do for our children is to open our homes to their friends. In the process, we may have children in our homes that do not fit our expectations for dress, manners or behavior. However, we may touch the life of a child who needs us.

As a child, I had a friend whose parents had a lifestyle different from that of my parents. As a teen, her behavior began to reflect her upbringing. Because of that, we did less together socially though I still cared for her. She had meals with us. She often spent the night at my house. My parents were very aware of the bad choices she was making. And yet, she was always welcomed into our home.

Being a parent and grandparent, I now see that my parents were stretching the concept of hospitality to fit what God would have them do rather than what seemed safe. They made sure that I still understood what was expected of me. But, they also wanted my friend to have a place where she could see a healthy family life modeled, feel safe and have fun. She found that in our home.

Demonstrate Christian hospitality to your children’s friends. Even as you are teaching your children about hospitality, you may make a big difference in the life of another child.