

Hospitality on a Wing and a Prayer

Entertaining without the pressure to be perfect

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I'd Ask You Home, but...

I looked around the church
And spotted you.
I'd like to ask you home,
But what can I do?

There is a problem,
I must confess.
However you say it,
My house is a mess.

I have a can of beans
And five-minute rice.
If you were already my friend,
I wouldn't think twice.

But you are new,
What would you think
If you saw
Dirty dishes in my sink?

So I'll let you have
A lonely day.
Because I let
Pride stand in my way.

(If this is you, read on.)

CHAPTER ONE

Needed: A Wing or Wings

(to Fly Away When a Hospitality Disaster Strikes)

As the strawberry shortcake, whipped cream included, slid into Mary's lap, I gasped in horror. And I wasn't the only one. All nine guests gasped too. We couldn't believe what we were seeing. Don, my husband, had just dumped the dessert onto the dress of one of our guests.

I didn't know whether to commit a murder, run out the back door, or pray for a hole to suddenly appear in the floor into which I could disappear. How I wished for wings so I could fly away.

It took a moment or two, but sanity returned, and I quickly grabbed some paper towels. Between Mary and me, we managed to scoop up a large bit of the cake and strawberries. However, strawberry juice and whipped cream were quickly seeping into her dress.

I murmured, "I'm so sorry; I'm so sorry. We'll either pay for cleaning or for replacing the dress."

"Don't worry, dear," she said. I showed her where the bathroom was and left her to repair her dress.

Now, if I had been thinking kindly thoughts, I would have said to my husband, "That's OK, dear. Accidents happen. I appreciate your help." However, my thoughts weren't very kind and certainly couldn't have been uttered in front of our guests.

Years later, Mary and I laughed about the strawberry mess and realized that that incident had helped to cement our relationship.

My friend Jane says she, too, has wished for a wing to fly away. The beautifully decorated ice-cream cake just had to be cut. Her eight guests planned to attend a meeting and couldn't wait for the cake to thaw enough to be cut easily. Even her largest and sharpest knife wouldn't cut through the top layer. What was she to do? She used what she had.

After cleaning and disinfecting a small carpenter's hand saw, and in front of her guests, she sawed the cake. Jane said that everyone had a good laugh and enjoyed the dessert.

In another incident, Grandma made tarts for dessert. She placed one tart on the plate for everyone at the table. First, she served the bachelor beside her.

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“Thank you very much,” he said, as he took the plate, set it down in front of him, and ate all the tarts.

Long ago hosts had problems too

How humiliating! How could it have happened? What had gone wrong? They had correctly planned for the number of guests. Perhaps the extra-hot weather had made people more thirsty. However, the worst happened. They ran out of liquid refreshments. Then Jesus performed a miracle. The wedding coordinator tasted the new wine and pronounced it better than what had been served first (John 2:1–10).

In this, His first recorded miracle, Jesus turned a hospitality disaster into a blessing. He gave a lesson to all future Christian hostesses—don’t panic, use what you have; you can survive any hospitality disaster.

There was also a lesson for guests—help, if you can and accept what you find.

*Prayer for when a hospitality disaster strikes:
Dear Lord, I don't have wings to fly away,
so please turn this disaster into a blessing.*