

FaithStay Takes Christian Hospitality to a New Level

In the book of Romans, the apostle Paul exhorts believers to “practice hospitality.” That simple phrase has become the core of Christian travel service FaithStay, a new accommodation website and mobile app, creating a deeper experience between travelers and local Christian homeowners.

FaithStay’s online marketplace allows Christ-followers to rent their entire home, a spare bedroom or even a couch to travelers seeking the love and comforts of a Christian home. Hosts may charge a nightly rental fee or open their homes at no cost.

And early indicators point to the fact FaithStay is on to something. Strategically launching in the major Christian travel hub of Redding, California, in early 2017, hosts have welcomed guests from more than 20 countries and hosted more than 3,000 bed nights. Bethel Church, and its 30-plus annual conferences and thousands of visitors, provided FaithStay with enough response that it has since spread organically to Kansas City, Missouri; Nashville, Tennessee; Los Angeles and another 300 homes across the U.S.

“It’s more than lodging. The act of opening our home is as interwoven in the Christian community as are love and servitude,” FaithStay’s co-founder David Willson says. “Our platform brings a new face to an already living tradition, providing a unified, streamlined means to share Christian hospitality with the world.”

FaithStay continues the benevolent legacy of David Willson, who has spearheaded global homestay programs for some of the world’s preeminent sporting events over the last 25 years. Willson is a devout Christian whose ministry began in 1996

with the Summer Olympic Games in Atlanta when, as director for The Salvation Army's Sports Ministry Department, he was challenged to provide housing for families of Olympic athletes from around the world—approximately 2,000 people. Willson collaborated with local churches and faith-based organizations in Atlanta to relieve the housing dilemma. That success and what transpired thereafter has resulted in more than 24,000 bed nights hosted in collaboration with more than 40 denominations, 7,000 churches and 200 faith-based organizations, successfully bridging the faith community with large secular entities.

"Hospitality is a conduit to sharing faith with the world in an approachable and simple way. You'd be surprised how far a good cup of coffee and a clean room go when you are away from home," Willson said in a recent interview.

While the travelers witness firsthand the depths of God's love, hosts open themselves up to opportunities to embrace new relationships and can personify the gospel through their compassion and generosity.

Willson reiterates why believers are excited to participate in FaithStay. A steady income stream is one initiative, but the most compelling, from the personal testimony of the hosts, is that their busy schedule does not allow them to take a trip to the mission field. Through FaithStay, hosts' homes become their mission field.

FaithStay host Claudia shared, "We are on many of the homesharing websites too. However, we see FaithStay as more than just earning extra income but as our own personal ministry, our way of intentionally showing the love of God."

Another differentiator, when compared to other travel platforms, is that hosts are encouraged to designate a percentage of their rental income as either a tithing to their home church or as a donation to local ministries and rescue

missions. Giving is built directly into FaithStay's platform.

Willson and the FaithStay team are now excited to activate hosts across the U.S. in cities such as Atlanta, Houston, Dallas, Orlando and Charlotte, where there is incredible demand from travelers.

The recent Shasta County wildfires have provided a perfect—albeit very unfortunate—opportunity for believers to open their homes using FaithStay. Through its website and Facebook page, FaithStay is asking individuals and families, in the region, to open their homes—without cost—to the evacuees. Readers can search #HelpRedding, and you can become a host here at .

Willson predicts FaithStay's unique format and benefits will create a witness to God's glory and goodness worldwide. "I see the creation of a legacy of hospitality not just with the guests coming for major sporting events but for guests from around the world who come to town for conferences, mission trips, vacations, disaster relief and other things," Willson says. "Now, there is no limit to the ministry of hosting someone in your home."

Involvement in FaithStay's hospitality movement is easy, Willson said. Simply visit or download the mobile app on either Apple's App Store or Google Play. {eoa}

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