



The Spiritual Practice of Hospitality



Jesus was the ultimate host. He constantly showed hospitality in his ministry. He told his disciples that there was plenty of room for them in God's family: "My Father's house has room to spare. If that weren't the case, would I have told you that I'm going to prepare a place for you?" (John 14:2)

Jesus welcomed everyone into God's family, even those who usually were excluded. We, as Christians, have Jesus as our example. That's why the apostle Paul wrote: "Welcome each other, in the same way that Christ also welcomed you, for God's glory" (Romans 15:7). The author of the Book of Hebrews told Christians: "Keep loving each other like family. Don't neglect to open up your homes to guests, because by doing this some have been hosts to angels without knowing it" (Hebrews 13:1-2).

Hospitality isn't just about being nice or doing what you're supposed to do. When you welcome others, you are imitating Jesus. Hospitality is a spiritual practice because it helps you share God's love with others.

Hospitality looks a little different today than it did in Jesus' time. Back then, people would greet their guests with a kiss, anoint their heads with oil, and invite them to wash their feet. Today, we have other ways of welcoming people. Think about ways you can show hospitality in your own life. Here are some ideas to get you started.

- **Pay attention in conversations.** One great way to show hospitality to anyone you meet is to be a good listener. There are lots of distractions these days that people didn't have to deal with in Jesus' time, such as phone notifications, a television playing in the background, or a constant urge to multitask. These things can get in the way of truly listening to another person. When you want to show hospitality in a conversation, try to minimize distractions so you can be fully present.



- **Share a meal or a snack.** Jesus is our example, and Jesus' hospitality often was centered around food. Who knew spiritual disciplines could be so tasty! If you want to show hospitality through food, try inviting someone you don't know well to eat lunch with you at school. Or see if your classmates want to do a school project over snacks at your house. (Make sure you get your family's approval first.) Or make cupcakes to celebrate your friend's birthday. The possibilities for food-based hospitality are endless.

- **Take another person's point of view.** Everyone has a different experience of life. That means that situations you find completely welcoming might be uncomfortable for others. When you're in social situations, pay attention to people who seem to have trouble connecting. Try to think about the situation from their perspective. Is there anything that might make it easier for them to connect? Do what you can to make the space welcoming for everyone.



These are just a few ways you could practice hospitality. You probably can think of other ways to be hospitable in your specific situation. Write some of your ideas here. Consider trying one out this week!