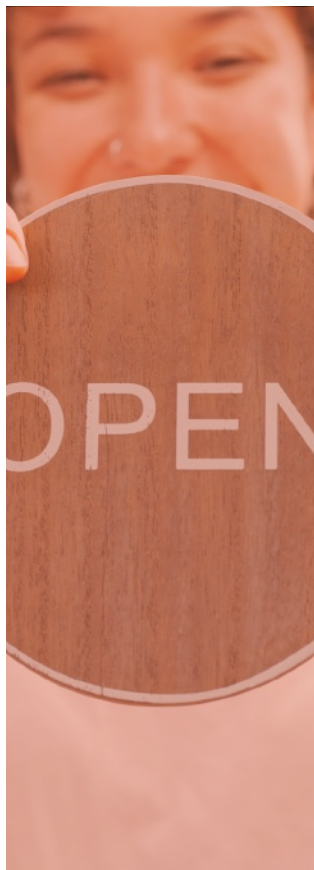


HOSPITALITY

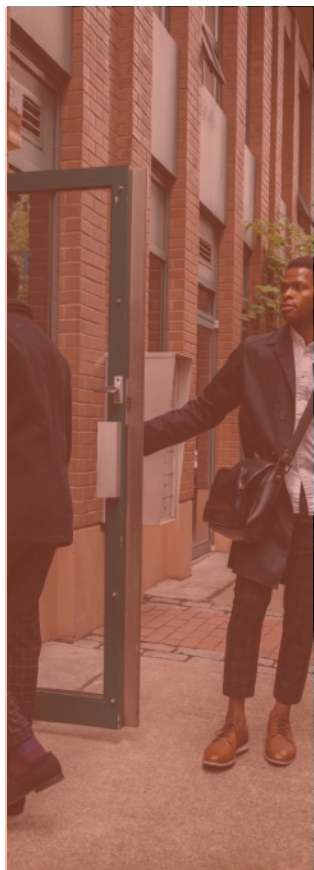
#8

A SPIRITUAL PRACTICES DEVOTIONAL

B/P



BE
KIND



HOSPITALITY

The Christian practice of hospitality is rooted in the teachings of Jesus Christ and exemplified throughout the Bible. At its core, hospitality is the intentional act of welcoming and caring for others with warmth, generosity, and love. It goes beyond simply entertaining guests or opening our homes; it involves creating a safe and inviting space where individuals feel valued, accepted, and seen. Hospitality is a reflection of Christ's selfless love for humanity, as He embraced all people, regardless of their backgrounds or social status. By practicing hospitality, Christians seek to embody Christ's compassion and grace, fostering genuine connections and promoting a sense of belonging within communities.

In the Christian practice of hospitality, believers are encouraged to extend their love and care not only to those they know but also to strangers and those in need. This mirrors the biblical call to "love your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:31), as well as to "show hospitality to strangers, for by doing so, some have entertained angels unawares" (Hebrews 13:2). Hospitality is not limited to physical provisions but encompasses emotional support, listening ears, and genuine interest in others' lives. By practicing hospitality, Christians create an atmosphere of warmth and acceptance, where individuals can experience God's love and grace in tangible ways. This practice not only fosters stronger relationships and a sense of community but also allows Christians to live out their faith in a tangible and impactful manner, serving as Christ's ambassadors to a world in need of love and compassion.

Day 36: The Heart of Hospitality

READ: 1 Peter 4:9 "Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling."

THINK: Hospitality is not just about hosting grand events or preparing lavish meals; it is about opening our hearts and homes to others with genuine love and joy. The Christian practice of hospitality is rooted in God's heart for community and sacrificial love. As we welcome others into our lives, we mirror Christ's unconditional love for us. In a world that often feels cold and disconnected, hospitality can be a powerful way to show Christ's love and bring warmth to others' lives. Let us embrace hospitality as an invitation to cultivate relationships and create a warm space for others to experience God's love.

DO: Consider the attitude of your heart when it comes to practicing hospitality. Reflect on any grumbling or reluctance you may have. This week, intentionally invite someone into your home, whether a friend, or a neighbour, and offer them a warm welcome. If that is too difficult, practice hospitality wherever you find yourself (work, school, or running errands). As you interact with individuals, listen attentively to their stories, struggles, and joys. Practice showing genuine interest and care, seeking to understand their hearts. Remember, hospitality begins with a receptive and compassionate heart. Write down any observations from those encounters below.

"The first service one owes to others in the fellowship consists in listening to them. Just as love to God begins with listening to His Word, so the beginning of love for the brethren is learning to listen to them."

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Day 37: Welcoming the Stranger

READ: **Hebrews 13:2** "Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it."

THINK: At BP, one of our core values is to *Love Those Not Like You*. Hospitality is not limited to those we already know; it extends to the stranger in need. In biblical times, people welcomed strangers not knowing if they were angels in disguise. This reminds us that our acts of hospitality can have profound spiritual significance. By embracing the stranger, we seek to be like Christ, who extended love and grace to all, regardless of their background. When we welcome the unfamiliar, we break down barriers and build bridges of understanding and compassion. Let us actively seek out opportunities to welcome and serve those who may feel like outsiders, offering them the love and acceptance that Christ has shown us.

DO: Reflect on the importance of welcoming and showing kindness to strangers. Consider ways in which you can reach out and connect with those who are new or unfamiliar to you. Pray for open eyes and a compassionate heart to recognize opportunities to extend hospitality to those around you. Perhaps reach out to a newcomer at church, your workplace, or community group and offer to grab a coffee or have a meal together.

"Hospitality means primarily the creation of free space where the stranger can enter and become a friend instead of an enemy."

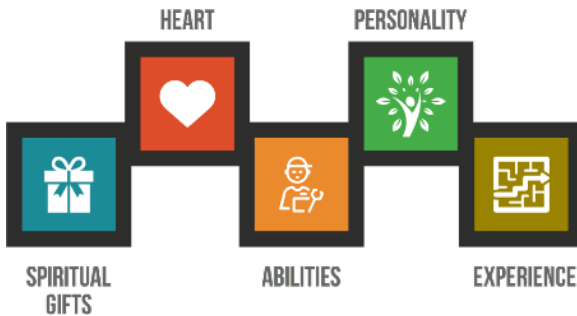
- Henri Nouwen

Day 38: A Reflection of God's Love

READ: **1 Peter 4:10-11** "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ."

THINK: As followers of Christ, we are called to be good stewards of God's grace, and one powerful way to do that is through the practice of hospitality. 1 Peter 4:10-11 reminds us that each of us has been uniquely gifted to serve others. Whether it is through words of encouragement, acts of kindness, or providing a welcoming space for others, we have the opportunity to extend God's love and grace to those around us. When we engage in hospitality with the strength and guidance that God provides, we become vessels of His love, reflecting His character to a world in need. Let us approach hospitality as an act of worship, recognizing that by serving others in this way, we bring glory to God and create opportunities for people to encounter Him through our actions.

DO: Reflect on how your practice of hospitality can be an expression of God's love to others. Take inventory of the unique gifts, talents, and passions that God has given to you. How could you use those gifts in showing hospitality, compassion, and grace to others?



"True hospitality is marked by an open heart, a generous spirit, and a willingness to embrace those in need."

- Timothy Keller

Day 39: Cultivating a Hospitable Attitude

READ: Colossians 3:12-14 "Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity."

THINK: True hospitality begins with cultivating a hospitable attitude. This involves living out the virtues outlined in Colossians 3:12-14. When we clothe ourselves with compassion, kindness, and humility, we create an environment where others can feel welcomed. Patience and forgiveness enable us to navigate the complexities of relationships without giving in to judgment or holding onto grudges. Above all, love serves as the foundation of hospitality, binding all these virtues together. Let us daily seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit to grow in these Christ-like qualities and reflect them in our interactions with others.

DO: Throughout the day, practice being patient and kind with everyone you encounter, *even in challenging situations*. Seek to understand the perspectives of others and extend grace where it's needed. If there's any unresolved conflict with someone, take steps towards reconciliation and forgiveness, letting love guide your actions. Record any observations below from those encounters.

"Hospitality is not to change people, but to offer them space where change can take place."

- Henri Nouwen

Day 40: A Legacy of Hospitality

READ: 1 Corinthians 16:14 "Do everything in love."

Romans 12:13 "Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality."

THINK: As we conclude this devotional on hospitality, let us remember that hospitality is not a one-time act but a way of life. It is a continuous expression of Christ's love flowing through us. When we live with a heart of love and hospitality, we leave a lasting impact on those around us. May our homes be places of refuge and healing, and our lives be marked by a genuine concern for others. Let us strive to be vessels of God's love, demonstrating His hospitality to a world in need.

DO: Think about the hospitality you have experienced in your life and the impact it had on you. Commit to leaving a similar legacy by intentionally practicing hospitality every day. Look for opportunities to extend kindness, welcome others into your life, and create an atmosphere of love and grace. Remember, every small act of hospitality can make a significant difference in someone's life and draw them closer to the love of Christ. Read Acts 2:42-44 and see how the early church practiced community and circle any words or phrases that speak to showing hospitality and community living.

"And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved." (Acts 2:42-47, ESV)

"Christian hospitality offers a glimpse of the eternal feast in the kingdom of God."

- Kathleen Norris

