

## Exploring Biblical Hospitality: Syllabus

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MEADS: November 8–12, 6:30–9:00 p.m. (CST)

### COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Through course readings, discussions, and writing assignments, this class explores the biblical art of hospitality—the obligation of disciples to care for physical, social, and spiritual needs—and of welcoming strangers and guests into individual and corporate fellowship by creating a space for others to enter and be received as a friend.

In addition to the theoretical discussions, we explore several scripture texts with questions for individual or group reflection and study examples from Community of Christ of hospitality in practice. With a guest representing Harmony, we will explore ways to be hospitable and inclusive of members of the LGBTQIA+ community. Students will complete a gifts assessment questionnaire to better understand their spiritual gifts.

### OBJECTIVES:

1. Define hospitality to include biblical concepts from ancient understandings to lived expressions in today's church experience.
2. Explore scriptural texts related to hospitality.
3. Consider ways to be welcoming and inclusive of many different groups of people; and explore areas where you might be uncomfortable extending a welcome in your personal life and within the congregation and in ministry opportunities.
4. Identify your personal spiritual gifts through a Gifts Discovery Questionnaire.

### READING MATERIALS

#### Required:

*Hospitality: Sharing God's Welcome*, by Tammy Lindle, (Herald Publishing House, 2006, ISBN: 9780830912452) Available from Herald House: [https://www.heraldhouse.org/products/hospitality-sharing-gods-welcome?\\_pos=1&\\_sid=e604bdfde&\\_ss=r](https://www.heraldhouse.org/products/hospitality-sharing-gods-welcome?_pos=1&_sid=e604bdfde&_ss=r)

#### Optional:

*A Christian View of Hospitality: Expecting Surprises*, Michele Hershberger, Herald Press, 1999, ISBN: 0836191099)

*And You Welcomed Me: A Sourcebook on Hospitality in Early Christianity*, Amy G. Oden, editor (Abingdon Press, 2001, ISBN: 0687096715)

*Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition*, Christine D. Pohl, (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999, ISBN: 0802844316)

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

- Complete all the readings prior to the first day of class.
- Complete the Gifts Discovery Questionnaire prior to the first day of class.

- Attend all class sessions and be ready to engage (having done the readings).
- Complete two short writing assignments by the end of class.

#### Pre-class assignments

- Read *Hospitality: Sharing God's Welcome*.
- Complete the "Gifts Discovery Questionnaire" prior to the first day of class.

#### Post-class assignments

- Write a Prayer for Peace (following the guidelines below) that includes aspects of hospitality learned in the class.
- Write a personal story for the *Daily Bread* blog (following the guidelines below) that explores an aspect of hospitality as experienced in your life or ministry.

### **Prayer for Peace**

The Prayer for Peace is the centerpiece of the Daily Prayer for Peace service. Approximately 1½–3 minutes long, the prayer expresses the yearning of the gathered community for wholeness in relationships between humanity, creation, and the Creator.

- The prayer may be written in prose, or it may be poetry.
- It should not include a specific country but be universal.
- It should use inclusive language.
- Be aware that while we are a Christian denomination sponsoring this prayer, the desire for peace is universal.
- Prayers are attributed to their authors. Prayers submitted become the property of Community of Christ.

#### **Here are two sample prayers:**

by Ray Hogue, Joplin, MO

O Lord, let us sense peace in the beauty of our worship.  
 Let us speak peace in our interpersonal relationships.  
 Let us hear peace in the midst of confusion.  
 Let us feel peace when we are touched by your Holy Spirit.

Let us hope for peace in the seas of hopelessness.  
 Let us sue for peace in the humane treatment of our little ones.  
 Let us respect peace in the wise lives of our elders.  
 Let us affirm peace as we accept the struggles of our youth.

Let us honor peace by being ethical persons in all walks of life.  
 Lord, let us follow peace to whatever person, situation or cross it leads us.  
 In the name of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, we pray. Amen.

by Sheryl Holstein, Roswell, Georgia

Dear God,

We confess to times of insensitivity, ignorance, judgment, indifference, hatred, and greed. Help us tear down the walls that separate us from each other. Lord, let us see you in the faces of our brothers and sisters. Let us hear the cries of the frightened.

Living on every continent are those who are oppressed, hungry, and heavy laden. As we merge in your love, help us unfold the red bud of passion as we become a people of compassion. Let us keep the Lamp of Life burning. Free us from our own limitations that we might free others. Renew in us your Spirit, that we might be faithful to each other in your love.

Together we can build your community in our hearts, with our minds, words, and deeds. May our hands join, our minds unite, and our hearts beat as one.

This is our prayer of peace. We lay it at your feet that it may be acceptable, and we all might be healed in your love.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

## Daily Bread Writers Guide

### Guidelines for Writing

- Maximum Length: 300-350 words
- Write from your own context to a global audience. Members and Friends from around the world subscribe to Daily Bread. Be mindful of culturally specific references and images as you write.
- Write in your own voice, as a representative of Community of Christ. Daily Bread is a ministry of Community of Christ, which seeks to embody the identity, message, mission, and beliefs of the church through diverse expression of voices and stories. For further guidance review our Who We Are webpage.
- It is important that the writing be your own work, using only very general paraphrases of copyrighted materials, if at all. The sources of any specific quotes must be referenced in detail.
- The Daily Bread editing team chooses the daily photo, scripture, and spiritual practice. You do not need to include these with your story, but you are welcome to suggest a scripture if it has relevance for your story.
- All material submitted is subject to editing and approval and will be copyrighted by Community of Christ for use including, but not limited to, print, film, electronic media, and reproduction or digital representation on the internet.
- You may consider submitting stories, poetry, or reflections.

### Prompts for Story Submissions

Consider these questions as prompts for sharing your story with the Daily Bread community!

- When have you been most aware of the presence of God?
- How has your image or experience of God changed over time?
- How have you experienced growth in your spiritual journey?
- When have you been surprised by the Spirit?
- What sustains you in difficult or uncertain times?
- When have you witnessed the Enduring Principles or Mission Initiatives in action?  
(<https://www.cofchrist.org/who-we-are>)
- How have you been formed through the themes and invitations of the Christian Seasons (Advent, Lent, Easter, Epiphany, Pentecost, Ordinary Time)?