

# It•takespractice

NURTURING FAITH AND VITALITY THROUGH SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

## THE PRACTICE OF HOSPITALITY

in preparation for Sunday June 26, 2011

### DAILY BIBLE READINGS

MON: 1 John 4.7-21

TUES: Luke 16.19-31

WED: Psalm 23; Deut 8.6-10

THUR: Lev 19.33-34; Deut 10.17-19

FRI: Luke 14.15-24

- What does this passage say to you about the nature of God's love?
- What is challenging in this passage about your own attitudes and responses to others?

### PRAYER

Open my eyes that they may see the deepest needs of people. Touch my heart that it may bring warmth to the despairing. Teach me the generosity that welcomes strangers. Let me share my possessions to clothe the naked. Give me the care that strengthens the sick. Make me share in the quest to set the prisoner free. In sharing our anxieties and our love, our poverty and our prosperity, we partake of your divine presence.

*Canaan Banana, Zimbabwe*

### IT'S TIME TO PRACTICE

1. Identify someone in the CSBC congregation who represents a culture, life-stage, or life experience very different to your own. Make arrangements to share a meal of a coffee together and listen to their stories of faith and life.
2. Rent the movie *Babette's Feast* (1987) or *Chocolat* (2000) and arrange to view it with friends. Afterwards, have a conversation about the nature and power of hospitality as depicted in the film and what implications this has for the church.

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

'When most of us practice hospitality, we typically welcome those with whom we already have some established bonds and significant common ground. Hospitality builds and reinforces relationships among family, friends, and acquaintances. It is one of the pleasures of ordinary life.'

'Hospitality to the stranger, however, is a different challenge. Strangers, in the strict sense, are those who are disconnected from basic relationships that give persons a secure place in the world. The most vulnerable strangers are detached from family, community, church, work and polity. This is most clearly seen in the homeless and the refugee.'

'When we offer hospitality to strangers, we welcome them into a place in which we are somehow connected—a space that has meaning and value to us. ... In hospitality, the stranger is welcomed into a safe, personal and comfortable place, a place of respect and acceptance and friendship. Even if only briefly, the stranger is included in a life-giving and life-sustaining network of relations. Such welcome involves attentive listening and a mutual sharing of lives and life stories. It requires an openness of heart, a willingness to make one's life visible to others, and a generosity of time and resources.'

'A life of hospitality is much less about dramatic gestures than it is about steady work—faithful labour that is undergirded by prayer and sustained by grace. When hosts are nourished in the midst of providing hospitality, they find an internal peace essential for making others feel comfortable, safe and welcome in their presence.'

*Christine Pohl, Making Room*