



WEEKLY STUDY

Week Eight

Our summer series called Pathways is introducing eight practices that help us get closer to the heart of God. So far, we've explored the practices of solitude, fasting, worship, studying God's Word, spiritual friendship, service, and simplicity. This week we learned about the pathway of hospitality.

If you are studying with your Providence Small Group, you can share from daily readings as well as the additional questions at the bottom of this guide. If you would like to get connected to a Providence Small Group visit prov.church/signup and click on Small Groups.

Find a time each day to read the passage of scripture. Follow the daily prayer prompt and then pray this or your own prayer.

*God, you welcome us as little children.
Through Jesus, you have swung wide the glimmering gates of Heaven.
May we welcome others as we welcome Christ---as Christ has welcomed us.
Amen.*

DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: MARK 6.39-44

Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. ⁴⁰ So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties. ⁴¹ Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to distribute to the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. ⁴² They all ate and were satisfied, ⁴³ and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish. ⁴⁴ The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand.

- While it is true that feeding your audience well helps in gaining their trust and attention (ask any preschool teacher!), Jesus went above and beyond to be lavish with the gift of hospitality. He miraculously provided more than enough. Have you ever felt like you would run out of resources for hospitality? Scarcity-mindset can be the enemy of true hospitality. As a follower of Jesus, the spirit of Christ lives in you. Maybe you have more than enough too?
- *Pray for an abundance-mindset so that you might see opportunities for hospitality.*

TUESDAY: HEBREWS 13.1-2

Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters. ² Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.

- The truth is, we don't know all there is to know about the stranger God places in our path. It's easy to judge a person by first impressions, but sometimes there is an angel hiding under the surface. The writer of Hebrews is saying that we ought to treat others as if they are each a gift from God (because in some way, they are!).
- *Pray for eyes to see the angels who are masquerading as strangers all around.*

WEDNESDAY: LEVITICUS 19.33-34

When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. ³⁴ The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the LORD your God.

- The practice of hospitality begins to break down our sense of who belongs and who doesn't. The person wandering through town may look very much like you did once. Are you in a position to show a radical kind of hospitality to those who others are avoiding or maligning?
- *Pray for those who feel out of place and disconnected where they live. Ask God to give you a heart for the foreigners in your daily life.*

THURSDAY: 2 KINGS 4.8-10

One day Elisha went to Shunem. And a well-to-do woman was there, who urged him to stay for a meal. So whenever he came by, he stopped there to eat. ⁹ She said to her husband, "I know that this man who often comes our way is a holy man of God. ¹⁰ Let's make a small room on the roof and put in it a bed and a table, a chair and a lamp for him. Then he can stay there whenever he comes to us."

- Elijah was shown a hospitality that impacted his future travels. The woman's hospitality gave him a sense of belonging and security. Her hospitality expanded over time to the point where she added on to her house to make space for the traveler who served God.
- *Pray through the spaces in your life. Your home, your workplace, all the places where you spend time. Pray for God to show you creative uses for the gift of space that you might share with others.*

FRIDAY: ACTS 16.15

When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.

- Timothy, Paul and Silas were instrumental in the conversion of a woman named Lydia, who was a strong business woman. She would become a key figure and leader in the church. Her immediate response to her baptism was to insist on hospitality for these servants of Jesus Christ.
- *As you pray, picture those who have played a role in your own faith. Are there some for whom you might still have an opportunity to show gratitude through hospitality?*

SATURDAY: HEBREWS 13.15-16

Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that openly profess his name.¹⁶ And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

- Worship is deeply connected to our desire and ability to do good and to share with others. Hebrews calls it a continuation of our sacrifices--a form of worship. A sacrifice of praise and a sacrifice of hospitality lead to a full life and response to who God is.
- *Pray for integrity between your heart of worship and your heart to show hospitality to others.*

- Small Group Discussion Questions will Resume in August -