



Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

Romans 12:9-13



First Missionary Baptist Church
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Pastor Emeritus Rev. Dr. Julius R. Scruggs

**40+ DAYS OF
HOSPITALITY
LENT 2023**

40+ DAYS OF HOSPITALITY

WEEK

- 1 Hospitality Begins With Awe**
- 2 Hospitality Creates A Safe Space**
- 3 Hospitality Makes Room**
- 4 Hospitality Is A Spiritual Weapon**
- 5 Hospitality Is Relational**
- 6 Hospitality Offers Acceptance**
- 7 Hospitality Offers Salvation**

What You Will Need

- A quiet uninterrupted place**
- Bible**
- Journal w/pen or pencil**
- The So Send I You Devotional**

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

This 40 Days of Hospitality Meditation and Calendar Guide recommends that you use the *So Send I You Devotional* as a Companion. Read pages 1-11 in the *So Send I You Devotional* journal as you prepare to enter into your 40 days of fasting and meditating on the practice of hospitality and other topics that will guide you in becoming a more spiritually mature believer.

You will need a quiet place to spend time reading the meditation, a journal and a pen/pencil. Take time each day to journal what God reveals to you during your time of reflection. You will be invited to practice a form of hospitality each day using the calendar following the weekly meditation.

Over the next 40 days notice times when you are resistant, encouraged, comforted, convicted etc., these are formation invitations.

Share what God is speaking to you, how your life is being transformed while you are on this 40 day journey. Go to our FB page and create a post #40dohfmbc and share your testimony of God's transforming power thru the meditations.

Remember to set aside \$1 per day (\$40) total as a lent missions offering to So Send I You Inc. We will collect these gifts on Resurrection Sunday.

All meditations were written by FMBC Staff Minister Joycelyn L. Lewis

YOUR 40+ DAY JOURNEY BEGINS

My Lenten Prayer

**Knowing that this is a journey that I do not
walk alone,
With your help this lent,**

**Lord Jesus,
I give you my hands to do Your work
I give You my feet to go Your way.
I give You my eyes to see as You do.
I give You my tongue to speak Your words.
I give You my mind that You may think in me.
I give You my spirit that You may pray in me.**

**Above all,
I give you my heart that You may love in me,
Your Father, and all humanity.
I give You my whole self that
You may grow in me,
so that it is You, Lord Jesus, who live
and work and pray in me.**

Prayer from the Grail

THE JOURNEY BEGINS

Write a prayer to the Lord as you begin your Lenten journey. In what areas of your life do you want to see transformed, what are you giving up, what fruit of the Spirit do you want Him to form in you? In what ways will you become more committed to God, your family, your church, your service?



HOSPITALITY BEGINS WITH AWE

Hospitality doesn't begin with an act. It begins with awe. Awe is a disposition of the heart that makes us present to promptings of the Holy Spirit to be hospitable. Awe reorients us to the One who is the source of our peace of heart and mind. The disposition of awe forms faith, hope, and love in us. We demonstrate awe when we experience an inspiration to be in awe-filled abiding attention to the Holy. It is not an emotion but an encounter with the One who formed us in our mother's womb, the one who knows us and loves us. The disposition of awe allows us to behold and contemplate what is good, true, and beautiful in every human being, in all His creation, and the situations in our lives.

We experience awe in moments of inner stillness; in humility, we bow before the eternal mystery of redemptive love. We receive the grace and mercy of His forgiveness. In awe-filled abiding attention, we become speechless as we accept the gifts of faith, hope, and love that woo us into an intimate relationship with the Holy Trinity. We become so caught up in the radiance of redemption that dispels the darkness of our sin that we thank God for the salvation we receive in our everyday lives. This makes us hospitable to the Spirit; we then become open and receptive to practice hospitality to the stranger. We open our hearts, homes, and lives to the stranger because we remember that we were once a stranger to God (Ephesians 2:12-13), and He has opened His heart, His home, and His life to us.

Reflection:

The spiritual discipline of contemplation, silence, and solitude cultivates the disposition of awe in our hearts. Find a quiet place alone, and set a timer for 5 minutes. Sit in silence. Then read Psalm 145 aloud. What are the attributes of God in the passage? In what ways were/are you a stranger to God? In what ways have you experienced God's forgiveness, grace, love, and mercy?

Conclude your time with God by writing a prayer of response to the Lord.

FEBRUARY

22 Practice Silence & Solitude 5 Min.

Evening: Read the So Send I You Devotional

23 Practice Silence & Solitude 10 Min.

Read the So Send I You Devotional

24 Join the 7:00 a.m. prayer call

Read the So Send I You Devotional

25 Practice Solitude and Silence 15 min.

Read the So Send I You Devotional

26 Seek & Sit w/someone you don't know

Exchange phone numbers set a day and time to talk this week.

27 Practice Solitude & Silence 20 min.

Read the So Send I You Devotional

28 Join the 5:00 a.m. prayer call

Read the So Send I You Devotional



HOSPITALITY CREATES A SAFE PLACE

WEEK 2

The essence of hospitality is a heart open to God, with room prepared for the Guestness of the Holy Spirit, that welcomes the presence of Christ. This is what we share with those to whom we open our doors. We give them him.

Karen Burton Mains

Hospitality creates a safe, open space where a friend or stranger can enter and experience the welcoming Spirit of Christ in another. As believers, we are all called to be safe people who offer grace, shelter, and the presence of Jesus to others. Romans 15:7 states, “Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.” We have all been the stranger wandering in the darkness of our sin and despair, but the Father sent Christ to welcome us into His kingdom so that we would experience his most precious gift, the gift of salvation.

We have received a banquet table filled with the bread of life, the fruit of his Spirit, the meat of His Word, and the drink of his living water. And as we eat and drink all He has to offer us, we will never hunger or thirst again. He knew that we were hungry and thirsty. We were in the prison of our sins, spiritually sick and naked with our sins exposed to the enemy who seeks to devour us. He became a safe place for us. He opened his arms and said, “Come all who are thirsty, come to the waters” (Isaiah 55:1), because all who comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty (John 6:35)”.

Because He opens His arms to us and prepares a feast for us, we, too, are called to open our arms to all who are in need. Those needs could be practical, like food, clothing, and shelter. Those needs could be spiritual, like sharing the Gospel with someone who is unsaved or a believer who wants to learn how to live out their faith.

We are called to be safe people, and we are called to create safe places where others can come and experience the presence of Christ.

Reflection: In what ways can you be a safe person for others?

MARCH

WEEK 2

1 Bring Canned Goods To Bible Study

Bring and/or invite someone to Family Night Bible Study

Evening: Read Day 7 in the So Send I You Devotional

2 Invite Someone Over For Dinner

Call someone and set a date & time to have dinner at your house

Read the So Send I You Devotional

3 Join the 7:00 a.m. prayer call

Read the So Send I You Devotional.

4 Take Someone Out to Lunch

Evening: Read in the So Send I You Devotional.

5 Seek & Sit w/someone you do not know

Exchange phone numbers set a day and time to talk this week.

6 Practice Silence & Solitude 10 min.

Evening: Read The So Send I You Devotional

7 Join the 5:00 a.m. prayer call

Read the So Send I You Devotional



HOSPITALITY MAKES ROOM

For I was hungry, and you gave me food, I was thirsty, and you gave me drink; I was a stranger, and you welcomed me; I was naked, and you clothed me; I was sick, and you visited me, I was in prison, and you came to me.'

Matthew 25:42-43

Hospitality accommodates. Accommodating someone means you will make room for them and provide something someone desires or needs.

Most recently, I took a trip to Dunkin' Donuts, and while I was sitting in the drive-thru, I was doing what most people do, looking at my phone, checking e-mails, and scanning Facebook. When I pulled up to the drive-thru, I noticed a man sitting on the sidewalk about two feet from the drive-thru. He was looking weary and disheveled. Our eyes met. I saw it. Shame. I nodded with a slight smile because I was trying to determine God's invitation. He didn't have a sign, he wasn't asking for anything, but he looked like a man in need. Do I purchase some food or give him the cash I had in my purse? I was led to provide him with money.

When I handed him the money, I looked him in the eyes, smiled, and said, God bless you. His eyes lit up. I saw it. Surprise. Joy. Gratitude. No shame. Matthew 25:42-43 is more than a list of "to-do's." They are examples of what happens when we make room for strangers. Needs and wants are met.

There's no doubt that making room for the stranger bears fruit in the stranger's heart and ours because we are the same in that moment of serving and being served. Human.

Reflection:

How can you prepare to make room for the strangers you will meet along your life's journey?

MARCH

WEEK 3

8 Bring Canned Goods To Bible Study

*Bring and/or invite someone to family night Bible Study
Evening: Read in the So Send I You Devotional*

9 Volunteer at the Rescue Mission

*Read So Send I You Devotional
Call 256-532-0231 to determine when you can volunteer*

10 Join the 7:00 a.m. prayer call

*Read the So Send I You Devotional.
Invite someone over to your house for dinner*

11 Go grocery shopping for a senior adult

Read The So Send I You Devotional

12 Seek & Sit w/someone you don't know

Exchange phone numbers set a day and time to talk this week.

13 Practice Silence & Solitude 15 min.

Evening: Read the So Send I You Devotional

14 Join the 5:00 a.m. prayer call

Read The So Send I You Devotional



HOSPITALITY Is A Spiritual Weapon

"But to you who are listening, I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.

..... "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. ...But love your enemies...Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked.

Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful."

Luke 6:27-28, 32-33, 35a,c,-36

One of the greatest tools that the enemy uses is division. The division between husbands and wives, parents and children, people of different races, cultures, backgrounds, or socioeconomic statuses, and even in the body of Christ. The goal of the enemy is to create a division that causes separation. Division quenches the Spirit and hinders the Great Commission. How can we go to every nation, to every person proclaiming the Good News of reconciliation when we separate ourselves from certain people?

When we are hospitable to all people, we put a halt to the enemy's scheme to divide, and we practice the unifying presence of Christ. Hospitality is the spiritual weapon that fights against disunity. This spiritual weapon compels us to go to people in our families, communities, churches, etc., and practice unifying hospitality. We don't pick and choose whom we love and whom we help. We choose to use our weapon of hospitality by showing mercy to all, even our enemies.

Reflection:

- 1.What action will you take today to practice hospitality towards someone who has offended you, seems unlovable, or you see as your enemy? Send them a card and offer them a smile. Let us use the hospitality weapon to destroy the enemy's works to divide.

MARCH

15 Bring Canned Goods To Bible Study

*Bring and/or invite someone to family night Bible Study
Evening Read The So Send I You Devotional*

16 Send a card to someone in prison

*Read So Send I You Devotional
See the last page of this guide for addresses*

17 Join the 7:00 a.m. prayer call

*Read the So Send I You Devotional.
Invite someone over to your house for dinner*

18 Send a card to someone in the military

Read the So Send I You Devotional

19 Seek & Sit w/someone you don't know

Exchange phone numbers set a day and time to talk this week.

20 Practice Solitude & Silence 20 min.

Evening: Read the So Send I You Devotional

21 Join the 5:00 a.m. prayer call

Read the So Send I You Devotional



HOSPITALITY IS RELATIONAL

Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.

Romans 12:10

Every person born was born to be in a relationship with our Creator and to be in a relationship with others. As believers, we are "many members" but one body. We are a part of the family of God. There can be no lone-ranger Christians. We are to grow together and serve God together. Scripture says two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor. If either of them falls, one can help the other up. We are to encourage and build one another up (I Thessalonians 5:11); when we are in a relationship, we help one another stand against the enemy's schemes. We edify one another towards Christian maturity.

We are relational when we practice hospitality with strangers, our family, friends, co-workers, and those in our community and churches. We focus on what we have in common and don't allow our differences to divide us. We don't judge, we forgive, we listen, and we are compassionate. We seek first to understand the other person rather than be understood and honor others above ourselves. We make ourselves friendly to a stranger who is often alone and lonely. We become devoted to them, don't give up on them, welcome them into our homes and lives, and offer our hospitality without grumbling (1 Peter 4:9). We show our love for God by showing our love for them.

Reflection:

In what areas of your life are you attempting to do life alone? How can you become more connected to the community of Faith so that you can be built up in the Lord?

Whom do you know that could be experiencing loneliness? Reach out to them and show yourself friendly.

MARCH

22 Bring Canned Goods To Bible Study

Bring/and or invite someone to family night Bible Study

Evening: Read the So Send I You Devotional

23 Ask a cashier how you can pray for them

Read the So Send I You Devotional

24 Join the 7:00 a.m. prayer call

Read the So Send I You Devotional

25 Donate to Christian Job Corps

Bring business attire to FMBC donate to Christian Job Corps
10am

Read the So Send I You Devotional

26 Seek & Sit w/someone you don't know

Exchange phone numbers set a day and time to talk this week.

27 Practice Solitude & Silence 20 min.

Evening: Read the So Send I You Devotional

28 Join the 5:00 a.m. prayer call

Read the So Send I You Devotional



HOSPITALITY OFFERS ACCEPTANCE

**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.
Leviticus 19:33-34**

God gives His people precise instructions about how we are to treat strangers. A stranger doesn't have to be someone we see on the street; it could be anyone we do not know personally, at our jobs, school, or church. God tells His people to treat them as though they are not strangers. Treat them like they are accepted. Why? Because there was a time when they were foreigners and were mistreated. They were not accepted in Egypt. They were rejected. They were judged and they were treated harshly. Hospitality accepts the stranger.

Reflection:

We must ask ourselves, "How do we treat the stranger? How am I treating someone I don't know? In what ways could I be mistreating them?"

What specific actions can you take to practice hospitality with a stranger so they will not feel mistreated?

MARCH/APRIL

29 Bring Canned Goods To Bible Study

Bring/and or invite someone to family night Bible Study
Evening: Read the *So Send I You Devotional*

30 Buy someone coffee

Join us at 1:00 p.m. at FMBC to create food boxes
Read the *So Send I You Devotional*

31 Join the 7:00 a.m. prayer call

Join us at 6:00 p.m. at FMBC to create food boxes
Read the *So Send I You Devotional*

1 Feed The Homeless

Join us at 9:00 a.m. to feed the homeless
Read the *So Send I You Devotional*

2 Seek & Sit w/someone you don't know

Exchange phone numbers set a day and time to talk this week.

3 Practice Solitude & Silence 20 min.

Read the *So Send I You Devotional*

4 Join the 5:00 a.m. prayer call

Read the *So Send I You Devotional*



HOSPITALITY OFFERS SALVATION

WEEK 7

Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.

John 4:13

Jesus was resting by a well. He was tired, but he recognized an invitation to practice Hospitality. In this one encounter, Jesus exhibits all the attributes of Hospitality that we have had the opportunity to practice over these past 40 days.

Jesus is inviting the woman to turn her eyes in **awe** upon the gift the Father has to offer (John 4:10). Then he creates a **safe place** for the Samaritan woman to have a conversation; he doesn't dismiss her; he **makes room for her**. Even though he's tired, he is willing to overcome the limitations of being tired to converse with a lonely woman whom a Jewish man would generally reject. This encounter is a **spiritual weapon**; **Jesus** does not allow the differences in their race or gender to hinder himself from sharing the Good News; he is the Messiah and has living water. The enemies' scheme to make her feel rejected has been thwarted. The conversation is **relational**; **he's** listening and knows about her sinful situation, yet he **accepts** her. He continues in the dialogue and discloses to her that he is the Messiah. At that moment, her **salvation** had arrived!

Jesus' simple act of practicing Hospitality to a woman at the well did not only bring salvation to her, but his act of Hospitality brought salvation to many other Samaritans. The Great Commission had been fulfilled in one woman's life through Hospitality.

Reflection:

As you conclude your 40 days of Hospitality, could you reflect on the past seven weeks? What were your experiences? In what ways is God inviting you to be more hospitable?

APRIL

WEEK 7

5 Bring Canned Goods To Bible Study

Bring/and or invite someone to family night Bible Study
Read the So Send I You Devotional

6 Pay for a strangers groceries or gas

Read the *So Send I You Devotional*

7 Join the 7:00 a.m. prayer call

Read the *So Send I You Devotional*

8 Witness to those in our Community

Join the witnessing team at 10:00 a.m. as we witness to those in Mt. Vernon Neighborhood & Read the So Send I You Devotional

9 Bring \$40 for the So Send I You Lenten missions offering

REFLECTIONS

- In what ways has your life been transformed these past 40+ days?
- Spend time journaling about those transformative moments.
- What commitments are you going to make?
- What has God invited you to surrender?
- What has God invited you to cling to?

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