

## The Ministry of Hospitality

Yours is the first of Christ's faces  
to greet God's people  
as they assemble for prayer.

Your greeting of welcome  
is the first wish that "The Lord be with you!"

Yours is the word  
that welcomes the stranger to be at home,  
or the silence  
that makes of our assembly a foreign land.

Yours is the task of discretion:  
knowing how to welcome, and,  
when and where, to seat the latecomer.

Yours may be the last word  
that ushers the community  
to its week of work in the Lord's vineyard.

Yours is the Lord's face and voice  
for those who enter and depart  
the holy ground of prayer.

Come to your work and your  
post from your personal prayer;  
be as ready as the Lord to meet His people.

Let your welcome and your smile  
be for all who enter;  
remember that you will have time  
to see your close friends later in the week.

Seek out the lost and confused;  
do not wait for them to come to you.

When appropriate,  
lend a hand and an arm to the disabled,  
remembering your own infirmities.

Greet each person as the Lord,  
for that is precisely whom you meet.

When taking up the collection,  
remember  
that it is for the work of God's people,  
especially among the poor;  
remember, too,  
that many who make an offering  
are themselves the poor.

Remember that you stand at the temple gates:  
some will come rejoicing,  
and others in fear;  
some will come healed,  
and others to seek that healing.

Be sensitive,  
and welcome all as best you can.

Some will rush by and ignore you:  
let go of your disappointment  
and pray for the Lord's gentle touch  
on their heavy or hurried hearts.

Some may fall ill while at prayer;  
see to their needs  
as you would have them see to yours.

Be slow to judge those that leave early:  
be glad that they have shared in our prayer  
and recall that only the Lord  
knows the reasons of the heart.

When your brothers and sisters  
thank and praise you for your work,  
take delight  
in the welcome they have found,  
and rejoice in the work  
the Lord has accomplished through you.

Be faithful in the work you do,  
for through it the Lord saves His people.