

If there is famine in the land, if there is plague, blight, mildew, locust, or caterpillar; if their enemy besieges them in any of their cities; whatever plague, whatever sickness there is; whatever prayer, whatever plea there is from any individual or from all your people Israel, all knowing the afflictions of their own hearts so that they stretch out their hands toward this house; then hear in heaven your dwelling place, forgive, act, and render to all whose hearts you know.<sup>2</sup>

I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?' Then he will answer, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.'<sup>3</sup>

### 1. Desire I desire to be a person of warm Welcome.

I prepare a beverage, tea, coffee or another warm drink, that I would normally offer to welcome a guest and make them feel at home. I hold it remembering all the times and ways I have warmly welcomed both friends and strangers.

Alternatively, I find a photo of someone who has really made me feel welcome in the past and spend a few minutes recalling that event to immerse myself in the feeling of that welcome... With either symbol or friend, I consider how I may offer a similar welcome, and how important something so simple might be in these alienating times.

I ask the Spirit of Welcome for the gift to be a person of warm welcome, especially if the person before me is sick, afraid and in need of urgent healing and help.

### 2. Rest Today I rest in the Welcoming Trinity.

I read the prayer texts. Then, I imagine I am circled by the Welcoming Trinity. Each person addresses me by name, saying, 'Whoever welcomes you, welcomes me, and the one who sent me'

How can I welcome the stranger, the person desperate for care now? How can I do this if I cannot meet them face to face? To receive guidance and encouragement, I rest now, and reflectively throughout the whole day, in the Welcoming Trinity...

### 3. Welcome I breathe in the Spirit of Welcome.

Then I imagine and feel the Spirit breathing a special Welcome into me.

I breathe it in deep, wait, then breathe it out to warm all those with an anxious and needful hearts, and to support those who need urgent healing action now.

I repeat as desired – breathing, welcoming, helping quickly...

I conclude in thanks, considering two things. First, if possible, can I get in touch with the one who made me feel so welcomed, to reconnect. Second, to decide who I might pass this exercise on to, and how. Urgently, who could be a person of welcome now?

**PRAYER TIME:** Fifteen minutes. Five minutes each for the three steps.

The three dots ... indicate the places to pause.

If you are specially moved at any of the steps, remain there for the rest of the prayer.

---

<sup>2</sup> 1 Kings 8:37-40

<sup>3</sup> MT 25:43-45