

Practice.



GENEROUS

LOVE

Choosing to follow Jesus' way invites more of His love to overflow out of our lives to others.

WONDER

I wonder what God might be inviting me into, with what I have?

ABUNDANCE

He provides for everything we need, reminding us to see the proof of this as we look at the birds, the grass...

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Church of the
Open Door

welcome

In the Generous life, we invite the expansive and abundant nature of Jesus to overflow into how we love, welcome and receive those around us.

In this season, our primary practice is hospitality which helps create a safe place for others to experience the love of Jesus in another.

Whenever we are introduced to a practice, let's first slow ourselves down and then consider the invitation to a new and deeper life with Jesus. One that invites us to expand, grow and move from one place to another. From Fear to Love, from Walls to Wonder and from Scarcity to Abundance.

Rather than reducing hospitality down to an experience or a unique gift, we invite you to look at hospitality as a lens through which we begin to see God and others.

But before we jump deeper, turn the pages to read a little more about the heart behind the larger view of the Intentional Life.

“By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

JOHN 13:35

The Intentional Life

The word “intention” is defined as an aim, target or purpose. Something that you shoot for, regardless of whether you hit it or not, it’s a direction.

At Open Door, we have a desire to be a community of people radically committed to spiritual formation (the ongoing, lifelong process of becoming more like Jesus), for the sake of others. This sort of commitment allows our very selves (mind, heart, soul and body) to be transformed by the Spirit into the likeness of Christ.

This incredible and mysterious formation process requires both our attention and our intention, an aim and a bit of a rhythm to help us practice, together.

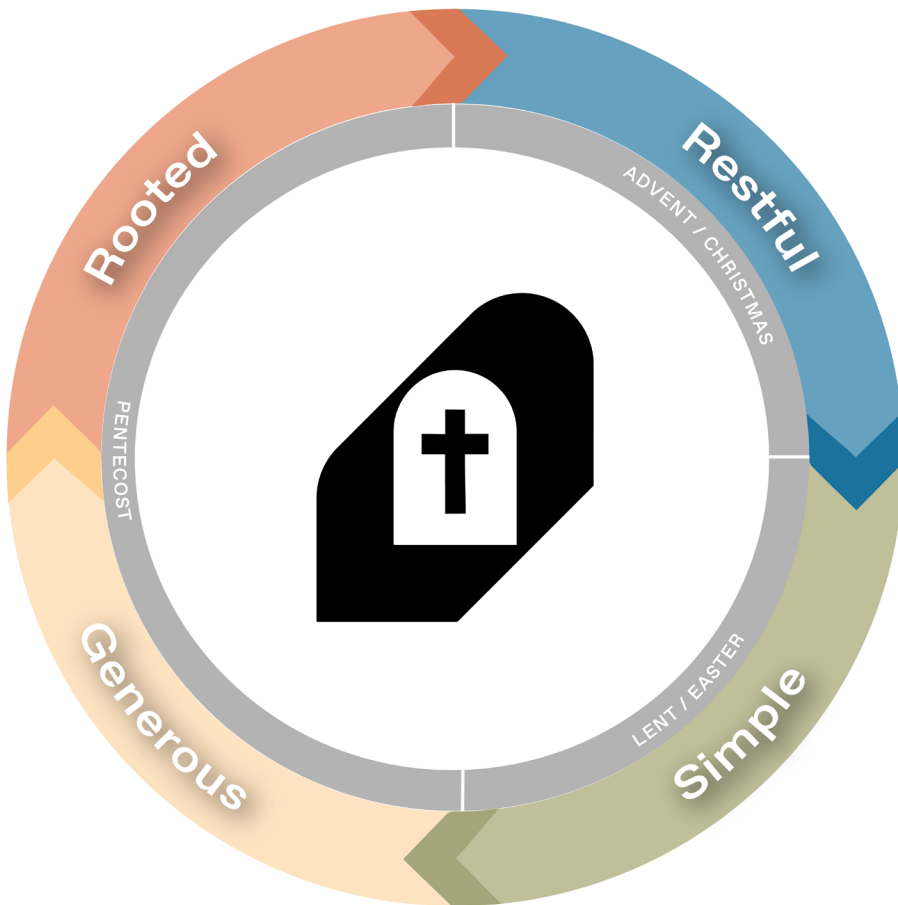
That said, we have identified four seasonal rhythms that help us practice living more intentionally.

They include:

The Rooted Life
The Restful Life
The Simple Life
and The Generous Life.

These rhythms are informed by the ancient church calendar, and are a part of the larger desire we have to live an intentional life.

They invite us into and equip us to practice the Presence and Way of Jesus in an authentic way where we can grow in our faith while actively living in community and loving others.



The Intentional Life

15 years ago, I was at a retreat with my close friends Bill and Tim.

Bill is a graduate of St. John's University in Collegeville, MN, a Benedictine Catholic school created around the teachings and rule of Saint Benedict which emphasizes five formational practices: prayer, work, study, hospitality, and service.

The university is also known for its pottery program founded and directed by Richard Bresnahan, who is also the artist-in-residence. Bresnahan's work at the studio incorporates Japanese techniques and uses the nearby clay deposit to create his pieces. The studio also features the Johanna Kiln which is a wood-fire kiln that is the largest of its type in North America.

As someone who has thrown clay on the wheel throughout my life, I was interested in visiting the pottery studio while on

retreat. Unaware of the hours they are open, we made our way down to the studio.

In our ignorance and excitement, we knocked on the door and walked in. There were a few people working on pieces of art and they immediately stopped working, stood up, and said, "Hi, welcome to the pottery studio". They offered us tea, coffee, and freshly baked bread.

I felt like an intruder and encouraged them to not stop their work. One of the artists offered to give us a tour of the studio, which we protested, but he insisted!

Their hospitality and welcoming posture to complete strangers made such an impression on us. It sank deeply into my own thinking and formation around this simple, uncommon, and powerful practice of hospitality and generosity of Jesus. Jesus moved toward the broken and the outcast, noticing

"...I went down to the potter's house..."

JEREMIAH 18:3

and serving the unseen in the culture.

The central practice of the Benedictine rule of life is, “All guests who present themselves are to be welcomed as Christ for he would say, I was a stranger, and you welcomed me”.

When we entered the studio, everyone stood, and I felt like I was important and honored, having some sort of undeserved prestige.

The students and the community at St. John's teach and try to practice this radical way of Jesus! The ultimate demonstration of generosity is found and experienced in Jesus, who sees us like no one else can, who sees the image of God in us, welcoming us in, and welcoming us home into his loving embrace.

Knocking on the potter's door now has a deeper metaphor and meaning for me which reminds me of this passage: “For every-

one who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.” Matthew 7:8.

I wonder who may knock on the door of our lives today, in need of the welcome and love of God. Together we are invited into bringing the loving, forgiving, and hospitable Kingdom of God to others!



BOB MCKENNA
Care Pastor

House

From Fear to Love

"There is no need to be afraid as we walk through life—afraid of the unknown, the unexpected, even other people. Deep within the heart of Christian spirituality lies a remedy to fear, anger and suspicion: hospitality."

Radical Hospitality: Benedict's Way of Love by Lonni Collins Pratt with Father Daniel Homan, OSB

Fear can have a significant way of shaping the way we practice generosity. We may have fear of a stranger- someone who is not like us, or fear of rejection, fear of what it will cost us or a fear that we don't have enough to share.

We are not implying that all fear is bad, in fact, at times it can be super helpful... like when you choose not to walk into a dark, creepy alley or into a building that's already burning! That's just wisdom!

AND, we are invited, over and over again in scripture to not be afraid.

1 JOHN 4:18-21

There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. We love because he first loved us. Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.

In his letter, John puts fear and love together, with love driving out fear. Love is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5) and has the ability to grow, thrive, conquer and actively diminish fear. And the way we practice love is by loving God and by loving others.

PRACTICE

Practice showing hospitality to someone you don't know.

Consider buying coffee for the person behind you, holding open the door for a stranger, or choosing to go second.

When asked the greatest commandment, Jesus elevated loving neighbors second to loving God (Matthew 22:36-40). By practicing the radical hospitality and generosity of Jesus, we are choosing to follow His way and inviting more of His love and abundance to overflow out of our lives to others.

Let's be honest, opening our lives to others can be both beautiful and messy. We may end up in surprising conversations, unfamiliar settings or really awkward experiences. But when we are open to moving from fear to love, with God, we participate in bringing God's Kingdom to earth in incredible and ordinary ways.

HEBREWS 13:2

Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.



Dive Deeper

Write down a time when you experienced the enjoyment of generosity. Were you receiving generosity or giving it away?

Questions taken from Practicing The Way Generosity Practice

What fears or desires keep you from being generous?

How would your life be different if you were free from the fear of not having enough?

From Walls to Wonder

“Here’s another way to put it: You’re here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We’re going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don’t think I’m going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I’m putting you on a light stand. Now that I’ve put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine! Keep open house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you’ll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven.”

MATTHEW 5:14-16 (MSG)

A large aspect of hospitality is the openness to share our time, talents, and resources with others. The way in which we love and welcome others comes out of an overflow of our life with God. When we are willing to see all of our possessions in light of God's goodness, and that all we have belongs to King Jesus, instead of building walls to contain or protect our things, we move to a more curious place of wonder, with God.

Here are a few "I wonder" questions to ask: I wonder what might God be inviting me into, with what I have? I wonder if there is something that I can give away or share with others? I wonder if there is a unique talent that I have been given that would benefit someone else?

PRACTICE

Practice opening your life to your neighbors. Maybe through a driveway chat, sitting around the campfire, or inviting them to share a meal at your place.

PRACTICAL WAYS TO INCREASE WONDER & ENGAGE IN HOSPITALITY IN DAILY LIVING



AROUND THE TABLE

One of the most fundamental expressions of hospitality is to invite others around your table for a meal.

"...They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people..." (Acts 2:46-47 NIV)

The early church was situated around the table. They followed the way that Jesus modeled for them and they ate together.

Who could you invite over for a meal?



AROUND YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Go for a walk...

Where do you live? Who is around you? What are the names of your neighbors? Where is God already at work in your neighborhood and where can you partner with Him?

Take it a step further...

Let's bring God's love to the world through building relationships, fostering community, and getting to know neighbors through service projects, social gatherings, cross-cultural events or simple acts of kindness.

Open Door would love to partner with you to help your idea come to life! Check out the \$100 Hospitality Microgrant. <https://qr.me-qr.com/8dkT3zpX>

THROUGHOUT YOUR DAY

When you start your day, invite God to give you His eyes and heart for others.

As you go throughout your day, who did you notice?

Bless that person by silently praying for them: God, may Your Kingdom come and may Your will be done in their life.

If you feel a nudge to engage, see what happens when you respond to this nudge. Respond with curiosity and love.



Dive Deeper

Share about a time that you experienced generosity from a neighbor.

Think about a time that you were generous with someone, how did they respond and how did their response affect you?

Read Matthew 5:14-16 (MSG) what are ways that you can "keep open house" and "be generous" with your life?

From Scarcity to Abundance

READ MATTHEW 6:25-34

²⁵ “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? ²⁷ Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?

²⁸ “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. ²⁹ Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ³⁰ If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? ³¹ So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³² For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³ But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Take a minute to think about the thing that is worrying you most, it can be big or small. As you ponder that thing, read the Matthew 6 passage again.

What do you notice?
What stands out? How do you feel or experience the statement that Jesus makes in this teaching "do not worry about your life"?

When we lean into this passage in Matthew, we see how generous and hospitable God is. He provides for everything we need, reminding us to see the proof of this as we look at the birds, the grass and the flowers. This is abundance and then some! The Kingdom of God is at hand and there is more than enough to go around.

God's Kingdom and economy stand in stark contrast to the world's economy, where there is never enough. We may worry and grasp to provide for ourselves, accumulating and possessing more than we need- in a race for the

newest, best and most efficient. Everywhere we turn, there is something to buy that we didn't even know we needed. Hustle up and get it...or it will be gone...which can lead to all kinds of worry! This is scarcity.

We ultimately live in both economies. We live in this world, and we are called to seek **FIRST** the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. When we are open to moving from scarcity to abundance, it can shift us from grasping to openness, from envy to gratitude and from owning to stewarding.

There is more than enough in God's economy and he has got you. It is good to be reminded of this and to love others from the overflow of God's incredible generosity. May His Kingdom come and His will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.

PRACTICE

It matters what you think about before you go to sleep at night.

As you close your eyes, take a few moments to reflect on your day with both humility and gratitude, resting in God's Presence and thanking Him for His goodness in your life.



Dive Deeper

What is capturing your attention most these days?

How much is worry influencing your thoughts?

What might it look like to expand your generosity in light of the abundance of God's Kingdom?

Closing Prayer

Where our hearts have shrunk,
and our giving with them,
Holy Spirit come.

To the fears that restrain us,
and our anxiety for material things,
Holy Spirit come.

To our other-blindness,
and the busyness that causes it,
Holy Spirit come.

That we may overflow
in abundant generosity,
Holy Spirit come.

That our giving may transform the world,
the poor, the church, and us,
Holy Spirit come.

That we may know you greatly,
through the expansion of our offering,
Holy Spirit come.

Father, you're the embodiment of
"giving is better than receiving",
and we want to be like you.
We praise and love you,
honor and desire you,
with all our being,
now and forever,
amen.



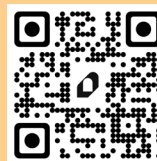
JOHN MARK COMER



THE FORGOTTEN PRACTICE OF GENEROSITY SERMON

Open Door

<https://qr.me-qr.com/Smw4uOWk>



THE WONDER OF RHYTHMS & SEASONS PODCAST

Church of the Open Door

<https://qr.me-qr.com/obf4V1Md>



RADICAL HOSPITALITY: BENEDICT'S WAY OF LOVE

Lonni Collins Pratt with Father
Daniel Homan

<https://qr.me-qr.com/ugL3S1lz>

RES OUR CES



THE ART OF NEIGHBORING

Jay Pathak & Dave Runyon

<https://qr.me-qr.com/dt8M9Ns2>



HOSPITALITY MICROGRANTS

<https://qr.me-qr.com/8dkT3zpX>

PRAYER ROOM

Anyone is welcome, and
there are no sign-ups or
time restrictions. Just take
the elevator to the second
floor and enjoy.