

Musing from the Pantry



In the prayer on Sunday, September 9, we said to God,

*You invite us to participate in a hospitality which is something else!
Help us not only to accept it with thanksgiving,
but to freely share it....*

I've been mulling over that prayer these last few days, as I think about the Pantry and our guests.

What did we do to earn God's hospitality? Nothing! God invited us in regardless of our abilities, our qualifications, our goodness – God invited us into God's kingdom, God's hospitality, just out of love.

That's one of the things that the Pantry shows our neighbors. Through our service, through our welcome, we help to show how open and how liberating God's hospitality is.

We don't preach about it; we don't put our guests through catechism. We just greet them with a smile, and with an open and willing heart. They're here with no pre-requisites of ability or qualification or goodness. They're here because they're in need, and they've learned that we offer an open and heart-felt hospitality, and open and heart-felt service.

Nobody has to prove that they're *worthy* of our help – just that they *need* our help.

Just like us: God doesn't ask us to prove that we're *worthy*; we just have to admit our *need* for God, and for God's love.

As I pondered on Sunday's prayer, and on the way that the Pantry helps us show God's love, I was also reminded of a hymn that I learned as a child, and a particular phrase that always opens my heart. The hymn is *My Song is Love Unknown*, and the phrase occurs in the first verse:

My song is love unknown, my Savior's love to me,
Love to the loveless shown, that they might lovely be.

Whatever our guests bring with them – whatever troubles, whatever problems – God's love transforms them, makes them lovely indeed. Do we see that? or do we keep our focus just on the problems?

As you go about your Pantry shopping this week, or prepare your thoughts for a shift as Pantry host, consider using this prayer – slightly reworded from what we said on Sunday – to help you prepare:

O God, Holy Friend, Loving Friend, you invite me into a hospitality which is something else! Help me to accept it with thanksgiving, and to freely share it with the world around me, and with the Pantry guests. Make me not only a receiver but a generous and modest giver. Let my light so shine that our guests see your love and glory. Through Jesus Christ, my divine brother, I ask this. Amen.