



Marilyn Sharpe
Ministries, LLC

THIS SEASON, PRACTICE CHRISTIAN HOSPITALITY

Alternatives for Simple Living Advent 2007

Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.
Romans 15: 7

More than two decades ago, as we decorated our home for Christmas, I dreaded what lay ahead. With three young children and furniture that years earlier had passed from shabby chic to just shabby, Christmas was the one time our home really looked its best. So, I felt that I really ought to entertain others, to invite them in while it looked festive. One house cleaning could cover a multitude of parties. I loved to cook, so I could dazzle them with the cuisine. I thought about all those I really owed a return invitation. And then there were all the sitters to line up to watch our children, while we went to the parties others threw to pay us back. What a miserable economy of paybacks!

And, oh, how different is Paul's call to hospitality from the pickle I'd gotten myself into. "Welcome ... as Christ has welcomed you ... for the glory of God." I had it all wrong, and I needed to get off that merry-go-round-gone-mad.

So, what changes have we made over the years that bring the Good News to us, so that we might share it with others?

STOP and evaluate absolutely everything you do for the Christmas season. Does it give life and joy? Does it bear Christ's light into the world? If not, say "goodbye."

PRIORITIZE In our life, our family came first. We made space in our formerly hectic schedule to sit by the light of two Yule logs and an advent wreath to sit in our living room, doing Advent devotions. We enjoyed the beauty of the season together in our own home.

SIMPLIFY Instead of a gourmet extravaganza, we hosted pot luck dinners or invited for a cup of Christmas tea and a plate of cookies. This past Christmas season, we hosted our staff Christmas party as a potluck. The food was fabulous. No one had slaved over it. We just enjoyed one another, and saw the light of Christ in our midst.

DO IT DIFFERENTLY Instead of hosting a dinner, go to a soup kitchen and serve one to those who are not overfed this season. Make it intergenerational. Sit down at table with the guests. Listen to their stories. Share yours. Now, that is welcoming one another as Christ has welcomed you, to the glory of God.... and letting them welcome you

SABBATH TIME Savor the relationship you have with God. Be still. Savor the relationship you have with others. Listen. Savor and give thanks for the gift of this day.