

## Guided meditation: Giving and receiving hospitality

Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, 'Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?' (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) Jesus said, 'Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me.'

John 12.1-8

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### Meditation

Take up a posture that is comfortable and close your eyes.

Now become aware of your breathing. Become aware of the air as it enters and leaves your nostrils . . . Not as it enters your lungs, just as it passes through your nostrils . . .

Do not control your breathing. Do not try to deepen it or change its rhythm. Simply observe your breathing, in and out, in and out . . .

I'm going to read the passage slowly [once/twice].

Don't prejudge the passage and what you think you will find in it. The text is a gift to be received. Ask the Spirit to speak through the passage.

Let a word or short phrase wink at you.

Stay with the word, repeat it to yourself, relish it, let it sink in to your heart.

[read passage once, or twice with short intervening pause]

Continue to chew over the word or phrase that the Spirit has revealed to you . . .

What is it saying to you? It doesn't matter if it is out of the passage's context. Why has it snagged your attention now? . . .

Now address your ponderings to God.

You might have questions you want to ask. You might want to challenge God.

Or you might want to thank God, or to say sorry, or to say yes.

Offer to God whatever is in your heart . . .

Allow God to respond . . .

Now simply rest in God's presence, filled with God's grace . . .  
If you become distracted, return to your breathing or to the word.  
Abide in loving silence before God . . .

Now return gradually to an awareness of your breathing and your posture . . .  
When you are ready, open your eyes.

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## Notes

This is the third of a series of meditations responding to *Befriending Silence* by Carl McColman, one of the books which the Slow Book Group at Exeter Cathedral has been reading. The book comprises an Introduction, eleven chapters, and a brief Final Word, which we are dividing into six sessions for reflection over the six months April, May, June, July, September and October 2024. In June we covered Chapters 4 and 5 on humility and hospitality.

The style of the meditation is based on the ancient monastic practice of *Lectio Divina*. It is a different approach to the [Shared Lectio Divina](#) that I hold weekly on Zoom, albeit also for use in groups.

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