

## ***Blessings of Loving Kindness*<sup>1</sup> – A Missional Practice**

*Missional Practices: cultivating new understandings, ways of being, and living Christ's mission.*

**Purpose:** to cultivate loving-kindness, well-being, happiness, and peace toward ourselves and others. Speaking words of blessing out loud or inwardly does more than reflect our thoughts—they shape our feelings and behaviors.

This practice helps us live the Great Commandment:

*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind... You shall love your neighbor as yourself.* - Matthew 22:36-40

This practice also helps us remember how interrelated our lives are:

*“Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. This is the interrelated structure of reality.”*

- Martin Luther King, Jr.

*Blessings of Loving Kindness* is an adaptation of *metta—lovingkindness*—a Buddhist practice. Directing *lovingkindness* toward ourselves “is the essential foundation for being able to offer genuine love to others. When we truly love ourselves, we want to take care of others, because that is what is most enriching, or nourishing, for us.”<sup>2</sup>

This practice can be personally transforming when used daily. You may become aware that you are less and less attached to past events and are releasing and freeing yourself and others. Do this practice each day for an extended period (two weeks or more) and see what difference it makes in your daily attitudes, thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.

You may practice alone or in a group setting.

### **Steps:**

1. Take a few moments to quiet yourself. Watching the breath helps to calm and center our natural restlessness. When you feel a sense of calm, begin by repeating the following blessing, giving the words time to resonate in your heart and mind:

May I be blessed with loving kindness

May I be blessed with health

May I be blessed with true happiness

May I be blessed with peace

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<sup>1</sup>Adapted from “Circles of Blessings” spiritual practice in Disciple Formation Guide, Community of Christ: [http://www.cofchrist.org/dfg/ad\\_blessing\\_comm\\_continued.asp](http://www.cofchrist.org/dfg/ad_blessing_comm_continued.asp)

<sup>2</sup> Excerpt from “Loving-kindness: The Revolutionary Art of Happiness” by Sharon Salzberg, 1995, Shambala Publications at [www.vipassana.com/meditation/facets\\_of\\_metta.php](http://www.vipassana.com/meditation/facets_of_metta.php)

2. When your heart feels full of loving compassion - move from yourself to someone who is beloved to you. This could be a life partner, family member, etc. Visualize this person as you pray this blessing on them:

May they be blessed with loving kindness

May they be blessed with health

May they be blessed with true happiness

May they be blessed with peace

3. Again, when your heart is full of loving compassion – move from this person to a close or dear friend. Visualize them as you pray this blessing for them:

May they be blessed with loving kindness

May they be blessed with health

May they be blessed with true happiness

May they be blessed with peace

4. When you feel filled with loving compassion – move to an acquaintance for whom you have neither positive nor negative feelings. Visualize this person as you pray this blessing on them:

May they be blessed with loving kindness

May they be blessed with health

May they be blessed with true happiness

May they be blessed with peace

5. As you feel your heart again fill with loving compassion – think of someone who has harmed you or that you are in conflict with. Visualize this person. Take a moment. Breath deeply and, looking them in the eye, lovingly pray this blessing on them:

May they be blessed with loving kindness

May they be blessed with peace

May they be blessed with true happiness

May they be blessed with peace

6. You may end here or return to yourself as a way of completing the circle. A prayer, silent or spoken over the group would be appropriate to close. You may want to spend some time reflecting on the group experience. Often there is a profound difference in the room and group, a deep sense of Spirit. Acknowledging this is important. Let the Spirit breathe.