

## Nouwen's Concept of Hospitality

- Hospitality... means primarily the creation of a free space where the stranger can enter and become a friend instead of an enemy.
- Hospitality is not to change people, but to offer them space where change can take place.
- It is not to bring men and women over to our side, but to offer freedom not disturbed by dividing lines.
- It is not to lead our neighbour into a corner where there are no alternatives left, but to open a wide spectrum of options for choice and commitment.
- It is not an educated intimidation with good books, good stories and good works, but the liberation of fearful hearts so that words can find roots and bear ample fruit.
- It is not a method of making our God and our way into the criteria of happiness, but the opportunity to others to find their God and their way.
- The paradox of hospitality is that it wants to create emptiness, but a friendly emptiness where strangers can enter and discover themselves as created free; free to sing their own songs, speak their own languages, dance their own dances; free also to leave and follow their own vocations.
- Hospitality is not a subtle invitation to adopt a life style of the host, but the gift of a chance for the guest to find their own.
- **Henri Nouwen.** *Reaching Out: The Three Movements in the Spiritual Life.* (1975 Doubleday. New York) (p 68)