



# "Welcome!"



**Theme:** Opening our hearts and homes to others

**Object:** A "Welcome Mat"

**Scripture:** "He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives the one who sent me. Anyone who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and anyone who receives a righteous man because he is a righteous man will receive a righteous man's reward. And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward." Matthew 10:40-42 (NIV)

Good morning. Have you ever seen one of these? (Hold up the Welcome mat.) Where have you seen something like this? Usually we'd see a mat like this outside the door to our home, wouldn't we? A mat such as this usually has two purposes. Do you know what those two purposes are?

Well, for one thing, it is a friendly reminder for people to wipe their shoes off so that they won't track dirt or mud into your home. And second, it is placed outside your door as a sign to let people know that they are welcome in your home.

Welcome — what does the word "welcome" mean? It means to receive someone in a warm and friendly way. Are people always welcome in our homes? Do we welcome people into our home if their skin is a different color from ours? Do we welcome people into our homes if they don't have as much money as we do?

How about in our church? Do you think that we make everyone feel welcome in our church? Do we speak to those people who are visiting our church that we do not know? If someone comes to our church and they are not dressed the way we are dressed, do we make sure that they are made to feel welcome?

Jesus said, "He who receives you receives me." If we turn that around, we will understand that if we do not welcome others into our homes and into our churches, it is the same as if we are refusing to welcome Jesus. We wouldn't do that, would we?

Well, let's put the welcome mat out — and let's be sure that we mean it!

Dear Father, help us to remember that when we refuse to welcome others to our homes and to our church, it is the same as refusing to welcome you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.