

It is never enough to say all are welcome.

Not until everyone has a seat at the table.

(Even if it means dragging extra chairs out of the garage and a table in from the patio).

Not until everyone leaves with a slice of pie and a container of leftovers and an invitation to return anytime.

Not until we all know each other's names, not from gossiping but from caring enough.

Not until God opens our eyes to show us how all-encompassing His love truly is.

Not until our generosity outgrows practicality.

Not until our hospitality stops only being a good show.

Not until those who call themselves children of God stop treating other children of God differently based on their human perception of worth.

Not until everyone we invite into our spaces gets the prodigal son's welcome.

Not until we prayerfully learn to love and welcome and uplift and nurture all of God's children.

Because those we see as the least worthy are the ones who need that welcome the most.

Yes, them: those who society has pushed to the margins and whose marginalization is used to justify further ill treatment by those who call themselves Christians.

We cannot truly mean we welcome all people with colorful signs and bulletin messages until God works in the hearts of all who claim him.

To give them empathy where it had been insufficient before.

Gifts of understanding and compassion.

We must pray that as Christians we will love as indiscriminately as Christ himself.

For only then can we say all are truly welcome.