

Hosting Devotional Meetings, Holy Days, or the Devotional Portion of Feast

... it is essential to the spiritual life of the community that the friends hold regular devotional meetings in local Bahá'í centers, where available, or elsewhere, including the homes of the believers.

--The Universal House of Justice, Ridván Message, 1996

Four Elements for Devotions:

Hospitality:

(The Guardian) was very happy to learn that wherever you have been you have received wonderful reception from the friends. Surely, it is only through such acts of hospitality that the true spirit of the Cause is manifested.

--Written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi: Arohanui: Letters to New Zealand, Page: 29

- Guests should be warmly greeted and be made to feel welcome.
- It is a good practice to assign several greeters to welcome people, pass out programs, usher people (if necessary), and to introduce guests and visitors to others.

The Word of God:

Is it within human power, O Hakim, to effect in the constituent elements of any of the minute and indivisible particles of matter so complete a transformation as to transmute it into purest gold? Perplexing and difficult as this may appear, the still greater task of converting satanic strength into heavenly power is one that We have been empowered to accomplish. The Force capable of such a transformation transcendeth the potency of the Elixir itself. The Word of God, alone, can claim the distinction of being endowed with the capacity required for so great and far-reaching a change.

--Bahá'u'lláh: Gleanings, Page: 200

- Prayers and the Holy Writings read with clarity and reverence have tremendous spiritual “*potency*” and “*capacity*”.
- If possible, printed programs can enhance devotional meetings. Several hundred are available at The Bahá'í Devotions Site @ www.bahaidevotions.org.
- It is often helpful to arrange writings and prayers around a certain theme, such as “truthfulness”.

Music:

We, verily, have made music as a ladder for your souls, a means whereby they may be lifted up unto the realm on high; make it not, therefore, as wings to self and passion

--Bahá'u'lláh: The Kitab-i-Aqdas, Page: 38

- Music, suited to the culture of the participants, can greatly enhance a devotional meeting.
- You can choose from live or recorded music, sing-along songs or instrumental music, etc.
- It is helpful for people to be able to see the words to songs they are singing – www.bahaidevotions.org has several sample songbooks that may be useful.
- The words to music for Feast should be from the Holy Writings, according to the House of Justice.

Unity In Diversity:

Its watchword is unity in diversity such as Abdu'l-Baha Himself has explained: "Consider the flowers of a garden. Though differing in kind, color, form and shape, yet, inasmuch as they are refreshed by the waters of one spring, revived by the breath of one wind, invigorated by the rays of one sun, this diversity increaseth their charm and addeth unto their beauty. How unpleasing to the eye if all the flowers and plants, the leaves and blossoms, the fruit, the branches and the trees of that garden were all of the same shape and color! ..."

--Shoghi Effendi quoting `Abdu'l-Baha: World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, Page: 42

- Prayers and writings can be recited in various languages that represent the different cultures of the people in your area. It is often helpful to explain the meaning or read the prayer first in English.
- Likewise, music and songs can be chosen which represent the various cultures of people in your area.
- Finally, unity in diversity can be expressed through a diversity of readers and musicians – women and men of a variety of ages, and a people of different cultural and racial backgrounds.