

## The Bishop's Gift

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Once a church had fallen upon hard times. Only five members were left: the pastor and four others, all over 60 years old.

In the mountains near the church there lived a retired Bishop. It occurred to the pastor to ask the Bishop if he could offer any advice that might save the church. The pastor and the Bishop spoke at length, but when asked for advice, the Bishop simply responded by saying, "I have no advice to give. The only thing I can tell you is that the Messiah is one of you."

The pastor, returning to the church, told the church members what the Bishop had said. In the months that followed, the old church members pondered the words of the Bishop. "The Messiah is one of us?" they each asked themselves. As they thought about this possibility, they all began to treat each other with extraordinary respect on the off chance that that one among them might be the Messiah. And on the off, off chance that each member himself might be the Messiah, they also began to treat themselves with extraordinary care.

As time went by, people visiting the church noticed the aura of respect and gentle kindness that surrounded the five old members of the small church. Hardly knowing why, more people began to come back to the church. They began to bring their friends, and their friends brought more friends. Within a few years, the small church had once again become a thriving church, thanks to the Bishop's gift.