

Chinmaya Mission Portland – Bhiksha guidelines

The proper etiquette for preparing and serving bhiksha for Swamijis

Bhiksha is offering an Acharya a meal or snacks. Offering bhiksha to a Swami (sannyasi) has been considered one of the foremost duties of a householder in the Hindu tradition. Just as scientists who are in pursuit of truth are being supported by present-day society, in Vedic tradition, it is considered the duty of the householder to support renunciates who spend their life in pursuit of Truth for the benefit of society as a whole.

From the householder's point of view, it is a great blessing to invite a holy person to visit his/her home. Association with the holy (satsanga) helps purify and surcharge the mind, and reminds one of the true goal of life.

Swamijis take whatever you offer them with gratitude and bless you with love. It is a great privilege to be with them and have them grace your home.

Bhiksha gives you special time for satsang with Swamiji and time for you to ask any questions you may have in a personalized session. We should follow these simple guidelines if we are signing up for Bhiksha time with Swamiji:

1. Plan ahead of time what you want to contribute to the potluck. 3-4 families are ideal for a bhiksha. Check with the coordinators to know specific diet restrictions for the Swamiji.
2. Prepare sattvic food fresh on the day of bhiksha, in a strict vegetarian manner. It is customary not to taste Swamiji's food during preparation. If you have non-vegetarian food at your house, be mindful not to desecrate Swamiji's food and the containers.
3. Be at the venue of bhiksha before Swamiji arrives, and leave only after he leaves. Feel free to assist in serving Swamiji, because it is not the food you give that matters, it is the service you provide, and the personal time you are privileged to spend with him.
4. Offer a bowl of fruit along with dakshina to him after he finishes his meal and receive prasad and blessings from him.

Offering bhiksha to the sanyasis and mahatmas is a great blessing for all devotees. As your token of appreciation that Swamiji is spending time with you, it is customary that you offer dakshina after the bhiksha. The money you donate is tax deductible and all of the donations go directly to supporting Chinmaya Mission programs. The *suggested* dakshinas are as follows:

Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda	\$501
Other Chinmaya Mission Acharyas	\$101

Devotees wishing to offer dakshina by check write their checks payable to:

- "Chinmaya Mission"
- Please write "Bhiksha" in the memo area.