



Thanksgiving Prayer Vigil

November 2016



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A Guide to Prayer, Praise, and Meditation
for a
Thanksgiving Prayer Vigil

November 23, 2016

Settling In

Readying oneself for prayer is an important step to meaningful communication with our Father. Sometimes noise around us, sometimes our personal discomfort with where we're sitting or the temperature of the room, sometimes the whirl of our lives barges in on our ability to concentrate on our God's speaking to us and our speaking to him.

Spend a couple minutes *centering* your thoughts on God. That starts by ridding yourself of all of the things which are clamoring for your attention. Make a list below. Then pray using the following prayer.

Your List of Things To Give Over To God

Father, help me to release these concerns into your care for the next minutes so they will not disrupt our time together. Enable me to concentrate on what you have to say to me and on the things I need to say to you. I trust you will do this for me because you have sent your Son to be my Savior. I joyfully await your blessing.

Listening and Learning

Moses encouraged the Israelites before they entered the Promised Land not to forget who it was that was responsible for the benefits they would experience in Canaan. Listen to Moses' advice from Deuteronomy 6:10-12.

When the Lord your God brings you into the land he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you—a land with large, flourishing cities you did not build, houses filled with all kinds of good things you did not provide, wells you did not dig, and vineyards and olive groves you did not plant—then when you eat and are satisfied, be careful that you do not forget the Lord, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

God has blessed us all in a number of ways. What are the houses, vineyards, and olive groves he has given you? Use the following list to think through the loving things God has done for you this past year. Pause at each item which applies to your life and tell your Father how appreciative you are.

Personal:

The assurance of the forgiveness of your sins and eternal life through Jesus, health, intellect, creativity, sensitivity to others' needs, positive personality traits, gifts of the Spirit, talents, abilities, opportunities to serve your Savior.

Family:

Spouse, each of your children, grandchildren, your parents, your brothers and sisters, your nieces and nephews, cousins, etc.

Work:

Those who work with you, those for whom you are responsible, those to whom you report, those in other departments, your entire company (including all employees and executives), and the ability to work and to be productive.

Schools:

Our member children attending other WELS schools; our high schools and colleges: their students, faculty, facilities, programs. Our area public schools, colleges, and universities.

Church:

The pastor, staff minister, church secretary, president, vice-president, recording secretary, treasurer, financial secretary, bookkeeper, counters, members of the Youth Discipleship Committee, Adult Discipleship Committee, Outreach Committee, Properties Committee, our janitor, Shining Star Christian School, their staff, students and families, our ushers, our Bible studies, our Fairview Ladies Group, our finance committee, our nominations committee, our choirs, our organists, our Youth Group, our HomeWORD Bound program, our kids' message presenters, our worship services, and any other programs and groups in our church.

Nation:

Our president, congress and all others charged with some area of administering our national government. Our governor and state legislature. Our city and county government, including our police and fire departments.

Moses warned God's people about a potential problem of thanklessness. Have you eaten and become satisfied on God's gifts to you and your family to the point that you have forgotten regularly to thank him for his goodness?

Then take the next minutes to repent of that sin, asking God for Jesus' sake to forgive you and claiming his promise that *if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness* (1 John 1:9). The following hymn will help.

*Forgive us, Lord, for shallow thankfulness,
For dull content with warmth and sheltered care,
For songs of praise for food and harvest press,
While of thy richer gifts we're unaware.*

*Teach us to thank thee, Lord, for love and grace,
For life and vision and a purpose clear,
For Christ, thy Son, and for each human face
That shows thy message ever new and near.*

*Forgive us, Lord, for selfish thanks and praise,
For word that speaks at variance with deed;
Forgive our thanks for walking pleasant ways
Unmindful of a broken brother's need.*

*Teach us, O Lord, true thankfulness divine,
That gives as Christ gave, never counting cost,
That knows no barrier of "mine" and "thine,"
Assured that only what's withheld is lost.*

*Forgive us, Lord, for feast that knows not fast,
For joy in things that while we starve the soul,
For walls and wars that hide thy mercies vast
And mar our vision of the kingdom goal.*

*Open our eyes to glimpse thy love's intent,
Our minds and hearts to plumb its depth and height;
May thankfulness be days in service spent,
Reflection of Christ's life and love and light. Amen.* CW 482

Praise and Thanksgiving

Be assured that because of Jesus' perfect life and hell-punished death, you are forgiven for all sins, even the sin of a lack of thankfulness. That prompts us to thank God all the more.

The Scriptures which follow guide us in adoring and thanking God. Thoughtfully read them through. Later go back over them and pause after each sentence to think about what you have read; then praise God for what we're told there about him.

Psalm 103

*Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.
He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases; he redeems my
life from the pit and crowns me with love and compassion. He
satisfies my desire with good things, so that my youth is renewed
like the eagle's. The Lord works righteousness and justice for all
the oppressed.*

Ephesians 1:3-14

*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual
blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of
the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.*

In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will – to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment – To bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.

In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession – to the praise of his glory.

Colossians 1:15-21

[Jesus] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the Head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation....

Jude 24, 25

To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy– to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.

Revelation 4:8-5:11 [selected]

- *Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come.*
- *You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.*
- *You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.*
- *You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth.*
- *Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!*
- *To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!*

Settling Back

Picture yourself, your family, your church nestled in Jesus' open and loving arms. Sense Christ's tender, gentle care surrounding, encouraging and enfolding you, your family and your congregation. Imagine him looking upon you with pleasure because he has washed your sins away and adopted you into his eternal family. Silently tell him how you feel about him and his caring for you.

Close by slowly praying the following hymn verses:

*O Lord, I sing with lips and heart Joy of my soul, life's key;
To earth your knowledge I impart As it is known to me.
You are the fount of grace, I know, And spring so full and free
Whence saving health and goodness flow
Each day so bounteously.*

*You feed us all from year to year And constant e'er abide;
With ready help in time of fear You stand here at our side.
Our deepest need you full supply And all that lasts for aye;
You lead us to our home on high When once we pass away.*

TLH 569, adapted

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

Doxology

Ephesians 3:20-21

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

There may be some time between the end of this prayer vigil and the beginning of Thanksgiving worship. You may wish to go back over this guide, re-reading or re-praying sections which are particularly significant for you. There are other hymns with a thanksgiving and praise theme in the hymnal between numbers 233 and 261, as well as numbers 609 and 616. If you have time, pray through several of them.

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