

Pause to Give Thanks

November is associated with Thanksgiving, a holiday for families to gather and enjoy a special meal and fellowship together. Perhaps this day includes a nap in front of the televised football games after the big Thanksgiving meal or a family card game. Growing up and in my youth it was also the day of the annual “turkey bowl” touch football game in the neighborhood. We all have our traditions, but the centerpiece of the holiday has always been a focus on giving thanks.



The initial Thanksgiving was at Plymouth, Massachusetts in the year 1621. It was the celebration of a harvest meal and an opportunity to set aside time to give thanks for one’s blessings. The settlers invited Native Americans to the feast, in gratitude for their teaching them how to hunt eel, grow corn and preserve food. An Indian named Squanto (from the Wampanoag tribe) taught the settlers this and also acted as an interpreter. Chief Massasoit and others also attended. It was a time of thanksgiving to God, but also to their Indian friends, who helped the Pilgrims survive the previous difficult New England winter. As they prepared for the next winter their harvest was plentiful.

Two years later this celebration took on an even greater significance. The harvest of 1623 followed a nearly catastrophic drought. Colonist William Bradford wrote: “And afterwards the Lord sent them such seasonable showers, with interchange of fair warm weather as, through His blessing, caused a fruitful and liberal harvest, to their no small comfort and rejoicing. For which mercy, in time convenient, they also set apart a day of thanksgiving... By this time harvest was come, and instead of famine now God gave them plenty ... for which they blessed God.”

In 1621 the Pilgrims were thankful to their Native American friends for helping them survive. In 1623 they realized God rescued them from drought conditions, producing a plentiful harvest in the face of near disaster. In both celebrations God enabled the Pilgrims to not only survive but to flourish. God placed fellow human beings in their path to help them adjust to their New World. Then, He provided the ideal weather conditions to overcome a serious drought. God truly knows what we need and He provides just that.

His blessings allow us to flourish, too.

This Thanksgiving and at all times, give thanks to the Lord. Know that He satisfies our needs, just as He did for the Pilgrims. Also, feel His love for all of us, just as He loved both the New World settlers and Native Americans alike. Take time to appreciate what He has done in your life. Look around you as you gather with family and friends to know how much He has blessed you. You have much to be thankful for. Pause and give thanks.



Scripture: *Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever. Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for mankind, for he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things (Psalm 107:1, 8-9).*

Question: What are you most thankful for?

Prayer: Dear Lord. We thank you for all that we have. Let us take the time to appreciate your many blessings. Amen.