

Giving Thanks

The plane is scheduled to touch down Wednesday afternoon, in Greensboro. Our daughter and her husband will be the first to arrive for the Thanksgiving holidays. Next will be our son and his family who lives locally. His family includes our 6-month old grandchild. And finally, on Saturday afternoon our oldest son and his family arrive from the West coast, after sharing the first half of the trip East with her parents in Fayetteville. They will have 15-month old grandchild #1 with them. It will be the first face-to-face meeting of the two infant cousins. What a blessing that will be for all.



In our house the Thanksgiving Day activities begin with the televised Christmas parade and the pleasant aroma of turkey in the oven. Thanksgiving is often a time when family gathers around the table to share a meal together. Before digging in, we bless the meal and express our gratitude for the special time together. At this particular meal, dessert is a must – often pie with whipped cream or ice cream on top. Then, many family members head for the sofa and sleep through most of the televised football games.

Certainly distance doesn't allow all families to gather every year, especially with Christmas providing a second opportunity for families to get together. Sometimes a phone call to loved ones is the best we can do. In any event, it is one of the most pure days off from work in the calendar year. If you don't listen to the Black Friday ads, Thanksgiving is a holiday with little commercialism.

The first Thanksgiving was held in early autumn of 1621 at Plymouth Plantation (Massachusetts.) The 53 colonists who had survived harsh conditions celebrated what they called a harvest festival. Over 90 Native Americans were invited to join the feast of turkey, duck, fish, venison and cornbread. It was a feast that lasted for several days and repeated at harvest time the following years. The Pilgrims avoided the term Thanksgiving because the word thanksgiving was considered a religious term. Two years later the first recorded day of thanksgiving was in 1623 after much-needed rainfall gave special meaning to being thankful. In 1863 President Abraham Lincoln made Thanksgiving Day an official holiday, joining together the concepts of celebrating the harvest with a time of giving thanks.

As we gather with family and friends on present day Thanksgiving, we give thanks to the Lord for the many blessings in our lives. We celebrate time with loved ones and enjoy a time of rest. We share a meal from a successful harvest and enjoy each other's company.

Giving thanks is central to the heart of a Christian. It recognizes:

- our many blessings (too many to count)
- the source of those blessings (God)
- the reason for them (God's love)
- and for how long (forever).

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever (Psalm 107:1).



Regardless whether or not you have family visiting this year, there is much for which to be thankful. *Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! (1 Chronicles 16:34).*

Question: Name five things are you most thankful for? Have you thanked God for them recently?

Closing Prayer: Our Heavenly Father. We thank you for the many blessings you have given us – not just on the day of Thanksgiving, but we are thankful to you every day. Amen.