

Faithful in Prayer... Rom. 12.12

Thanksgiving



The mnemonic ACTS helps us to remember a number of the important elements in praying – **Adoration** (or Praise), **Confession**, **Thanksgiving** and **Supplication** (including intercession, our prayers for others, and petition, our prayers for ourselves).

Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving is when we consider with thankfulness God's goodness to us in Jesus and his guidance and help throughout the week.

Part of our thanksgiving needs to be “general.” There are many general blessings we receive as members of the human race. We give thanks for life, for beauty, for the weather, for our daily bread... These things are part of God’s good gifts to all people – whether appreciated or not. It is good to reflect on them and to give thanks to God for them.

Our general thanksgiving extends to the grace of God we experience as members of the Christian family. The life, teaching and example of Jesus, his death for us on the cross, his presence with us day by day, forgiveness of sins, salvation, assurance, the gift of the Holy Spirit, the Scriptures, prayer, fellowship... The list could be extended on and on. Never take God’s grace for granted. Remember to give thanks!

Part of our thanksgiving needs to be “specific.” Think back over the past day or week. What are the specific ways in which you have known the love and grace and help of God? It may have come through a fellow-Christian, or through someone with no connection with this or another church. Perhaps you were challenged or encouraged through something you read in the Bible or in another book. Be specific and thank God.

Paul wrote that we should “be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus” (1 Thess. 5.16-18).

He emphasised that our prayers and petitions need to be presented to God “with thanksgiving.” Then we would have the peace of God guarding our hearts and minds (Phil. 4.6-7).

How is it possible to maintain a thankful attitude “in all circumstances”? Paul gives the secret – “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose” (Rom. 8.28). The symbol of Christianity is the cross. And if God can take the cruel human execution of his Son and make it the means of salvation, forgiveness and new life, there is nothing we may experience that he is unable to turn to good.

Group Prayer

Our silently meditated group confession should flow on naturally into thanksgiving – for God’s grace in forgiveness. It can be helpful for group members simply to speak out a word to express our thanksgiving. In time, this can be extended to a sentence. Thanksgiving is vital in the Christian life. Give space for all members to express their thanks.