

# GROWING Together

13th Series

## TABLE GRACE

*God is great. God is good.  
Now we thank God for our food. Amen.*

In a food court, people at the nearby table bow their heads briefly, then they eat. Ever notice it? Some people begin every meal with a prayer. Sometimes a child recites it aloud for the family. Other times adults eating alone simply close their eyes and repeat a Bible verse: “*You prepare a banquet before me; You welcome me as an honoured guest and fill my cup to the brim. I know your goodness and love are with me*” (Ps 23:5-6). Some people make the sign of the cross and breathe a spontaneous word of thanks. At special meals like wedding banquets, one of the guests reads a prayer before the meal is served. A group on retreat joins hands and sings a short hymn in rounds: “*For health and strength and daily food we give you thanks, O Lord.*” All of these are table graces, a brief moment of prayer before or after a meal is eaten.

*For what we are about to receive  
May we be truly thankful. Amen.*



Each time Jesus ate with his disciples and even when he fed the 5,000, saying grace was a part of his meals. He prayed before, during and after a meal, “*looking up to heaven and giving thanks to God.*” By his own example then, Jesus emphasized the importance of saying a table grace. He even asked his disciples to do it in remembrance of him, especially during his Sacred Meal, The Lord’s Supper.

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*For all your goodness, Lord, we give you thanks.  
Thanks for the food we eat and for the friends we meet.  
For each new day we greet, we give you thanks.*

Why say grace? Since we must take time to eat, mealtime prayer is a natural step to a well nourished spirituality. When we pause to give thanks and ask a blessing, we are reminded of God in our busy day. We are also reminded — amid our plenty — of the millions who have little food. Saying grace can thus help us grow in awareness, compassion and generosity. A table grace has other

benefits. It honours our body and our body’s needs and thus honours how God has created us all. And, praying at mealtime cultivates an important attitude of thanksgiving. Such an attitude enables us to be more aware of God’s grace in our lives, of God’s unconditional gifts to us all.

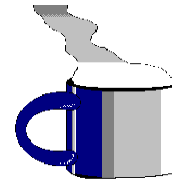
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*For food in a world where many walk in hunger,  
For faith in a world where many walk in fear,  
For friends in a world where many walk alone,  
We give you humble thanks, O Lord.*

Table graces are found in books of prayers, in devotional readings and popular religious song books. Here are some you might like to try.

*Bless this food and drink, we pray,  
All drawn from your creation.  
May they remind us of your Word  
That nourishes salvation. Amen.*

*As we partake of this food and drink,  
Bless it and us for Jesus’ sake. Amen.*



*Thank you for the world so sweet,  
Thank you for the food we eat.  
Thank you for the birds that sing.  
Thank you God, for everything. Amen.*

*Thank you, God, for this our food.  
Bless it to our use, and us to Thy service. Amen*

At the kitchen table and office desk, on a picnic blanket or in an elegant restaurant, heartfelt gratitude is our fondest response for all God does and gives. Gratitude is the very heart of Christian faith: in the time-yet-to-come, the Bible says, all prayer will cease except the prayer of thanksgiving which will never end (Rev 7:12). Meanwhile, let us “*be filled with thanksgiving*” (Col 2:7).

Thanks be to God!

GROWING TOGETHER is a series of five monthly Sunday bulletin inserts for the ecumenical education of Christ’s faithful.



Gathering the Family of Jesus

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