

Thanksgiving in Prayer - Outline

Singapore Youth for Christ
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Introduction

- Saying “thank you” - how hard can it be? Yet which we generally do poorly.
- Priority of thanksgiving in prayer and its misuse
- There are numerous references to thankfulness and thanksgiving in the Bible
 - *Genesis* - Thanksgiving is integral to the principle of the “sabbath.”
 - *Leviticus* - Thanksgiving was incorporated as an integral element of the worship practices of the Israelites, specifically in the form of the thank offering in response to the Lord’s blessings.
 - *Psalms* - Thanksgiving is a principal component of the prayers of the Israelites.
 - *Gospels* - Thanksgiving is a part of the teaching and practice of Jesus.
 - *Letters* - Thanksgiving is a key aspect throughout the letters of Paul.

The meaning of “Thanks” and “Thanksgiving”

- Two principal words used in the Bible:
 - ‘*yadah*’ (Hb) - to praise, give thanks, confess.
 - The core idea here is the expression of an acknowledgement of some sort.
 - ‘*eucharisteo*’ (Gk) - to thank, give thanks.
 - The core idea here is that of ‘grace’ (‘*charis*’ (Gk)), with thanks being the response to the unmerited favour that has been received from God.
- To “thank” (English) - means to express gratitude towards another for a benefit or favour and showing an appreciation for a kindness they have done.
- The verb “to thank” is used in general parlance bears the following key elements:
 - thanksgiving is based on and requires an acknowledgement of some benefit or blessing received, and of from whom or where it came
 - it is done as a response to what another has done (it is something that has impacted one’s mind, will, heart, desires, senses)
 - it is expressed towards someone else
 - it cannot be demanded or commanded, for otherwise it would not be genuine, for thanks (the expression of gratitude) must come voluntarily from the heart.
- Question - How to give thanksgiving in prayer?
- Five elements of our thanksgiving:
 - The **object** of our thanksgiving - Who we give thanks to
 - The **subject** of our thanksgiving - What we give thanks for
 - The **reason** for our thanksgiving - Why we give thanks
 - The **manner** of our thanksgiving - How we give thanks
 - The **timing** of our thanksgiving - When we give thanks.

The object of our thanksgiving - Who we give thanks to

- Short answer - the Lord
 - Ps 105:1, 106:1, and 107:1; Mt 6:9; Jn 11:41; Mt 6:9; Rom 1:8; 1 Cor 1:4; and 1 Thes 1:2.
- In directing our prayers to the Lord we are acknowledging:
 - the Lord as the creator, provider, and sustainer
 - the Lord is rightfully due our thanks
 - people are sinful creature and unworthy of any blessing
- Thanksgiving must recognise and reflect the creator/creature distinction
- 1 Chron 16:8-36, and Ps 100

The subject of our thanksgiving - What we give thanks for

- Short answer - Everything!
 - Eph 5:20 and 1 Thes 5:18.
- In giving thanks for everything we are acknowledging:
 - the Lord's covenant is the basis on which we receive all blessings
 - covenant blessings are many and great,
 - covenant required obedience and service
- Thanksgiving must recognise and reflect God's covenant and the master/servant distinction
- Deut 7:7-12, 28:2-12, and Ps 106.

The reason for our thanksgiving - Why we give thanks

- Short answer - Gratitude
 - Ps 138:1-3.
- In giving thanks to the Lord we are also acknowledging:
 - the mercy, grace, and kindness of the Lord
 - we are not worthy of any blessing or benefit in and of ourselves
- Thanksgiving must recognise and reflect God as the gracious saviour
- Lk 3:15-16.

The manner of our thanksgiving - How we give thanks

- Short answer - Humility
- In giving thanks we must acknowledge:
 - we are coming before a holy and sovereign Lord
 - that only the holy are entitled to come into his presence and is a privilege
 - any approach must be with all humility
- Thanksgiving must recognise and reflect the holiness of the Lord
- Ps 66:13-15, 96:7-9, 100

The timing of our thanksgiving - When we give thanks

- Short answer - Always
 - Eph 1:16, 5:20; Phil 4:4-6; 1 Thes 2:13, and 5:17.
- When we give thanks we must acknowledge:
 - we are forever in the Lord's loving care and always receiving his gracious provision
 - our lives must always be ones of an attitude of prayer
- Thanksgiving must recognise and reflect that the Lord is our eternal father and we are forever in the Lord's loving care and receiving his gracious provision
- 1 Chron 16:34; Ps 100:4-5, 106:1, 107:1, 136.

Two case studies

- The thankful leper - Lk 17:11-19
 - Who owes what to whom?
 - The one who returned – a Samaritan
 - Misguided call for mercy
 - Acknowledging the source of mercy – the essence of thanksgiving and the evidence of genuine faith
- The Pharisee and the tax collector - Lk 18:9-14
 - How they approached
 - What they said
 - Self-righteousness and thankfulness are mutually exclusive