

Thanksgiving

Even if your family does not consistently pray before meals, surveys show more than half of U. S. families say grace before enjoying their annual Thanksgiving feast. In a 2016 Meyocks survey, 56% of Americans said they always pray before eating the meal while just 17% of families said they never do.

It is no surprise that 71% of Americans are most thankful for their family. You may be more surprised to learn that according to a 2017 poll by The Washington Post and the Kaiser Family Foundation, the simple act of routinely saying grace is a widespread practice in the U. S. Roughly half of Americans offer a prayer over their food at least a few times each week.

I had to smile when I read about a four-year-old boy who was allowed to give thanks for the family before their Thanksgiving dinner. Each family member bowed their head and the child thanked God for his friends; he named each one by name. Then the child thanked God for his: mommy, daddy, brother, sister, grandma, grandpa, and then all his aunts and uncles. After that he expressed his gratitude for the turkey, the dressing, the fruit salad, the cranberry sauce, the pies, the cakes, and even the cool whip. Then he paused... After several moments of silence, he looked up at his mother and asked, "If I thank the Lord for the broccoli, won't He know I'm lying?"

I love the honesty of the story. The child was onto something significant. When we pray at Thanksgiving, or any other time, God knows whether we are actually grateful or are just reciting memorized words and trying to fulfill a cultural expectation.

The Apostle Paul encouraged believers in the first century to, “Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.” (1 Thessalonians 5:18, NLT)

Thanksgiving is our only national holiday set aside to encourage us to do something which, down deep, we know we should do. When others are kind to us, we should acknowledge it and be thankful; similarly, when God blesses us, it is appropriate to be grateful to Him as well.

Expressing gratitude to God is always a good thing. Besides helping us recognize our blessings; being thankful helps us acknowledge God has been good to us.

Happy Thanksgiving everyone, may your celebration this year overflow with gratitude which is both honest and heartfelt.