

Gratitude

Life Group Guide | Sunday, November 20, 2022

Review the Group Guidelines and read the following outloud:

Thanksgiving became an official holiday in 1863 by proclamation of President Lincoln during a time when he felt the country could benefit from a focus on gratitude. Near that time, he also wrote these words:

We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of Heaven; we have been preserved these many years in peace and prosperity; we have grown in numbers, wealth, and power as no other nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us, and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us. It behooves us, then, to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins, and to pray for clemency and forgiveness.
(Proclamation 97, Appointing a Day of National Humiliation, Fasting and Prayer, March 30, 1863)

What reflections do you have after hearing what Lincoln wrote over 150 years ago?

Read Psalm 136:1-9; 23-26

One of the definitions of gratitude shared by Pastor John was:

“Gratitude is a byproduct of an awareness of God’s goodness.”

Discussion questions:

1. What gets in the way of you noticing God’s goodness in your life?
2. What things do you do (or not do) that contributes to your lack of noticing God’s goodness as frequently as you could?
3. Several suggestions were given for practicing the discipline of gratitude. Which one works for you or which one would you like to try?

Review the main ideas from the message:

- Gratitude requires a benefactor (a giver), benefits (the gift), a beneficiary (a receiver) and a benediction (naming our gifts)
- Practicing and verbalizing gratitude are part of a Christ-following lifestyle

Dayenu Practice (if available use Dayenu handout given during service):

Hannah and John introduced us to Dayenu (*Die-ay-new*) practice. This Jewish passover tradition is the corporate, verbal expression of gratitude. After a gift God has given is announced, the group shouts “*Dayenu!*” in response. Dayenu means “It would have been enough!”

The format of the Dayenu practice is:

“It would have been enough _____ but you gave _____!”

For example, “It would have been enough that I have fresh air to breathe each day, but you gave beautiful things to look at.”

Give each person several minutes to fill in the sentence above with their own gratitude response. They can complete as many sentences as they can think of.

Go around the room and have each person share their response. Repeat this until you’ve exhausted the responses.

Ask: After completing this exercise, how do you feel? Is that the same or different than when the group started tonight?

Close time in prayer with gratitude to God for all these gifts.