

# EVENING: GRATITUDE & CONFESSION

*Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. - 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18*

## DAILY GRATITUDE

*Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. - Colossians 4:2*

The evening is a time for resting and presence. In the evening, we are tired from the events of the day, and the greatest gift we can give one another is undivided presence with other tired people in need of rest in each other's company. However, we often litter our homes, dinner tables, and relationships with the clutter we carry home from the day. In order to be present to one another at the close of the day, we must first become present to God.

## DAYENU

During the Jewish Passover, Israel sings a song of gratitude for God's deliverance in the Exodus called Dayenu. Traditionally, dayenu means "it would have been enough." A more modern translation might sound like, "Thank you God for overdoing it." This is an excellent prompt for giving thanks to God at the close of the day.

## REVIEW THE DAY

Remember the events of the day: The people, tasks, messages, meals, demands, and surprises.

Remember all of it. As you make your way back through the day from morning to evening, give thanks to God for anything and everything you have to be grateful for.

## PRAY GRATITUDE

"God, lunch today would've been enough, but you provided me with the resources to choose the type of food I wanted to eat."

"God, lunch of my choice would've been enough, but you created a world of flavor and spice and culture to make food more than fuel but delicious."

"God, a delicious lunch of my choice would've been enough, but you gave me a co-worker to share a conversation with over food."

It keeps on going like that, but you get the point.

"Thank you God for overdoing it." That's Dayenu, and that's how we pray gratitude.

Take time now to take an inventory of your day, using this form as a way to savor blessings and give thanks.

Ronald Rolheiser writes, "To receive in gratitude, to be properly grateful, is the most primary of all religious attitudes. Proper gratitude is the ultimate virtue. It defines sanctity. Saints, holy persons, are people who are grateful, people who see and receive everything as a gift. The converse is also true. Anyone who takes life and love for granted should not ever be confused with a saint."

When we end the day in gratitude, we remember the fingerprints of God all across the hours of the day. We enter into the evening present and restful in the company of others in need of restful presence.

## DAILY CONFESSION

Confession needs to be a regular rhythm in our walk with the Lord because we are aware of our sinfulness, not only as individuals, but corporately as a community. We seek God's mercy and forgiveness, as we turn away from sin and toward new life in Christ.

In Psalm 51 we you won't find a joyful song from King David, who wrote many of the joyful Psalms that we love to sing and say. You will actually find King David in a humble and weak position before God.

Nathan, the prophet, had boldly confronted David and told him that he needed to turn from his wicked ways back to God.

Instead of defending himself, David makes a confession before the Lord of his need for God's mercy. And this confession has been used for years in the church.

Confession isn't a dirty word. Confession before the Lord does not mean guilt. It does not mean shame. When we confess corporately and privately we are promised freedom and joy.

Take time now to take an inventory of your day again.

Confession can be as simple or as detailed as possible.

In what ways were you far from God? Ask yourself, did you make choices that were worthy of God's calling?

A small note: The Holy Spirit convicts and guides, but He never wants shame and guilt to manifest itself in your walk with God. If you feel shame, lean on God's grace. If you experience guilt, remember what the Bible says.

## HELPFUL TIP

As you pray, we encourage you to pray along with a physical action. Open your hands as an outward expression of your desire to receive God's grace. Kneel in humility before the Lord. Adding physical actions to our prayer life often allow us to connect to God in new ways.

*Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus - Romans 8*