

Pray with Thanksgiving

Scripture Reading — Philippians 4:4-9

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. — Philippians 4:6

When I visited for meals at my grandmother's house as a boy, she always let me do the dishes. Her kitchen-sink window had a shelf with beautiful purple, white, and pink African violets. She also kept notecards on her windowsill with handwritten Bible verses. One card, I remember, highlighted Paul's sound advice for praying "in every situation."

Though he was probably a prisoner at the time, Paul writes a cheerful, optimistic letter to the church in Philippi, brimming with joy. He includes sound pastoral advice for daily Christian living, including suggestions for prayer. As in other letters, Paul urges his friends to pray in all situations. And "do not be anxious about anything," he says, but bring everything before God.

Paul also mentions a vitally important ingredient: praying with a thankful heart. Indeed, "thanksgiving" is one of the basic characteristics of the Christian life. With a thankful heart we can acknowledge that we are utterly dependent on our loving and faithful heavenly Father.

Paul assures us that when we bring everything to God in prayer with thanksgiving, we will experience the peace of God that beats all conventional wisdom and keeps us secure in Jesus' love. My grandmother knew this and loved to be reminded of it.

Prayer

Father, fill our hearts with thanksgiving for your many, many blessings, and help us to turn to you in all situations. Amen.

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