

169. A MEAL TIME PRAYER - THURSDAY - OCTOBER 22, 2026

Good morning, Grace Harbor – it's Dan. Happy Thursday!

Well, it **will** be Thursday when this episode releases, but I'm actually recording it Wednesday evening. You see, I asked George if I could come by when the truck from the Co-Op delivers the fresh food on Thursday morning. He said, "Sure, but just know it's around 4:30 in the morning."

"No problem!" I replied – with probably a little too much confidence. So, the kids are in bed, I want to get this episode ready, and then I'm going to turn in myself.

So, let's get to it! Thursdays are the days when we spend extra time on the practice of prayer. And, since we've been talking about food this week, I was wondering if you ever say a prayer before you eat. You might call it a prayer, some people call it the blessing, others call it "saying grace."

We try to do it at most meals, though we aren't perfect. The idea is to both thank God and offer a blessing over the food. In my church tradition, a blessing doesn't do anything magical to the food, but rather it's naming out loud the love that God has for us and gives to us – especially through the meal.

We've encountered other prayers of blessing recently when I prayed over each squash I was wiping down during the

harvest, and when we did the Blessing of the Animals. The idea is the same for the meal you're about to share.

You might pray the same prayer every time. When my daughter was younger, she sort of mashed up words from other prayers she'd heard, and accidentally created one of my favorite pre-meal prayers of all time, which we now use regularly: "Dear Jesus, thank you for our holy daily bread. Amen."

And especially if the vibes are already a little silly when we sit down, my wife will break out one of the fun prayers they used at the summer camp she used to work at – including one that is sung to the tune of the Superman theme song!

And while lots of religious traditions have prayers and other rituals around gratitude for food, the Christian tradition of praying over a meal is often connected to Jesus' example of praying before meals, which was an expression of Jesus' own Jewish faith. A great example comes in the story known as the feeding of the five thousand when Jesus took what little food they had, gave thanks to God, blessed it, broke it, and it became more than enough.

Another famous example of Jesus blessing a meal comes when he celebrates communion for the first time with his disciples. And speaking of communion, you've probably heard me talk about the Fruit of the Earth Bakery, which is owned by my friend Brie. It's where I get the communion bread for our church. Well, the name of her bakery comes

from a prayer used by some churches when they celebrate communion where the bread is described as “fruit of the earth and work of human hands.”

I think that is such a beautiful image that can be applied to more than just communion because all good meals are a combination of God’s blessings through the growing of the ingredients, the hard work of the often unseen people who help bring food to market, and the skilled work of the ones cooking.

For your time of discussion together, I’d like to see if you can create your own family pre-meal prayer. I’m going to give you a simple framework and offer an example or two for each part, but then leave space for you to craft your own.

So, I always like to open with gratitude to God. Many of my prayers begin with something like “Dear God, we thank you for this day and for all of your blessings.” Go ahead and offer a suggestion for a way you could begin your prayer with thanks to God.

[SHORT PAUSE]

Next, because it’s a meal and the food is on everyone’s mind, it’s a good idea to go ahead and acknowledge that you’re praying for the food. It could be as simple as, “We ask that you would bless this food.” I often say, “bless this food to the nourishment of our bodies” – meaning, use this food to make us healthy and strong. Go ahead and come up with your part about the food now.

[SHORT PAUSE]

Now would be a good time in the prayer to acknowledge those that put in the work to make this food available to us. You could specifically name groups of people like farmers, farm workers, those who transport the food, those who sell food, and those who cooked. Or, a common prayer I've heard is, "Bless this food and the hands that prepared it." Share your thoughts on how you can widen the thank you now.

[SHORT PAUSE]

Finally, you can close the prayer in whatever way feels most natural to you. Some people like to close with one more statement of gratitude, such as "we love you and we thank you." Some use a traditional line like "In Jesus' name we pray." And some people just say "Amen," with an occasional encouragement "now eat!" tacked on at the end by a 3-year-old. Or maybe that only happens in my house. Suggest a closing to your family's prayer now.

[SHORT PAUSE]

Ok! Why don't you go ahead and put your whole prayer together, and then I'll share mine to close. If you're at the breakfast table right now, then it's perfect timing! But wherever you happen to be, you can hold one of today's meals in your mind. If you want to, you can close your eyes and fold your hands.

[SHORT PAUSE]

Dear God, we thank you for this day and for all of your blessings. We ask that you would bless this meal to the nourishment of our bodies, and bless the many hands that helped prepare it. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Ok, Grace Harbor, have a great Thursday. Hopefully I woke up on time this morning and was able to see the food delivery. Either way, I'll tell you about it tomorrow!

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