

Why Do We Pray Before Meals?

What's your favorite food? Fried chicken? A juicy steak? Scrambled eggs? Not infrequently, we gather around a bountiful table of meat, potatoes, vegetables and desserts. And many of us do so with prayer and expressions of gratitude for gifts received.

While we might take such a moment of prayer for granted, do you ever think of eating as a time of worship? Maybe you should.

Most of us learned to pray before meals a long time ago. Parents teach their small children to pray before meals and, sometimes, even after meals. Such prayer before meals is sometimes called "grace," as in, "Let's say grace," coming from the Latin word gratia, meaning "thanks."



Family Mealtime Prayers



BLESSING BEFORE MEALS

Bless us, O Lord, and these thy gifts which we are about to receive from thy bounty, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

GRACE AFTER MEALS

We give thee thanks, almighty God, for all your benefits, who livest and reignest forever and ever.

Amen.

Alternate conclusion:
And may the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God rest in peace. Amen



Faith-Filled Family Mealtimes



Quick and Easy Ways to Make Mealtime Prayer More Impactful

- Sing the traditional Grace Before Meals prayer—improvise the melody.
- Say a prayer chain—go around the table and let each person tell God something he or she is thankful for that day.
- Read a passage from Scripture—don't worry about having to add anything to it. Let the verse be the prayer.
- Take 15 seconds of total silence, letting each family member pray to himself or herself. You may be amazed at how powerfully prayerful a pause can be!
- Move the prayer from before the meal to after the meal. Simply changing when you say the prayer can help people focus more on the act of praying.

Tips for Quality Family Mealtimes

1. Commit to a set time for meals (daily, weekly, or according to your schedule).
2. Turn off the TV, computers, and handheld games, and don't answer the phone. Don't flip through your mail.
3. Use prayer to mark the transition from busyness to mealtime. Be mindful of those who don't have enough to eat today.
4. Slow down enough to taste and enjoy your food.
5. Hold one conversation at a time. Everyone gets a chance to speak. You can disagree, but you can't be unkind about it.
6. Encourage laughter.
7. Practice manners, such as saying please and thank you and asking politely for people to pass the salt, and so on. Everyone stays at the table until they're excused to leave.
8. Give everyone a role in preparing or cleaning up. Even small children can help set the table or put napkins in place.
9. Regularly invite guests to your table. Welcome them as you would welcome Jesus. Treat your family members the same way.
10. Always end with a quick expression of gratitude to God and thanks to the cook!

Hours of family fun and faith-talk are just a click away!

<https://tinyurl.com/FamilyFunFaith>

When you click the button from this link, a random question will pop up to spark fun and creative family conversations. Below each question you'll find a family faith tip related to the general theme of the question, followed by a short, original prayer that families can pray together.

Encourage everyone in the family to share his or her answer to the question, and talk about how the faith tip might be applied to your family life. Use the question, tip, and prayer as unique opportunities to grow together as a family.

Although this resource can be used just about anywhere, you may find it especially effective and enjoyable at the dinner table. With nearly 50 questions, faith tips, and prayers at your disposal, mealtime will never again be mum time! Have fun together as a family!

