

Table Prayers for a Family Agape Meal

“Agape” is the New Testament word for love, particularly, Divine Love. Christians have long used the word to describe a meal eaten together in Christian Fellowship with special prayers of thanksgiving for God’s providence. It has been carried into our tradition alongside the celebration of the Eucharist as a somewhat less formal gathering that way of transforming a normal meal into a time of particular thanksgiving and unity in the Spirit.

Opening Prayers

LEADER: How wonderful it is, how pleasant, for God’s people to live together in harmony! (Ps 133)

In the name of Christ, we are together to share God’s love and to offer thanks and blessing.

PEOPLE: We share our food and our lives with one another, following the example of Jesus.

LEADER: We break bread together, and pray that we may be open to God’s presence and open to one another.

PEOPLE: We give our thanks to God, the founder of this and every feast.

LEADER: May God bless this food and our fellowship.

PEOPLE: We give thanks for this abundance, and we remember those who do not have enough.

LEADER: May God give food to those who are hungry.

PEOPLE: May God use our hands and lives to feed God’s children, by giving us a hunger for justice and righteousness.

[If Communion is to be received as part of the meal

READER: Jesus said, “Very truly, I tell you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live for ever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”-- John 6:47-51

PEOPLE: Thanks be to God.

LEADER: Jesus taught us to call God our Father, and so we have the courage to say

PEOPLE : Our Father...

LEADER: As this grain once scattered over the hills was gathered together and became one, so gather Your Church together from the ends of the earth into Your kingdom.

PEOPLE: To You be the glory and the power forever.

LEADER: The Body of Christ, the bread of heaven.

Communion from the Church is consumed by all who desire it at the table, after receiving, all say together

Gracious Father, we give you praise and thanks for this Holy Communion of the Body of your

beloved Son Jesus Christ, the pledge of our redemption; and we pray that it may bring us forgiveness of our sins, strength in our weakness, and everlasting salvation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**]

Setting the table

A candle may be lighted with the following prayer

Blessed be God, who created the light and separated it from the darkness. Blessed be God who has shown us the light of the world in Jesus of Nazareth. Blessed be God who has called us to join the company of the saints in light.

Bread for the meal may be set out with the following prayer

Blessed be God who brings forth food from the earth to sustain us, and has given us the Bread of Life in Jesus our Lord. Blessed be God who has called us to be taken, blessed, broken, and shared for the love of God's creation. Amen.

Wine for the meal may be set out with the following prayer

Blessed be God, who gives us friends and fellowship to gladden our hearts. Blessed be God who has refreshed us with the cup of salvation. Blessed be God who has grafted us onto Christ, the True Vine. Amen.

Other food may be set out with the following prayers

Blessed be God who alone satisfies our hungers and longings. Blessed be God who strengthens us for service. Blessed be God who feeds us with the food that endures to eternal life. Amen.

When the meal is finished, all may join in the Prayer of Thanksgiving

PEOPLE: Accept, O Lord, our thanks and praise for all that you have done for us. We thank you for the splendor of the whole creation, for the beauty of this world, for the wonder of life, and for the mystery of love. We thank you for the blessing of family and friends, and for the loving care which surrounds us on every side. We thank you for setting us at tasks which demand our best efforts, and for leading us to accomplishments which satisfy and delight us. We thank you also for those disappointments and failures that lead us to acknowledge our dependence on you alone. Above all, we thank you for your Son Jesus Christ; for the truth of his Word and the example of his life; for his steadfast obedience, by which he overcame temptation; for his dying, through which he overcame death; and for his rising to life again, in which we are raised to the life of your kingdom. Grant us the gift of your Spirit, that we may know him and make him known; and through him, at all times and in all places, may give thanks to you in all things. Amen.

LEADER: The Peace of the Lord be always with you.

PEOPLE: And also with you.

All may share a sign of Christ's Peace with one another.