

How Your Thanksgiving Can Be More Than Just a Calendar Date

Toward the end of the month, we turned our attention to Thanksgiving and the meal we were all sharing at Regina's house after church services in the morning. Nathan would be home from Alaska, the harvest season was over for another year, and Thanksgiving was marked on the calendar. It was time to thank God for family, for freedom, for food and shelter and all the abundant blessings He showered upon us daily, hourly.

Food, of course, is the main element of the Thanksgiving meal. In the weeks before Thanksgiving, our conversation centers there quite often, and on such enthralling topics as holiday turkey prices and whether Butterball brand turkeys are better than any other brand.

"I need to copy your recipe for cranberry salad," one of us will say to Mom.

And: "If a recipe asks for heavy cream, is that the same as the whipping cream you buy in the store?"

Or: "I'm hungry for pimento dip with crackers, Mom. Do you still have some?"

To which Mom would reply, "Yes, I have lots of canned pimento mix in jars in the cellar. And plenty of cream cheese in the fridge. I'll make some."

The seasons keep swinging, the years keep passing, and time is like a relentless tide that never hurries, never waits, never stops. It takes us all along, whether we notice or not, whether we like it or not.

As everything changes in one way or another, we continue to

cherish family and make it our highest priority. After all, other people are the only thing on earth that you can take along to heaven. Where better, then, to invest your time and your life, than in other people? And especially those you encounter most often.

There is a timelessness in love—love for God first, then love for those around us. And of that love, the ties of a family legacy are the most precious.

It's easy to remember that during the good times, the times of thanksgiving and days of laughter. It's harder to keep that firmly fixed in one's heart when the hard times come, the storms, the tests. But why thank God only for good things, sunshine, happiness, laughter?

I'm still learning to thank Him as well for the difficulties, the rain, the times of tears. But those times are the ones that bring growth, make us stronger, send roots deeper into faith and trust in God's ultimate plan.

Thanksgiving is not just a day that arrives on the calendar once a year and gives us a chance to get together and celebrate with cranberry relish and turkey and stuffing and desserts. It's a heart condition for those who love God and believe in His divine love and salvation and guidance.

"Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 5:20). {eoa}

Darla Weaver is a homemaker, gardener, writer and Old Order Mennonite living in the hills of southern Ohio. She is the author of *Water My Soul*, *Many Lighted Windows* and *Gathering of Sisters*. Weaver has written for *Family Life*, *Ladies Journal*, *Young Companion* and other magazines for Amish and Old Order Mennonite groups. Before her three children were born she also taught school. Her hobbies are gardening and writing.

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