

Kingdom Economics: How Godly Traditions Convey Kingdom Truths

Read Time: 3 Minutes 53 Seconds

WalletHub estimates 97% of Americans celebrate Thanksgiving and were expected to spend \$835 million on Thanksgiving turkeys for last week's holiday. More than 50 million people were expected to watch the Macy's Thanksgiving Parade on television and 3.5 million people were expected to be spectators along the route.

Turkey, stuffing, pumpkin pie, mashed potatoes, sweet potatoes and cranberry garnishments top the list of favorite Thanksgiving dishes. The average number of calories consumed on Thanksgiving range between 3,150 and 4,500.

When Americans were asked what they were thankful for this Thanksgiving, they responded: family (84%), health (69%), friends (63%), memories (63%), personal freedom (53%), stability (47%), fun experiences (45%), opportunities (42%), achievements (33%) and wealth (21%).

The tradition that we observe as Thanksgiving began with a three-day harvest feast in 1621 with the Pilgrims and the Wampanoag tribe. The Pilgrims had arrived in the New World to escape religious persecution and find a new life. The Pilgrims were deeply religious and the only holidays celebrated were the Sabbath, days of thanksgiving and days of fasting. They lost about half of their original members with the harsh conditions of the first winter. But with the help of God and the Wampanoag, they enjoyed a bountiful harvest.

Most of the Pilgrim's prayers were spontaneous, and we don't have a record of the prayers offered during the first

Thanksgiving. The first recorded day of prayer by the Pilgrims was in 1623.

“Plymouth had been stricken with a severe drought. ‘Upon which,’ said William Bradford, ‘they set apart a solemn day of humiliation, to seek the Lord by humble and fervent prayer, in this great distress.’ That same evening it began ‘to rain with such sweet and gentle showers as gave them cause of rejoicing and blessing God ... For which mercy, in time convenient, they also set apart a day of thanksgiving.’”

President Washington declared a national day of Thanksgiving and Prayer in 1789.

“Whereas, it is the duty of all Nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits and humbly to implore His protection and favor ... a day of public thanksgiving and prayer to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many signal favors of Almighty God.”

President Lincoln declared the last Thursday of November in 1863 as a day of Thanksgiving and Praise.

“... I do therefore invite my fellow citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next, as a day of Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the heavens.”

Thanksgiving Day is a godly tradition. Not all of its observances are godly, but its root is godly. Since its inception, its purpose has been to recognize our heavenly Father as sovereign (filled with mercy, grace and truth), to thank Him for His many blessings, and to seek His future blessings.

Tradition can mean the intergenerational transmission of customs or beliefs. The Lord often used tradition to remind

the Israelites of His faithfulness. The three pilgrimage feasts (Ex 23:14-17) of Unleavened Bread (Pessach/Passover), Weeks (Shavuot/Pentecost) and Booths (Sukkoth) were all designed to remind future generations of His faithfulness.

The first feast brought the Passover, deliverance from Egypt and gratefulness for the early harvest into remembrance. The second feast was originally thankfulness for the later harvest but eventually included the giving of the Torah. The third pilgrimage of the Israelites reminded of the 40 years in the desert when they were forced to rely on God alone for substance and protection.

A few of the other Jewish holidays include Purim (protection and deliverance), Rosh Hashanah (creation, New Year), Yom Kippur (Atonement) and Chanukah (lights). All expressed God's faithfulness to present and future generations. Jewish traditions are one reason the Jewish people have maintained their national identity through millennia of some of the severest trials and persecutions the world has seen. The Lord's wisdom in establishing traditions is evident.

Jesus gave the tradition of Communion which has reminded generations of the Messiah's sacrifice for us, the new covenant and His forthcoming return. It has also served as a unifying tradition for believers of all denominations and generations.

"I have received of the Lord that which I delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus, on the night in which He was betrayed, took bread. When He had given thanks, He broke it and said, 'Take and eat. This is My body which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of Me.' In the same manner, He took the cup after He had supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.' As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes," (1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

Since traditions are important to the Lord, should rededicate ourselves to greater emphasis on Godly traditions. If we want future generations to have the beliefs and values of the kingdom, we should teach them to future generations via Godly traditions.

Perhaps, we can even go as far as implementing family traditions which testify to the Lord's intervention on our and our family's behalf.

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