

Giving Thanks Before Meals

Most Christians pray a short prayer, giving thanks to God for the food, before they eat their evening meal.

Why?

From what I have seen, most of them don't pray before lunch. Even less seem to pray before breakfast.

I've never seen a Christian pray before eating gum, or a candy bar.

Why not?

Why do we do this? And where is the line that decides whether we pray or not pray?

Amazingly I have found a strong reaction to even asking this question. It is a ritual for us, and we don't like it to be challenged.

But let's ask it anyway. That's healthy.

The only "giving thanks", (before a meal), recorded in the Bible is when Yeshua was handing out bread.

When Yeshua fed the 5000, Matthew and Mark say that Yeshua blessed the bread, and gave thanks for the fish.

When he fed the 4000 he gave thanks for the bread and blessed the fish. Luke and John just say Yeshua gave thanks both times.

Btw: Yeshua didn't bow his head to pray, he looked up to Heaven. Why do we always close our eyes and bow our heads when we pray? What's with that?

And when Yeshua was instituting communion at the last supper, he blessed the bread, (during the meal), broke it, and handed it out saying, "This is my body". And then he gave thanks for the wine, (or more literally for the cup), and passed that around too.

Oh, and another btw: this was no ordinary bread. It was Passover bread. Made without yeast, (representing his body made without sin). I wonder if when Yeshua said, "as often as you eat this bread", he actually did mean, "as often as you eat this Passover bread"... also implying that his followers should keep Passover as a remembrance of his sacrifice?

And Paulus gave thanks to God for the bread that he handed out to his fellow sailors just before they were shipwrecked on Malta, (Acts 27).

But these are very special occasions. And it would be dangerous to use these to create a rule for daily life.

There are of course many occasions listed in the Bible where people ate food. None of the others, (except for the Passover meal), mention the giving of thanks. (That doesn't prove that they didn't pray first, but just that it's not mentioned).

In Romans 14 Paulus says it's OK for Christians to eat anything because they are thankful to God for it.

But we can be thankful without a specific ritual prayer before we eat it right? Thankful is an attitude, which we can have with or without a prayer.

And if we can't be thankful without a specific prayer, then that would apply to gum and candies as well as our evening meal. At least we should be consistent.

In fact, there are many things we should be thankful for. Paulus tells us to be thankful for everything, and to give thanks in all circumstances.

Perhaps we should we stop and pray more often, and not just when we are about to eat?

So?

So, be thankful because every mouthful you eat, every step you walk, every breath you take, every beat of your heart, is given to you by God.

It's up to you what you do before you eat. But if you cannot eat without praying because it's a ritual that has mastered you, then perhaps you have a problem.

At least you should do some research and have a think about it. Pray about it, perhaps you'll be surprised by the answer.

But whether you pray or not. Be thankful.