

Gratitude

Meister Eckhart said that if the only prayer we ever said was thanks, it would suffice.

I once heard a rabbi share that every day we should offer to God thanks for one hundred things, people, abilities that touch our lives. Now such a practice might seem daunting but consider beginning by offering thanks for one thing, person, ability each day. Or each morning give thanks for the day that is to unfold and each evening give thanks for the day that has been. Or consider keeping a gratitude journal; or begin a birthday gratitude practice, or be intentional about an end of year review.

- Gratitude Journal - A spiritual practice you might consider is at the end of each day to take time to think of five things, people, events ... that have touched your life that day and for which you are thankful. Write these things, people, events in a journal and name these gratitudes before God and give thanks. This is a great way to end a day giving thanks for what has been, grounding our days in gratitude.
- Birthday – Consider on your birthday writing/naming the number of things you are thankful for – aim to make these at least equivalent to your years. A variation of this is that on the birthday celebration the members of the family list the things for which they are grateful for in the birthday person.
- End of Year Review – As you think back over the year that has been take time to remember and give thanks for the people, events and things that have touched your life. Remember the moments when your life has been graced by God's presence and give thanks.

Gratitude can be more than an individual practice, some congregations have discovered ways to be intentional about sharing gratitude with one another.

In one congregation they begin each board meeting with a time of gratitude – naming before one another the gifts that have been shared in that faith community since the last meeting.

In another congregation letters of appreciation are sent out to all who give of their times, treasures, talents after each special event or occasion in the life of the faith community.

A great, foundational book on gratitude is written by Mary Jo Leddy. It offers ideas for living lives of gratitude. See *Radical Gratitude*, 2002, available from UCRD.