

HARVEST

Celebrating harvest festivals as we know it today began in 1843 when the Rev. Robert Hawker invited people to a special thanksgiving service for the harvest at his church in Cornwall. With decorated churches and famous hymns like “We plough the fields and scatter” helped to keep this in church calendars to this day. It serves as a reminder to thank God for our provision, our farmers, and connects us with the seasons. We may not be as connected to the seasonal rhythms of the land as we were back then but it remains a time to say thank you.

Our context today is one of uncertainty, high inflation, increase cost of living with food and energy prices noticeably increasing the past few years. It’s easy to get down about it all so a good practice, like starting a prayer is to ask:
what am I thankful for today?

READ Deuteronomy 8

How was God providing for the Israelites? How have you experienced Gods provision in your life?

In Deut 8:11-14 the author gives a warning, how easy do you find it to forget what God has done for you? Are there any things you do that help you to remember to thank God?

READ 2 Corinthians 9: 6-15

‘⁶Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.’ Is a famous verse but what does it mean to you?

Paul is drumming up support for a donation that was promised from the Corinthian church to aid the struggling church in Jerusalem. But he doesn’t want them to give because they have to but rather out of generosity. Paul seeks to change the perspective from cold money calculations to a heart issue of generosity even when you don’t feel you have enough money yourself.

“To give,” says one ancient commentator “is not to lose but to sow seed.” The fruits of generous giving are as productive and sure as the fruits of the earth in the season of good harvest. The ultimate purpose of the collection, as of all forms of Christian ‘service’, is the expression of thanksgiving from grateful hearts to God. People glorify God by acting generously, because it is inspired by him and reflects his own character (cf. Matt. 5:43–48) How do you feel when you give? Do you agree with the ancient commentator above?

Open Door

This year, our food collection will go to Open Door, a charity in Taunton working with the homeless and providing regular meals during the week. If you aren’t sure what or where they are take a moment to look at their website or ask someone in your group who may know more.

Prayer

Take a moment to give thanks and show gratitude to God for his care and provision this year. Ask for forgiveness when you find it hard to trust in his provision and to look upon his creation with generosity. Pray that God would bless charities like Open Door to look after those who have little to nothing and he would lead us to know how we might help too.