

23 November 2018

### **“Thanksgiving and our Rituals”**

From time to time, people ask me why we should go to church. I would like to cite a specific example of how ritual functions—and worship is part of the Christian ritual.

A timely example of ritual is our secular celebration of Thanksgiving, which by the way, we model on the Hebrew notion of giving thanks to God. I suggest secular simply because Thanksgiving Day has been set aside for national thanksgiving to God by our presidents from at least as far back as Abraham Lincoln. In point of fact, for Christians every Sabbath Day is a day of thanksgiving. Thus, in a way, Christians should be experts at giving thanks to God.

Many families have their own thanksgiving rituals. I still remember the thanksgivings we spent at my grandparents’ house when growing up. We would all gather at the farm, eat a wonderful meal and soon dismiss the children to play outside. After the children left, the adults would push their plates back and listen to my grandfather spin tall tales about his life. Yet, his stories so entertained, that we youngsters would sneak back in and listen to his fantastic “whoppers!” Each Thanksgiving Day was exactly the same. Thanksgiving Days, as I remember them, are imprinted deeply on my soul. They were among my best childhood memories.

This is how ritual served us and my guess is that it functions this way for many families. We attend worship as either a nuclear family or part of the family of God because the ritual of worship gives our lives meaning and joy. Our worship ritual also gives us a formal opportunity to thank God for the gift we call life!

**Come, Worship  
Stay, Learn  
Go, Serve**