

# PathLights

*"Your word is a lamp to my feet  
and a light to my path"  
Psalm 119:104*

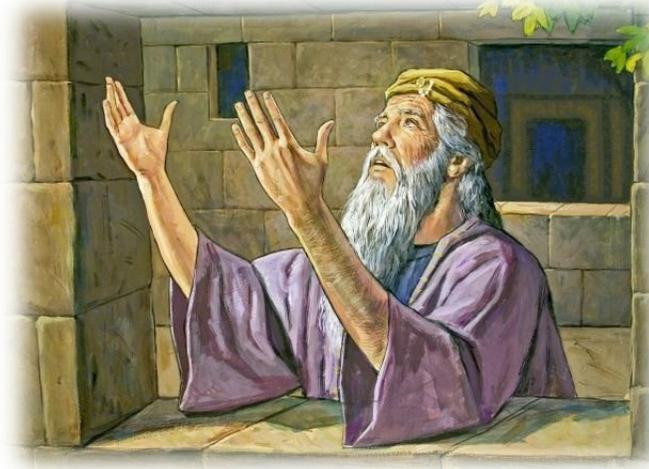
November 19, 2017

## An Extraordinary Thanksgiving

by Frank Himmel

Our national Thanksgiving holiday is upon us once again. Consider Daniel 6:10, which describes a day of thanksgiving in that prophet's life.

Now when Daniel knew that the document was signed, he entered his house (now in his roof chamber he had windows open toward Jerusalem); and he continued kneeling on his knees three times a day, praying and giving thanks before His God, as he had been doing previously.



Note carefully the description of Daniel's praying.

*He entered his house.* Daniel had no desire to make a show of praying. Jesus cautioned us about practicing our righteousness, including prayer, to be seen by men (Matthew 6:1, 5).

On the other hand, *he prayed with his windows open.* While Daniel was not trying to impress others with his praying, he was not at all ashamed for others to know that he was a man of prayer, a believer in God.

Daniel's windows were opened toward Jerusalem, indicating that *he prayed as God instructed.* At Solomon's dedication of the temple, he expressed the desire that when God's people were captives in a foreign land, if they returned to the Lord with all their heart and prayed toward the land, the city, and the temple God had chosen, the Lord would hear (1 Kings 8:46ff). God agreed (9:1ff).

*He prayed kneeling.* While no specific posture in prayer is required, what could better reflect the humility God desires than kneeling before Him?

*He prayed three times a day.* David once said that he would complain to the Lord evening and morning and noon (Psalm 55:17)—complaining in the sense of calling on God for deliverance. Daniel regularly prayed that often, regardless of the circumstances.

*He prayed and gave thanks.* Daniel's prayers included petitions, supplications, and thanksgiving (v. 11). It wasn't all "give me." The New Testament cautions us about that, too (Philippians 4:6).

*He prayed as he had been doing previously.* Prayer is not just for special occasions. Daniel was in the habit of prayer, and we should be, too. ▶

# The Importance of Balance

by Frank Himmel

God’s plan is for each church to have elders to oversee it (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5). Elders are not managers;

they are shepherds (1 Peter 5:1-4) and teachers (Ephesians 4:11). Nevertheless, there is an element of administration that necessarily comes with their work. Caring for God’s flock requires balance, and balance requires wisdom.



Elders must see to it that a balance of truth is taught—the “whole counsel of God,” not just favorite subjects. Bible classes ought to include both topical and textual studies, sometimes aimed at deeper knowledge and conviction, other times focused more on application. The same thing is true of preaching.

Elders must balance opportunities for growth with maximizing edification. Inexperienced teachers and worship leaders cannot be expected to provide the same level of edification as those who are more seasoned. However, the only way to get better is via training and practice. Wisdom finds a way to provide growth opportunities without unduly compromising the benefits we receive from our assemblies.

Elders must balance the needs of the sheep—all of them. We are not all the same. We are at different

levels of maturity (both in age and spirituality), we face different challenges, and we have different preferences. When planning the church’s program of work, elders must take all these factors into account, knowing that what is most expedient for one likely will not be for another. It is not always an easy task.

Finding the right balance is one reason why elders must be prudent (1 Timothy 3:2). Let’s be grateful for our shepherds. ■

## Extraordinary Thanksgiving - continued from p. 1

So, what was extraordinary about Daniel’s thanksgiving? He prayed as he always had “when Daniel knew that the document was signed.” What document? The king’s edict that anyone who petitioned any god or man besides the king would be cast into a den of lions (vv. 6-9). *Daniel gave thanks under threat of death!*

Daniel reminds us that we always have much to be thankful for, even when our immediate circumstances are severely challenging. His certainly were. The king’s edict was problematic enough in itself; it was especially so considering that it was the unjust and ill-conceived effort of Daniel’s self-serving peers, designed specifically to entrap him (vv. 1-5).

Let’s be like Daniel. Let’s make thankfulness part of our daily thinking, and the expression of it part of our daily activity. No matter what. Let’s count our blessings, even in trying times. Don’t let life’s trials get you down. Don’t lose your focus on God. The next morning, Daniel had even more to be thankful for! ■

## Service Leaders for the Week

	Sunday Morning	Sunday Evening	Wednesday Evening
GREETER	Chris Brooks	Josh Baucom	Mark Clifton
SONG LEADER	Sam Walters	Bruce Williams	Frank Himmel
OPENING PRAYER	Steven Turner	Mike Zachry	
LORD’S SUPPER			
BREAD	Mark Clifton	Mark Clifton	
CUP	John Baucom	John Baucom	
CONTRIBUTION PRAYER	Daven Daniel		
SERMON/INVITATION	Frank Himmel	Frank Himmel	Singing
CLOSING PRAYER	Josh Baucom	Chris Brooks	TBD