

Friendsgiving /Thanksgiving Reflection Questions



In the Old Testament, God gave Israel festivals of remembrance. Celebrations such as the Feast of Tabernacles and the Passover reminded the Israelites of God's deliverance and provision. The pilgrims set aside a day of thanksgiving to remember how God brought them to America and provided for them.

How has God provided for you this last year?



The pilgrims, who experienced hunger and sickness, still praised God for His provision and protection. Psalm 107:9 says, *"Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness."*

Share about a time when you saw God's goodness during a hard season.



The pilgrims faced great danger and hardship on their voyage across the Atlantic. Yet they faced even more difficulties when they landed. William Bradford said that the pilgrims could only be sustained by God's Spirit and grace. In his writings, Bradford encouraged future generations to praise God for His mercy and kindness.

What attribute of God are you most thankful for and why?



We know what great things God did for the pilgrims because William Bradford wrote their experiences in *Of Plymouth Plantation*. He made sure that future generations learned of God's faithfulness.

Who is someone who taught you about God? How did that person teach you about God and His character?



As the Pilgrims traveled across the Atlantic Ocean, they saw God work miracles in preserving their ship and lives, even when a great beam cracked during a storm. The Psalmist says, *"They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; These see the works of the LORD, and his wonders in the deep."* -Psalm 107:23-24

What aspect of creation most reveals God to you?



When the pilgrims landed at Plymouth, they thanked God for bringing them safely across the ocean. In her poem "The Landing of the Pilgrim Fathers," Felicia Dorothea Hemans reflects on the sounds the pilgrims brought to this bleak land. She says that they "shook the depths of the desert gloom / With their hymns of lofty cheer."

Share about a hymn or Gospel song that has encouraged you in difficult times.

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John Robinson, the pastor of the separatist congregation in Leiden, Holland, never made it to America as planned. But he wrote letters to the Plymouth governors and had great influence. He is known for supporting the Native Americans in disputes that arose, and he encouraged peaceful relationships between the pilgrims and Native Americans.

Who is a peacemaker in your life that you are thankful for?



When the pilgrims landed outside the jurisdiction of King James, they drew up *The Mayflower Compact* to establish a form of government for their colony. It is believed that *The Mayflower Compact* was modeled after the church covenant Pastor John Robinson wrote, and that Pastor Robinson's farewell letter to the pilgrims influenced the document as well.

Share about a writer or teacher who has influenced you in your walk with God or service to God.



The pilgrims set out for an unknown land to build a new life. This required great courage as they faced the perilous seas, an unexpected detour, and an unfriendly, barren coast. They lived out David's encouragement in Psalm 27:14, "*Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart.*"

Share about challenge have you faced that caused you to rely on the Lord for courage and strength. How did God show Himself faithful?



After the pilgrims suffered much the first winter, Squanto helped them learn how to live in the New World. Years before, Squanto was captured to be sold as a slave. He escaped, lived in England for a time, and then returned to America. This difficult experience gave him the intercultural skills he needed to help the pilgrims. This reminds us of the biblical story of Joseph, who realized that what his brothers meant for evil God used for good to save others.

Share about something that was difficult to experience, but you later saw God used it for good.



Pastor John Robinson could not join the pilgrims in America, but the pilgrims needed continual biblical teaching and instruction. Thus, church elder William Brewster became responsible for teaching and preaching to the pilgrims in Plymouth.

Share about someone who has encouraged you in the Lord this year.