

**HEARTBEATS Staying Connected 9/20/2024**  
**The Jewish Beginning to Prayer**

Dear Friends in CHRIST,

It is part of the Jewish faith to pray in many different situations rather than just at mealtime or when in need. Their prayers frequently begin the same way: “Blessed are YOU, O LORD OUR GOD, King of the Universe...” Once that phrase is spoken, the rest of the prayer is repeated from the Hebrew scriptures (Old Testament) or filled in based on the occasion or situation.

The blessing or grace recited before meals follows the form, “Blessed are YOU, O LORD OUR GOD, King of the Universe, who has created the fruit of the vine.”

At Passover and other occasions of special meals, they pray, “Blessed are YOU, O LORD OUR GOD, King of the Universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.”

Another prayer before meals and an instruction to teach children about cleanliness before eating says, “Blessed are YOU, O LORD OUR GOD, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us with HIS Commandments and has commanded us about the washing of hands.”

When fruit is served as a snack or dessert, this grace is offered: “Blessed are YOU, O LORD OUR GOD, King of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the tree.”

Before bed, it is customary to pray, “Blessed are YOU, O LORD OUR GOD, King of the Universe, who brings sleep to my eyes and slumber to my eyelids. May it be your will that I lie down in peace and that I arise in peace.”

When dealing with a problematic person, one might pray, “Blessed are YOU, O LORD OUR GOD, King of the Universe, who changes hearts of stone to hearts of flesh and show all people righteousness.”

Having a familiar opening can make it easier to pray. This Jewish beginning brings the focus to GOD and who GOD is. Then words can be added that speak to the blessings of GOD and GOD’s involvement in our lives. If a situation calls for it, a statement of GOD's power in situations can serve as a petition for GOD’s intervention, or help with a need being sought. If you try using this introductory petition for your prayers, you may find yourself praying brief prayers more often and in surprising circumstances

In CHRIST's love,  
Pastor Jeffrey