

For the VCOC Website:

Prayer Suggestions

Offered by Chaplain (LTC) Kenneth M. Rupp, USA, Retired

Chapter events may include a prayer as part of the schedule. Normally this is an Invocation at the beginning of the event. Some events include a Benediction at the end of the event. Samples of such prayers can be found in prayer books, worship hymnals and the internet. An on-line search for “meeting invocations” or “dinner prayers” provides many examples. A good discipline when preparing a prayer is to think about the specifics of the group attending, the event itself, and what is happening in the world around you. Personally, I prefer to write out prayers to help keep me focused. Free-flowing prayers also are effective. What I offer here are a few thoughts on preparing prayers and a sample of several prayers which may be used as they appear or, hopefully, used to stimulate your creativity in writing your own prayer.

I believe that many invocations have a simple structure that serves to:

1. Call on the Almighty (God, Creator, Father, etc.)
2. Acknowledge the gathering, and ask for God’s blessing on the time together (meeting, dinner, memorial service, other event).
3. If there is a significant commemorative event that may be close to the date of the gathering (Veterans Day, Pearl Harbor Day, Army birthday, etc) or a current event (elections, protests, natural disasters) coinciding with the gathering, or chapter members experiencing health issues, consider including a petition for them.
4. Close with a word of thanks, praise, faith or hope in the deity to whom you are praying. (In your Holy Name, in your Name, in Jesus’ Name, etc)

Not all Invocations need to follow this outline. I offer it as a way to get started preparing your prayers for your events. Sometimes a much longer prayer may be required but the simplest often is the best. An invocation ought not be confused with the more comprehensive “Pastoral Prayer” common in many Christian worship services and special ceremonies. This prayer is much longer and all-encompassing.

A Benediction is a brief word of thanks to the Deity for being present at the event and a call for safe travel home or a request for a blessing upon the group as the attendees depart.

Sample meeting Invocations:

1. Eternal Father, we give you thanks for this new day. We ask you to bless our time today as we meet and work to improve the lives of those who serve our nation. Watch over them, we pray, until our service members return to their families. All our concerns we place before you, confident in your mercy for all. In your Holy Name we pray. AMEN.

2. Almighty God, we thank you for bringing us here safely this morning and pray that your Spirit will be present in our meeting. We pray for our nation. Heal the divisions that lead to hatred and violence. We lift up our leaders in Congress and this Commonwealth. Enable them to listen to each other and act with wisdom in their deliberations so that they faithfully may serve this nation. *(we give thanks for the life of name of member who died and his/her work on behalf of this chapter. Accompany family and friends in their grief as they face the days ahead.)* Hear us, O Lord, as we pray.
AMEN

3. O Lord our God, we give you thanks for this day and for bringing us together for this meeting. Guide our conversation as we seek to help those who have served this nation. We ask your continued care for those who serve today in our nation's military services. May they and their families be strengthened and comforted by the knowledge that you are with them in these difficult and dangerous times. May all that we do be worthy of their service on our behalf and may our lives reflect your love. Confident that you know our needs and hear our prayers, we pray in your Holy Name. AMEN

Sample dinner Invocations:

1. Almighty God, we give you thanks this night for those gathered here and for all who have served our nation in the past and those who serve our nation this night. We pray for their families and for the safety of our service members deployed to dangerous places. Remind them, O Lord, of your presence and care for them.

As we share our meal tonight may we be rededicated to the task of relieving the hunger and thirst of all in our community and world who struggle to find nourishment each day.

Confident that you know our needs and hear our prayers we pray in your Holy Name. AMEN

2. Almighty God, our Creator and Redeemer, we give you thanks for this new day. Guide us in our time together that we might be renewed by this fellowship.

We ask your continued care and protection for those who serve today in our nation's Armed Forces. May they and their families be strengthened and comforted by the knowledge that you are with them in these difficult and dangerous times. May all we do and say be worthy of their service on our behalf.

Bless, O Lord, the food we share. May it nourish us and remind us of the responsibility we have to share your abundance with those around us in need. In your name with pray. AMEN

3. Almighty and Eternal God, we join together this evening tired from the day and hopeful for a restful evening. We ask your blessing upon the food we eat and the fellowship we share. We know that we and all of creation are in your hands.

O God, let the design of your great love shine on the waste of our wraths and sorrows, and give peace among nations, peace in our cities, peace in our homes and peace in our hearts.

We remember our military members and families and ask that you might protect them even as they serve to protect us and others. May they always know the certainty of your presence in their lives.

Bless. O Lord, we pray our time together this evening and grant us a safe and quiet night.

In Your Holy Name with confidence and hope we pray. AMEN

Sample Benedictions:

1. Lord God, as we complete this time together we thank you for your care this day and pray that you will grant us safe journey home and a peaceful night. Refresh us with sleep so that we may rise in the morning to serve you in the day ahead. In Your Name we pray. AMEN

2. O Lord, we ask you to bestow your blessing on us as we return to our homes. May we travel safely and rest securely that we may rise in the morning to serve you and our neighbors in the days before us. With joy and hope we pray. AMEN