

God of seeds and soil, your feast begins long before a morsel of food touches our lips.

You begin with dirt and dust, with water and sun: ingredients that you supplied from the very beginning, knowing we would be hungry, understanding that we would be thirsty. You nourish us and provide for us before breathing life into us.

You, O Great Creator, started providing your gifts for us from the very beginning.

You began this feast in the soil with your hands,

And for that, we give you thanks.

God of grain and grapes, you continued preparing for the feast by sending your son, Jesus Christ. You sent him to feed us; by his words and deeds, through his death and resurrection, he became the bread of life and the wine of compassion.

Christ is the one who gathers us in, who calls each of us by name, who sets a place for us. For the invitation, for the nourishment, and for Jesus Christ, we give you thanks.

God of wheat and wine, long after your son first gathered his friends around a table in an upper room, your Holy Spirit has continued meeting us at tables: hand-crafted tables painted with intricate designs and weathered park benches that serve as a place to eat when needed; tables that are covered with homemade casseroles and tables with quickly opened fast food bags being passed around; tables that are surrounded by friends and families and tables where only one seat is filled.

No matter what each table looks like, the food that is served, or the people gathered around it, your Spirit meets us still. For your ever-present Spirit, O God, we give you thanks.

God of second helpings, you promise abundance. Like a mother who heaps another spoonful onto our already full plates, you give more than we need. Yet, despite your generosity, there are those whose bellies are still empty, and those whose thirst is never quenched. As we celebrate your joyful feast today with our siblings in Christ around the world, we are aware that no amount of singing can hide the sound of grumbling stomachs and parched throats.

Help us to trust in your promises.

As we eat this bread and drink this cup, may we trust that there is enough to go around.

Keep us from hoarding what you have provided so that all of your children might taste and see, drink and be satisfied.

God of tables and chairs, we pray for all eating spaces around the world today, where believers are gathering despite risk and suffering.

We pray for chairs that are empty where loved ones used to sit: for tables in places of conflict where bullets fly and bombs rain down; for spaces that have been ravaged by hurricanes, floods and fires.

We also pray for eating spaces that are emotionally unsafe this day: tables where tensions are high and certain topics are off limits; placemats that are not set for someone because of the way they look, who they voted for or who they love.

**For all these spaces, tables and chairs where your children gather,
Lord, we pray for your peace.**

God of the joyful feast, today in the north and the south, in the east and the west,
we are grateful as we meet you around tables full of gifts you have given us.

Continue to pour out your Spirit upon us so that when the meal is over and we leave this table, we might be a part of extending every table around the world.

Help every meal we share look more and more like your heavenly feast;
everyone welcomed, everyone fed, everyone nourished.

In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, we pray. Amen.

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