

**A Long List**  
LCDR R. C. Richards  
Command Chaplain

I heard a joke about a man who was having Thanksgiving dinner with some friends of his, one of whom was a surgeon. As the man carved the turkey, he commented to the friend, "I'm doing a pretty good job, wouldn't you say, Doc? I probably would make a good surgeon." He kept remarking about his brilliant job as he sliced, but the surgeon never said a word. After he was finished cutting the turkey, the surgeon looked him and said, "Now, let's see you put it back together."

One thing that many families do at Thanksgiving is gather around the table before the meal and each person is asked to tell at least one thing they are thankful for. The answers will always vary according to the age and maturity level of the individuals. Also, some will be serious, while others will try to add a little bit of humor to the list.

I personally think it is a good idea to share with the family members those things for which we are grateful. However, I think it would be better to give some serious thought to it, rather than have to come up with one item at the spur of the moment. This way, we can really assess the many blessings we enjoy, rather than simply naming one thing for which we are thankful at that particular moment.

Maybe a good way to do it would be to ask each family member to come up with a list a few days before Thanksgiving. Then, the night before, make one list incorporating all of the items that each person has on his or her list. Then, before Thanksgiving dinner, read the list aloud, recognizing all of the things we as a family have for which we can thank God. I think this would probably be more in keeping with the original concept of Thanksgiving.

There is nothing wrong with doing many of the activities we enjoy on Thanksgiving. Part of my own family tradition is to watch football on TV in the afternoon, while many people like watching the Thanksgiving Day Parades on TV. There is certainly nothing wrong with this, but we need to focus on the real reason for the holiday. We need to pause to thank God for all of the things with which He has blessed us.

As I look at my own life, I have a long list of things for which to thank God. I have to thank Him first for my wonderful wife. I have two great sons and my daughters-in-law are second to none. My grandson is precious. I have parents who instilled in me values such as a love for God and a love for country. My parents have been married for more than fifty years, modeling a home filled with love and commitment to each other. I have the best job in the Navy, allowing me to serve with some of the greatest Americans I have ever met. I have a beautiful home and a steady income. And that just begins the list.

I hope that this Thanksgiving, you will take a serious look at the many things in your life that you might take for granted. Make a list, share it with your family, then thank God for all of the things on your list.

I hope you have a happy and safe Thanksgiving.

Semper Fi in the Lord and I hope to see you in Church on Sunday.