

## **NON-DENOMINATIONAL INVOCATIONS FOR ROTARY CLUB MEETINGS**

**Rotary is a non-discriminatory, non-political, and non-denomination organization.**

**Rotary is comprised of members from a wide range of religious faiths, and for that reason Rotary International recommends nondenominational meeting invocations that give no referral to beliefs of specific religions.**

**Several individuals and Rotary Clubs have offered the following non-denominational invocations.**

**Note that the Rotary Club of Bellingham WA club often uses the term, "Lord of the Universe" to remind themselves that no matter what their religion, all good people are guided by the spirit.**

**So, below are 28 examples of invocations that may be used as is or modified to your liking. Sources are acknowledged when known.**

1. Creator and sustainer of all that is or will ever be, accept our thanks for this day and all its blessings. We ask that you guide and direct our club, its leaders and our actions. Grant that each of us may feel our responsibility to Rotary, to our community, to our country, and indeed to all countries and peoples. Bless our fellowship today, and bless this food to the nourishment of our bodies, in your service. Amen.

2. As we gather here today as members of Rotary, we pray that we are ever mindful of opportunities to render our service to fellow citizens and to our community. Keeping in mind always the enduring values of life, exerting our efforts in those areas and on those things upon which future generations can build with confidence. Let us continue to strive to make a better world. Amen.

3. We are thankful for this day that you have given us, for its blessings, its opportunities, its challenges. May we appreciate and use each day that comes to us. We pray for strength and guidance for each day as it comes, for each day's duties, for each day's problems. May we be challenged to give our best always, and may we be assured of your presence with us. Amen.

4. We stay focused on the objectives we have for the world: Peace. Tranquility. A true Brotherhood of Man. Freedom from hunger, from oppression, from sickness. The freedom to choose our own destinies. We reaffirm our commitment to our simple Rotary Four Way Test for all we do and support: Is it the truth? Is it fair to all concerned? Will it build good will and better friendships? Will it be beneficial to all concerned? We reaffirm our commitment to high ethics in all we do. And we give thanks for all the blessings, opportunities and responsibilities that befall us as Rotarians. We continue in this new millennium with optimism, renewed energy, and a commitment to service to you and our fellow men and women. Please, Lord of the Universe, help us so to serve! Amen.

*Adapted from an invocation by Joseph D. Coons Bellingham WA*

5. Let us Pray. Lord of the Universe: One of your wise ministers said recently, You can judge a person by his checkbook stubs.

As Rotarians, we are generally blessed with lives of relative luxury, and opportunities unknown to many. Help us to review our checkbooks, and, indeed, the registers of our lives with honesty as we consider our priorities, and our opportunity to help others. Open our hearts, and our accounts, to those in need, while still providing us with appropriate fruits of our own labors. Help us to share not only our tangible wealth, but also our intangible riches of knowledge, leadership, and creativity to make our city, our nation, and our world, a better place filled with the peace and love that you can bring through us. Amen. *Joseph D. Coons Bellingham WA*

6. Lord of the Universe, Rotarians world-wide acknowledge your power, and your expectation that we be of service to mankind.

Let us renew our obligation to fulfill that expectation, just as the return of spring renews growth in the world around us, with a new commitment to help others in our community, our nation, and our world. With the power, influence, and wealth that we as leaders in this place most certainly have, let us always remember that these are a blessing from you, and that charity is more fulfilling than decadence, and the Golden Rule a much richer yardstick than any bank account. Amen. *Joseph D. Coons Bellingham WA*

An invocation is a traditional prayer for the support, counsel, or indulgence of an almighty power upon the works of a body of people such as our Rotary Club. In preparing today's invocation, I was reminded that several men of science, including Ben Franklin, Albert Einstein, and Steven Hawking all believe in the presence of God, particularly as manifested in the remarkable natural order of the world.

So today I offer this prayer:

Let us bow our heads:

Lord of the Universe, you have given most of mankind a strong desire to do good, to be honest, to serve others, and to faithfully fulfill their obligations to their neighbors.

Help us, as Rotarians and humans, to do good.

Help us, as Rotarians and humans, to be honest and ethical in all our dealings.

Help us, as Rotarians and humans, to serve others.

And help us, as Rotarians and humans, to faithfully fulfill our obligations as neighbors to our community, our nation, and the world. Amen. *Joseph D. Coons, Bellingham WA*

7. Lord of the Universe, we are before you today humbled and puzzled.

We are humbled by the world's loss of a man who served as a symbol of goodness, who though from a different culture and raised in a different faith than most of us, taught us that all humans have the same need for peace and good will among men. Help our leaders and those of other nations follow the example of King Hussein in their quest for a united world where we can find comfort for the poor, opportunity for all, and peace.

On another matter, may we ask you to give us some sign of your purpose? You have reminded us recently that you ARE in charge, and there are things we cannot change and you have humbled us. The torrents, the gusts, and the rest of your recent offerings to us by your bounteous nature are, to be bold, getting a little much! If your point is to show us your authority, we acknowledge it; if you desire to demonstrate your inscrutability, we are convinced, and if your goal is to help us wash away all our misdeeds, we are almost down the drain ourselves!

Thank you for your lessons, oh Lord. We are, however, ready for a different example of your strength. We humbly beg you for an equal demonstration of your ability to bring us sunshine. Amen. *Joseph D. Coons, Bellingham WA*

8. Lord of the Universe, tonight, from two democratic nations which prove that a border can be shared for centuries in peace, we are men and women gathered in the spirit and support of Rotary International, our own Clubs, and Rotary District 5050.

As we enjoy our fellowship, help us to remember how fortunate we are to be able to serve our brothers and sisters around the world through our great organization, and its astonishing Foundation.

That we are prosperous, enables us to give of our material wealth. That we are free, enables us to work together on projects. That we are generous, enables us to work together to achieve amazing successes. And

that we are dedicated, brings us together as our Club=s leaders and workers so that we may continue with these efforts.

Guide us in our service. Keep us well so we can serve. And bless those peoples around the world who our touched by our works, so that they, too, can have the joy of a fulfilling life, full of good health and companionship, in surroundings that are beneficial to all. Amen. *Joseph D. Coons Bellingham WA*

9. Lord of the Universe, this is a time in our year when many of us turn our attention to the spiritual side of our lives, when we consider what light we will follow . . .

Help us to understand that no matter what name it is given and in what language it is expressed, that philosophy called The Golden Rule is indeed the most true guidepost by which we should mark the trails of our existence here . . .

Remind us that if that concept were universally held as a standard, by the people of all nations and faiths, there would be no wars, no hunger, no crimes one against the other . . .

We pray that you continue to bless the work that we as Rotarians, from many nations and of many faiths, do to help those less fortunate, for we believe that one manifestation of this Golden Rule is in our Rotary motto, Service Above Self.

Please give us an international time of peace on earth, good will towards men, inspired by our great leaders and philosophers who themselves were inspired by you, Oh Lord.

And finally, we ask you to guide those who, as our government leaders, make their daily decisions that affect us, so that their efforts, whether international or local, shall be motivated by this same great rule of charity and good will. Thank you, Lord. Amen. *Joseph D. Coons, Bellingham WA*

10. Let us take a moment to remember all the religions represented in the Rotary family,

Let us also recall that when we were invited to join our Rotary clubs we were not asked are you a Protestant, a Hindu, a Muslim, a Jew, a Catholic or a Buddhist, or a Sikh. You were not asked because all religions are welcome in the Rotary family.

Please join me in a moment of reflection and thanks with these words

With our friends beside us,  
And no person beneath us,  
With the bonds of Rotary Between us,  
And our worries behind us,  
With our goals before us,  
And no task beyond us,  
With a thirst for knowledge,  
And a dream of a Polio free world,  
We are thankful for our Rotary friends and the meal we are about to share.

Thank You, Shalom, Ah-men. *Chris Offer, Governor 5040/99-00*

11. The paths of our lives are filled with peaks and valleys. When we are on the top of our peaks, we become so self satisfied that we tend to ignore the things of importance. When we are in a valley, we feel a sense of abandon and again can focus only on what is directly ahead. Remind us, as You do in nature, that above the tree line the mountain-tops are barren and only in the valleys can we find the opportunity for true growth. Amen. *Ronald Hanson, Rotary Club of Cloquet, MN USA D5580*

12. Invocation for Rotary meeting (script BEFORE silent invocation) composed by

Will you please bow your head with me.  
Let us pray silently together, each one of us, according to our individual beliefs.  
Let us offer thanks for our food, blessings for one another.  
Let us be a source of hope for those in need,  
and contentment for those who are lonely.  
Let us give gratitude for our opportunity to serve Rotary.  
Let the feelings of love, kindness, and a well directed, yet gentle spirit always be reflected in our actions.

(30 seconds of silence) Amen. *Bob Summers, Past President, RC Fort Myers SOUTH D-6960*

13. Blessed are you, Lord, God of Creation. You feed the whole world with your goodness, your grace, your kindness and your mercy. You nourish and sustain us and do good to all. Bless this food to our use and us to your Rotary service. Amen. *Dr. William Dougherty, Rotary Club of Elmira Heights*

14. May those assembled here today enjoy the many offerings of Rotary. May we abide by the rules we have established, those of trust, fellowship and ethics, and may we place Service above Self, in our daily endeavors. And may we always test ourselves and our efforts to be sure they are the truth, good for all concerned, of benefit to mankind, and provide peace and understanding. Amen. *Ken from Wisconsin*

15. Let My Eyes Be Opened  
Let me awake and see the beauty  
that surrounds me all around.  
Let me hear the singing birds  
make their wonderful sound.  
Let me thank God for my health  
that has been good to me so far.  
Let all my dreams come true  
when wishing upon a star.  
Let me be thankful for friendship  
that was lovingly given me.  
Let me never forget the caring  
that was made for me to see.

*Betty Opheim, Fargo West Rotary, Fargo, North Dakota District 5580*

16. It is good to recognize how different we are. Our talents, our dreams, our backgrounds, our occupations. And it is good to know that when You created each of us, You broke the mold. No one is exactly like anyone else. Even our thumb print and our voice track tell us how unique we are. Yet, we thank You that we can take these differences and mobilize them for the good of Rotary and our community. In our differences we can think the same thoughts and move together toward a common goal. Bless us as we meet together. Thank You for our individuality and also for our common bond. Amen. *Phil Morris - Rotary Club of Furnitureland, High Point, North*

17. Today we pray that we may receive Your special blessing because we are committed to be a real service organization to help humankind. May each of us in our daily routine come to know the joy of caring and sharing with others not as fortunate as we are. May our motto that includes serving, caring and sharing be for us life service as well as lip service. Amen. *Adapted from a published prayer by Phil Morris – Furnitureland Rotary Club, High Point, NC*

18. Help us today to see our opening prayer as conversation, really believing You hear us and care about what we say. Remind us that You are a perfect Father who listens carefully to His children and desires the very best for us. We thank You for this family of Rotarians, to which we belong and ask that You bless us as we meet together. Amen. *Phil Morris - Rotary Club of Furnitureland, High Point, NC*

19. Teach us true discrimination. We need to be able to tell the difference between faith and fatalism, between activity and accomplishment, between humility and an inferiority complex, between a quick salute

to You and a real prayer that seeks to find out Your will. Father, as we make a new beginning this week, teach us true discrimination! Amen. *Phil Morris - Rotary Club of Furnitureland*

20. We pray for the bifocals of faith so that we can see the concern of the moment right under our noses, but also see, further on, Your purpose, in working out Your plan, in the world You have made. We pray for the ability to see at close range -- our part, as a group to become solution-partners in the giving of time and effort and money, and we pray also for the ability to see clearly in the distance, those who are in partnership with us. May we look with new vision through these bifocals of faith and then act. Amen. Adapted from a printed source by Phil Morris - *Rotary Club of Furnitureland*

21. "Will you please bow your head with me.  
Let us pray silently together, each of us according to our individual beliefs.  
Let us offer thanks for our food, blessings for one another and for absent friends  
Let us be a source of hope for those in need, and contentment for those who are lonely.  
Let us give gratitude for our opportunity to serve Rotary.  
Let the feelings of love, kindness, and a well-directed, yet gentle spirit always be reflected in our actions."  
THEN FOLLOWS A 30 SECOND PAUSE AND THE ANNOUNCEMENT "Amen" *Jim Gray*

22. God of the Universe, since we are not conscious enough to fathom your ebb and flow, help us then to bring our best efforts to what we can know.

To love our friends and family.  
To treat our employees and fellow workers fairly.  
To seek justice.  
To help those in need.  
To be the best that we can be,  
And to live by the four way test:

Of all the things we think, say or do:  
Is it the TRUTH?  
Is it FAIR to all concerned?  
Will it build GOODWILL and BETTER FRIENDSHIPS?  
Will it be BENEFICIAL to all concerned?

Amen.

*Invocation given by Rotarian Len Scheffler December 7, 1993 Rotary Club of Columbia-Northwest Columbia, MO D-6050*

23. A `grace' requested follows:

For friends, food, fun and fellowship, especially the fellowship of Rotary we get our sincere thanks. May these tokens of your bounty nourish our physical bodies in preparation for the challenges that are ours in Rotary. Keep us always mindful of the needs of others and keep us always attuned to our calling in Rotary. We ask these things in the Name of your eternal truth. Amen. (Rev.) *Kenneth D. Benner Rotarian, Rotary Club of Strathcona Sunrise Comox Valley, British Columbia*

24. We are grateful, Our Father, for the privilege of training ourselves for service. Give us open minds, a clear understanding and a steady purpose to make the most of our talents, and lead us into the fields of work where we can best serve Thee. Amen.

For food to nourish the body and conversation to enrich the mind, may the Lord make us truly thankful. Amen.

O Lord and giver of all good  
we thank you for our daily food

May Rotary friends and Rotary ways  
Help us to serve thee all our Days

Amen. *"Adolf"*

25. Lord as u blessed the loaves and fishes  
Bless this food upon our dishes  
Like the sugar for our tea  
May our lives be stirred by Thee

*Tom Telfer Rotary Club of London West District 6330 London, Ontario*

## 26. A Prayer of Thanksgiving

We offer you this special prayer this year, dear Lord, because we want it to be everlasting. We do not, like too many times in the past, wish to soon forget these words of thoughts that we, heartfelt, and under no sense of obligation, now present to you.

Please bless this abundant food which, once living, has been sacrificed so that our bodies can be nourished with its life giving minerals and vitamins. From this meal forward, please guide all of our physical actions so that we can continue to claim worthiness of such a sacrifice.

Please remind us daily to use the time you have given us to add something of value to the day. Please help us to realize that this added value is especially beneficial to us when, without obligation or expectation of payback, it is freely given away to those who are less fortunate. Please show us that a smile, a wave, a helping hand-seemingly simplistic things do, add much more value to the day than we normally realize.

Impress upon us that everything on your earth and in your universe are intricately interconnected and that we humans need to show more respect for these connections of your design. Please foster our internal growth so that we will show more compassion for the plights of all of the living things you have placed around us. Please make us comprehend that the various talents you have allowed each of us are gifts from you and must be shared with others and with proper humility. Please encourage us to remove from our minds the many emotional blinders that daily keep us from seeing the overwhelming beauty surrounding us.

Finally, we fervently ask that you widely open our hearts and shine your light of love into the depth of our souls so that we will truly see that part of You which you, dear Lord, in your infinite wisdom have placed within us all. Please show us that if we can just sensitize ourselves to your Love which, unknowingly to most of us, continuously circulates throughout our bodies, then and only then, will we be able to spontaneously metamorphose into radiant beacons which can then happily reflect back to others just a fraction of the overflowing warmth of your all encompassing Love. Though we now bask daily in this Love, we seldom allow ourselves to truly see and feel it. Please make us see!!

*Jeff Mabe "A Sincere Gift of Giving Never Travels in a Straight Line."*

27. In those many years during which I was the " designated Prayer" [ I am an episcopal Priest, now retired] I generally began "Baruch attai Adonai" "Blessed are you O God" and then followed with any specifics I felt needed at that particular meeting [ such as illness, etc] then blessed God for allowing us to meet together in " fellowship, in peace and in service" Thanked God for our blessings at His hand, gave thanks for the food and the chance to serve all His creatures and asked God to continuously remind us of the needs of those people who depend upon us " I never used the name of Jesus, Our club had many good Jewish members. It did NOT, however have Moslem or Buddhist or any other religious body represented and so, unless we had guests I didn't recognize who could have been other than Christian or Jewish I did not especially attempt to include blessings from those disciplines [ although I know some]. Occasionally I would vary by using Native American blessings such as the " Four Winds " blessings . Thanks to my age and infirmities I am now only an occasional prayer and others have taken over. If you would like the exact

wording of special graces [ although I believe that my words wouldn't fit your particularities] I would be happy to recollect some for you. Good luck and God bless you. Amen. *Bob Mason*

28. As each of us give our own thanks according to our personal persuasions let us dwell on some thoughts that bind us together:

"You've blessed us with friends and laughter and fun  
With rain that's as soft as the light from the sun ---  
You've blessed us with stars to brighten each night  
You've given us help to know wrong from right --  
You've given us so much please, Lord give us too,  
A heart that is always Grateful to you."

Amen. *An Irish Prayer. Tim Creedon PDG Rotary Club of Phoenix # 100, Arizona*

Invocations collected by Harry Heflin, Rotary Club of Azusa, Rotary District 5300