

# A GRATEFUL HEART

## *A Gift to Ourselves and to Others*

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"Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." — 1 Thessalonians 5:18

Gratitude is more than simply saying "thank you." It is a posture of the heart — a daily choice to acknowledge God's goodness and to notice the blessings that surround us, even in the midst of challenges.

For Faith Community Nurses, cultivating gratitude can be both a powerful act of self-care and an essential part of health ministry. Here are some ideas on practicing both:

### 1. Gratitude as Self-Care for the Faith Community Nurse

In the role of caregiving, it's easy to pour out without pausing to be poured into. But research shows that practicing gratitude can improve emotional well-being, reduce stress, lower blood pressure, strengthen the immune system, and even promote better sleep. Spiritually, it grounds us in God's faithfulness and gently shifts our focus from burdens to blessings.

### 2. Teaching Gratitude to the Congregation

Just as gratitude strengthens us as caregivers, it can also be a powerful tool for building spiritual, emotional, and physical health within our congregations. As Faith Community Nurses, we can **model and teach simple, practical ways to practice gratitude daily.**

#### Practical ways to cultivate a spirit of gratitude as a nurse:

- Begin your day with thanks. Take a few quiet moments each morning to thank God for three specific things.
- Keep a gratitude journal. Write down moments — big or small — where you saw God's hand at work during the day.
- Pause during stressful moments. When tension rises, breathe deeply and identify one thing in that moment you are grateful for.
- Share your gratitude. Speak or write a quick note to someone who made a difference in your week.

#### Ways to engage the congregation:

- Host a brief in-service or workshop on the health benefits of gratitude — improved mood, lower stress levels, better sleep, and stronger relationships.
- Encourage a "gratitude challenge." Invite members to share one thing they are grateful for each day for 30 days.
- Create a gratitude wall or board at church where members can post short notes of thanks to God or to one another.
- Incorporate gratitude into prayer time. Begin meetings or small groups with a moment of thanksgiving.

#### Remember:

- Gratitude is a spiritual discipline that aligns the heart with God's will.
  - Gratitude can be practiced in both joyful and difficult seasons.
- Gratitude shared builds stronger, more connected faith communities.

As Faith Community Nurses, we are both recipients and ambassadors of gratitude and examples demonstrating the benefits of practicing gratitude. Gratitude doesn't erase stress or pain, but it gives us a healthier, hope-filled way to carry it. When we intentionally practice thankfulness, we care for our own well-being and set an example for those we serve. A grateful heart truly becomes a vessel of hope, healing, and joy.



Here is a way you can show your gratitude to nurses this holiday season. Send your favorite nurse a personalized Nurse Appreciation Box. Click the image or click the link to be directed to the AdventSource website to purchase.