

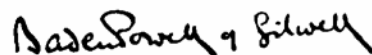
# Scouts' Own Worship Service Nonsectarian and Interfaith Resources

## Boy Scout Troop 149

“For an open Troop, or for Troops in camp, I think the Scouts' Own [Worship Service] should be open to all denominations, and carried on in such manner as to offend none. There should not be any special form, but it should abound in the right spirit, and should be conducted not from any ecclesiastical point of view, but from that of the boy. Everything likely to make an artificial atmosphere should be avoided. We do not want a kind of imposed Church Parade, but a voluntary uplifting of their hearts by the boys in thanksgiving for the joys of life, and a desire on their part to seek inspiration and strength for greater love and service for others.

“A Scouts' Own should have as big an effect on the boys as any service in Church, if in conducting the Scouts' Own we remember that boys are not grown men, and if we go by the pace of the youngest and most uneducated of those present. Boredom is not reverence, nor will it breed religion.

“To interest the boys, the Scouts' Own must be a cheery and varied function. Short hymns (three verses are as a rule quite enough-never more than four); understandable prayers; a good address from a man who really understands boys (a homely "talk" rather than an address), which grips the boys, and in which they may laugh or applaud as the spirit moves them, so that they take a real interest in what is said.”



By Baden Powell  
Printed in "The Scouter" November 1928

# Calls to Worship and Invocations

Come let us sing unto the Lord: Let us make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the lands. Let us serve the Lord with gladness and came into his presence with singing.

--Psalm 100

Blessed is the spot, and the house, and the place, and the city, and the heart, and the mountain, and the refuge, and the cave, and the valley, and the land, and the sea, and the island, and the meadow where mention of God hath been made and His praise glorified.

--From the Baha'i Writings

O Great Spirit! Watch over us as we begin this day. Protect us as we live in your care. Give us bounty and hold us from harm. We are your children and wish only to please you. We hold our Mother Earth close to our hearts and wish her goodness. We thank You for your love.

--American Indian

## PRAYERS

### Canoeing Prayer

Lord, we will be canoeing today;  
We shall be very busy;  
If, during the course of the day  
We forget about you,  
Please don't forget about us.

### Jamaican Camp Prayer

Lift up your hearts;  
Hearts and minds and voices all give thanks  
For this our bread;  
Hearts and minds and voices all give thanks  
For these our friends;  
Hearts and minds and voices all give thanks  
For this our camp;  
Hearts and minds and voices all give thanks  
For this our world;  
Hearts and minds and voices all give thanks  
We thank the Lord;  
Hearts and minds and voices all give thanks

### God of the Sea

God of the sea, the winds, the tides, we praise thee for the greatness of thy power and the certainty of thy laws. We see careless picnickers throw their litter to be carried far out into the sea by the outgoing tide, but the next morning it lies stranded on the beach where the high tide has left it.

So it is, our Father, in our lives. We throw out a careless word, an unkind thought, and it comes back to us in resentments and friendlessness. A selfish act, a yielding to temptation, or a deed left undone comes back as a haunting memory, another's failure, or a missed opportunity.

Help us, Our Father, to cast only good upon the waters that good may come back with the tide. Amen.

-Dorothy Wells Pease

### **God of the Open Air**

God of the open air, we kneel reverently in this temple not made with hands.  
The tall pines lift our thoughts above us to the Source of all this beauty.  
The singing of the feather-throated choir puts a melody in our hearts, a song of joy and praise and trust.  
All the discordant notes of the world are muted; all the problems of life are forgotten.  
We are filled with an inner peace and know that here we have found Thee.  
As we leave this hallowed spot, may the reality of Thy presence go with us to give us courage and strength  
for our daily tasks.  
Amen.  
-- Dorothy Wells Pease

### **Prayer of Thanks Giving**

We thank you today  
For the adventure of Scouting,  
For the unselfishness of parents,  
For the patience of teachers  
And for the encouragement of friends.

### **Silent Prayer For Our Brothers**

B.P wrote:  
First love and serve God.  
Second love and serve your neighbor.  
In doing you duty to God always be grateful to him.  
Whenever you enjoy a pleasure or a good game, or succeed in doing a good thing,  
Thank Him for it, if only with a word or two.  
Let us each now say a silent prayer for our brother on our right... For our brother on our left...  
And now for our brother Scouts around the world.

### **More Prayers to Think About**

O God, Thou hast given so much to us, give one thing more - a grateful heart. Amen.  
-George Herbert

# Graces

## Breakfast Prayer

Dear Lord,  
Keep us from being like porridge  
Slow to boil and hard to stir  
Make us like Corn Flakes  
Always prepared and ready to serve!

## Mayan Grace

Matiox pela way. (Mahtiyosh payla why)                      Ri ajaw x'yao. (Ree ahow shyow)  
Thank you for the food.                      It was God who provided it to us.

## Philmont Grace

For Food, For Raiment, For Life, For Opportunity,  
For Friendship and Fellowship, We thank Thee o Lord

# Quotes and Thoughts

To be closer to God, be closer to people.  
-Kahlil Gibran

For every complex and difficult issue, there is always an answer that is simple, easy and wrong.  
-H.L. Mencken

Freedom is not worth having if it does not include the freedom to make mistakes.  
-Mohandas Gandhi

Love the earth and sun and animals,  
Despise riches, give alms to everyone that asks,  
Stand up for the stupid and crazy,  
Devote your income and labor to others...  
And your very flesh shall be a great poem.  
-Walt Whitman, American Poet

Meditate.  
Live purely. Be quiet.  
Do your work with mastery.  
Like the moon, come out  
from behind the clouds!  
Shine  
-Buddha

"All you have shall some day be given;  
Therefore give now, that the season of giving  
may be yours and not your inheritors."  
-Kahlil Gibran, Lebanese Poet and Novelist

Wherever there is a human being, there is an opportunity for kindness.  
- Seneca, Roman Philosopher

Take the first step in faith. You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step.  
-Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

If I keep a green bough in my heart, the singing bird will come.  
-Chinese Proverb

Thousands of candles can be lighted from a single candle, and the life of the candle will not be shortened. Happiness never decreases by being shared.

-Buddha, The Enlightened One

“The journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step.”

-Lao Tzu, Chinese Philosopher

Use what talent you possess:  
the woods would be very silent  
if no birds sang except those that sang best.

-Henry Van Dyke, American Educator

If it is not truthful and not helpful, don't say it.  
If it is truthful and not helpful, don't say it.  
If it is not truthful and helpful, don't say it.  
If it is truthful and helpful, wait for the right time.

--Buddha

What the caterpillar calls the end of the world, the master calls a butterfly.

--Richard Bach

You often say, "I would give, but only to the deserving."  
The trees in your orchard say not so, nor the flocks in your pastures.  
They give that they may live, for to withhold is to perish.  
Surely he who is worthy to receive his days and his nights,  
is worthy of all else from you.

--Kahlil Gibran

Smile at each other, smile at your wife, smile at your husband, smile at your children, smile at each other -- it doesn't matter who it is -- and that will help you to grow up in greater love for each other.

--Mother Teresa

Kindness is the language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see.

-- Mark Twain

In the archer there is a resemblance to the mature person.  
When he misses the mark, he turns and seeks the reason for his failure in himself

-- Confucius

## **A True Friend**

A true friend is one to whom you can tip out all the contents of your heart, chaff and grain together, knowing that the gentlest hands will take and sift it, keep what is worth keeping and, with the breath of kindness, blow the rest away.

-an Arabian definition of a friend

## **Friendship**

If there is one ingredient which adds warmth and love to our lives it is friendship

If there is one relationship to help us through all the others, it is friendship

Friends surround us with the beauty of their caring

With friends we can share what we see, what we feel and what we love

Friends help us with our problems because they listen and as they listen we begin to hear the language of our own hearts

With friends we can walk along the remembered paths of our lives and completely share our experiences

With friends we can work the soil of forgotten dreams that needed to be tended and nurtured once again

With friends we can plant the seeds of our hearts and new dreams

We can always return to a friend like going back to a special place and find the same warm feeling unchanged by time or distance

Life gives us friends so we can share the precious times and memorable moments of being children, teenagers, adults, parents, and grandparents

Life gives us friends so we can share the growing up and growing down and growing old

With friends we have a place to go to be accepted and understood

Together we can laugh

Together we can cry

Our thoughts are heard, our feelings are held in the heart of a friend

With friends our lives are made more full, more rich, more open and beautiful and blessed

## **The Log in the Woods**

The old log in the woods will never be a great tree again, things never go back, yet lying there, covered with moss, it is creating new life, which in turn will be great and beautiful...

The fish eats the insect, the bird the fish, the mammal the bird, and the insect the mammal, as each, in universal rhythm is creating new life, for there is no life except life which comes from life...

Waters flow where daisies grew, Trees grow where swans once swam

All things upon this earth are developing into new things, from what is here must come what is to be.... There is no other material.

-- Gwen Frostic

### **Be At Peace**

You are a child of the universe, no less than the trees and the stars; you have a right to be here. And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should.

Therefore, be at peace with God, whatever you conceive Him to be and, whatever your labors and aspirations in the noisy confusion of life, keep peace with your soul.

With all its sham, drudgery and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world...

-- From an inscription in St. Paul's Church, Baltimore

### **Take Time**

Today I pray that I can:

Take Time to think. It is the source of power.

Take time to play. It is the secret of perpetual youth.

Take time to read. It is the fountain of wisdom.

Take time to pray. It is the greatest Power on earth.

Take time to be friendly. It is the road to happiness.

Take time to laugh. It is the music of the soul.

Take time to give. It is too short a day to be selfish.

Take time to work. It is the price of success.

Take time to do charity. It is the key to Heaven.

### **Today's Thought**

I am but one,  
But I am one;  
I can't do everything,  
But I can do SOMETHING;  
What I can do,  
I ought to do,  
What I ought to do,  
God helping me,  
I WILL DO.

### **Different Approaches to God**

You see many stars at night in the sky but find them not when the sun rises, can you say there are no stars in the heaven by day? So, O man! Because you behold not God in the days of your ignorance, say not that there is no God. As one and the same material, water is called by different names by different peoples, one calling it water, another calling it eau, a third aqua, and another pani, so the one Satchitananda, the everlasting intelligent-bliss, is invoked by some as God, by some as Allah, by some as Jehovah, by some as Hari, and by others as Brahman.

As one can ascend to the top of a house by means of a ladder or a bamboo or a staircase or a rope, so divers are the ways and means to approach God, and every religion in the world shows one of these ways. Different creeds are but different paths to reach the Almighty.

-- Sri Ramakrishna from Searching, p.76

## **The Golden Principle**

Blessed are those who prefer others before themselves. -- Baha'i Faith

Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful. -- Buddhism

Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. --Christianity

This is the sum of all duty: treat others as you yourself would be treated. -- Hinduism

No one of you is a believer until you desire for another that which you desire for yourself. -- Islam

In happiness and suffering, in joy and grief, regard all creatures as you would regard your own self. -- Jainism

What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor. -- Judaism

Be not estranged from another for God dwells in every heart. -- Sikhism

Human nature is good only when it does not do unto another whatever is not good for its own self. -- Zoroastrianism

# Songs (Mostly from the Christian Tradition)

## Michael Row the Boat Ashore

Michael, row the boat ashore, Alleluia,  
Michael, row the boat ashore, Alleluia.

Jordan's River is chilly and cold, Alleluia,  
Kills the body but not the soul, Alleluia.

Jordan's River is deep and wide, Alleluia,  
Meet my mother on the other side, Alleluia.

Gabriel, blow the trumpet horn, Alleluia,  
Blow the trumpet loud and long, Alleluia.

Brother, lend a helping hand, Alleluia,  
Brother, lend a helping hand, Alleluia.

Michael's boat's a gospel boat, Alleluia,  
Michael's boat's a gospel boat, Alleluia.

Michael, row the boat ashore, Alleluia,  
Michael, row the boat ashore, Alleluia.

## Amazing Grace

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound  
That saved a wretch like me.  
I once was lost, but now I'm found;  
Was blind, but now I see

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,  
And grace my fear relieved.  
How precious did that grace appear  
The hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils and snares  
We have already come.  
'Twas grace that brought us safe this far,  
And grace will bring us home.

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound  
That saved a wretch like me.  
I once was lost, but now I'm found;  
Was blind, but now I see

## Kum Ba Ya

Kum ba ya, My Lord, Kum ba ya.  
Kum ba ya, My Lord, Kum ba ya.  
Kum ba ya, My Lord, Kum ba ya.  
Oh Lord, Kum ba ya.

Some one's crying Lord, Kum ba ya.

Some one's laughing Lord, Kum ba ya.

Some one's shouting Lord, Kum ba ya.

Some one's praying Lord, Kum ba ya.

Kum ba ya, My Lord Kum ba ya.

### **Kum Ba Ya -- The Scout Law Version**

Kum-ba-yah my Lord, Kum-ba-yah  
Kum-ba-yah my Lord, Kum-ba-yah  
Kum-ba-yah my Lord, Kum-ba-yah  
O, Lord, Kum-ba-yah.

A Scout's trustworthy Lord, Kum-ba-yah,  
A Scout is loyal, Lord, Kum-ba-yah,  
A Scout is helpful, Lord, Kum-ba-yah,  
O, Lord, Kum-ba-yah.

A Scout is friendly, Lord, Kum-ba-yah,  
A Scout is courteous, Lord, Kum-ba-yah,  
A Scout is kind, Lord, Kum-ba-yah,  
O, Lord, Kum-ba-yah.

A Scout's obedient, Lord, Kum-ba-yah,  
A Scout is cheerful, Lord, Kum-ba-yah,  
A Scout is thrifty, Lord, Kum-ba-yah,  
O, Lord, Kum-ba-yah.

A Scout is brave, Lord, Kum-ba-yah  
A Scout is clean, Lord, Kum-ba-yah  
A Scout is reverent, Lord, Kum-ba-yah  
O, Lord, Kum-ba-yah.

Kum-ba-yah my Lord, Kum-ba-yah Kum-ba-yah my Lord, Kum-ba-yah  
Kum-ba-yah my Lord, Kum-ba-yah O, Lord, Kum-ba-yah.

## **Scout Vespers**

Softly falls the light of day,  
As our campfire fades away.  
Silently, each Scout should ask,  
"Have I done my daily task?"

"Have I kept my honor bright,  
Can I guiltless sleep tonight?  
Have I done and have I dared,  
Every thing to be prepared?"

## **God Bless America**

God Bless America, land that I love  
Stand beside her, and guide her,  
Through the night with the light from above,  
From the mountains, to the prairies,  
To the ocean, white with foam,  
God bless America, my home sweet home.  
God bless America, my home sweet home.

## **Let There Be Peace on Earth**

Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me.  
Let there be peace on earth, the peace that was meant to be.  
With God as our Father, brothers all are we.  
Let me walk with my brother in perfect harmony.

Let peace begin with me, let this be the moment now.  
With every step I take, let this be my solemn vow:  
To take each moment and live each moment in peace eternally!

Let there be peace on earth  
and let it begin with me.

## **For the Beauty of the Earth**

For the Beauty of the Earth, For the Beauty of the skies  
For the love which from our birth, over and around us lies  
Lord of all, to Thee we raise,  
This our hymn of grateful praise.

For the wonder of each hour, of the day and of the night  
Hill and vale, tree and flower, sun and moon and stars of light  
Lord of all, to Thee we raise,  
This our hymn of grateful praise.

For the joy of ear and eye, For the heart and mind's delight  
For the mystic harmony linking sense to sound and sight  
Lord of all to Thee we raise,  
This our hymn of grateful praise

## **Morning Has Broken**

Morning has broken, Like the first morning,  
Blackbird has spoken, Like the first bird,  
Praise for the singing! Praise for the morning!  
Praise for them springing fresh from the word.

Sweet the rain's new fall, sunlit from heaven,  
Like the first dew fall, on the first grass  
Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden,  
Sprung in completeness, Where His feet pass.

Mine is the sunlight! Mine is the morning,  
Born of the one light Eden saw play!  
Praise with elation, Praise every morning,  
God's recreation of the new day!

## America the Beautiful

O beautiful for spacious skies  
For amber waves of grain,  
For purple mountain majesties  
Above the fruited plain  
America! America!  
God shed his grace on thee,  
And crown thy good with brotherhood  
from sea to shining sea!

O beautiful for patriot dream  
That sees beyond the years  
Thine alabaster cities gleam,  
Undimmed by human tears!  
America! America!  
God shed His grace on thee,  
And crown thy good with brotherhood  
from sea to shining sea!

## All That I Can

I'm gonna do all that I can, for the Lord  
I'm gonna do all that I can, for the Lord  
I'm gonna do all that I can, 'til I can't do no more  
I'm gonna do all that I can, for the Lord

I'm gonna sing all that I can, for the Lord  
(etc.)

I'm gonna \_\_\_\_\_ all that I can, for the Lord  
(etc.)

I'm gonna do all that I can, for the Lord  
I'm gonna do all that I can, for the Lord  
I'm gonna do all that I can, 'til I can't do no more  
I'm gonna do all that I can, for the Lord

## The Philmont Hymn

Silver on the sage, starlit skies above  
Aspen covered hills, country that I love  
Philmont here's to thee, scouting paradise  
Out in God's country, tonight.

Wind in whispering pines, eagles soaring high  
Purple Mountains rise, against an azure sky  
Philmont here's to thee, scouting paradise  
Out in God's country, tonight.

# Stories

Note: These stories should NOT be read, but rather should be learned and told naturally.

## The Carpenter's House

An elderly carpenter was ready to retire. He told his employer-contractor of his plans to leave the house building business and live a more leisurely life with his wife enjoying his extended family.

He would miss the paycheck, but he needed to retire. They could get by. The contractor was sorry to see his good worker go and asked if he could build just one more house as a personal favor. The carpenter said yes, but in time it was easy to see that his heart was not in his work. He resorted to shoddy workmanship and used inferior materials. It was an unfortunate way to end his career.

When the carpenter finished his work and the builder came to inspect the house, the contractor handed the front-door key to the carpenter. "This is your house," he said, "my gift to you."

What a shock! What a shame! If he had only known he was building his own house, he would have done it all so differently. Now he had to live in the home he had built none too well.

So it is with us. We build our lives in a distracted way, reacting rather than acting, willing to put up less than the best. At important points we do not give the job our best effort. Then with a shock we look at the situation we have created and find that we are now living in the house we have built. If we had realized that we would have done it differently.

Think of yourself as the carpenter. Think about your house. Each day you hammer a nail, place a board, or erect a wall. Build wisely. It is the only life you will ever build. Even if you live it for only one day more, that day deserves to be lived graciously and with dignity. The plaque on the wall says, "Life is a do-it-yourself project." Your life tomorrow will be the result of your attitudes and the choices you make today.

Author Unknown

## Perspectives

One day a father and his rich family took his young son on a trip to the country with the firm purpose to show him how poor people can be. They spent a day and a night in the farm of a very poor family. When they got back from their trip the father asked his son, "How was the trip?" "Very good, Dad!"

"Did you see how poor people can be?" the father asked.

"Yeah!" "And what did you learn?"

The son answered, "I saw that we have a dog at home, and they have four. We have a pool that reaches to the middle of the garden, they have a creek that has no end. We have imported lamps in the garden, they have the stars. Our patio reaches to the front yard, they have a whole horizon. "

When the little boy was finishing, his father was speechless.

His son added, "Thanks, Dad, for showing me how poor we are!" Isn't it true that it all depends on the way you look at things? If you have love, friends, family, health, good humor and a positive attitude toward life, you've got everything!

You can't buy any of these things. You can have all the material possessions you can imagine, provisions for the future, etc., but if you are poor of spirit, you have nothing!

Author Unknown

### **The Cracked Pot**

A water bearer in India had two large pots, each hung on the end of a pole which he carried across his neck. One of the pots was perfectly made and never leaked. The other pot had a crack in it and by the time the water bearer reached his master's house it had leaked much of its water and was only half full.

For a full two years this went on daily, with the bearer delivering only one and a half pots full of water to his master's house. Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments. But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection, and miserable that it was able to accomplish only half of what it had been made to do.

After two years of what it perceived to be a bitter failure, it spoke to the water bearer one day by the stream. "I am ashamed of myself, and I want to apologize to you." "Why?" asked the bearer. "What are you ashamed of?" "I have been able, for these past two years, to deliver only half my load because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your master's house. Because of my flaws, you have to do all of this work, and you don't get full value from your efforts," the pot said.

The water bearer felt sorry for the old cracked pot, and in his compassion he said, "As we return to the master's house, I want you to notice the beautiful flowers along the path."

Indeed, as they went up the hill, the old cracked pot took notice of the sun warming the beautiful wild flowers on the side of the path, and this cheered it some. But at the end of the trail, it still felt bad because it had leaked out half its load, and so again the pot apologized to the bearer for its failure.

The bearer said to the pot, "Did you notice that there were flowers only on your side of your path, but not on the other pot's side? That's because I have always known about your flaw, and I took advantage of it. I planted flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day while we

walk back from the stream, you've watered them. For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate my master's table. Without you being just the way you are, he would not have this beauty to grace his house."

Each of us has our own unique flaws. We're all cracked pots. But if we will allow it, God will use our flaws to grace his table. In God's great economy, nothing goes to waste. Don't be afraid of your flaws. Acknowledge them, and you too can be the cause of beauty. Know that in our weakness we find our strength.

Author Unknown

## **Attitude**

The longer one lives, the more one realizes the impact of attitude on life. Attitude is more important than facts, more important than circumstances, failures or successes, and certainly more important than what other people think or say. It's more important than appearance, talent or skill. Attitude can make or break a man, a home, a family, or an organization. It can shatter dreams, ideas, relationships, and children's futures

Every day, each one of us has a choice regarding not only the clothes we wear, but the attitude we present for that day. It's the last thing we put on as we leave our home. People should all have a mirror by the door, just to make sure their attitude is on straight.

We cannot change, as God cannot change, the past, nor can we guarantee that those we smile or say "Good Morning" to will be pleasant or even civil, since anger has a way of inserting its sharp words into pleasant as well as strained conversations.

The time we spend interacting with people may vary from a few seconds to hours, and happens under all circumstances, such as walking down the street, or school hallway.

We may think that a head nod, or a brief "Hello" is insignificant, but think again. As a clown, I have come to realize that those few moments, are what children, or people remember.

Two weeks ago, another clown and myself were at a Friendly's restaurant in Concord. We had just finished a parade, and were still in costume. We were tired, hot, and hungry. Since it was during that heat wave, many parents were there with their children, and you know how clowns react with children. So we made balloons and passed them from table to table until all the kids had at least one. Just as our food arrived, a small boy, around nine years old, came from somewhere and tugged at my sleeve and said "When I grow up, I want to be just like you." We never did get to eat.

What I'm trying to say is that whether you interact with people in three minutes or three hours, you leave behind you a feeling (attitude) of caring or non-caring, of sensitivity or insensitivity, and as one clown said "You walk away leaving a legend or a nightmare."

Each one of us should realize that as we walk away, we leave something behind. What that is depends on us.

--A.L. (from the internet)

## **The Black Door**

There's a Middle Eastern story of a spy who had been captured and sentenced to death by a general of the Persian army. The general had fallen upon a strange and rather bizarre custom. He permitted the condemned person to make a choice. He could either face the firing squad or pass through the black door.

As the moment of execution drew near, the general ordered the spy to be brought before him for a short, final interview, the primary purpose of which was to receive the answer of the doomed man to the question: "Which shall it be---the firing squad or the black door?"

This was not an easy question, and the prisoner hesitated, but soon he made it known that he much preferred the firing squad. Not long thereafter, a volley of shots in the courtyard announced the grim sentence had been fulfilled. The general, staring at his boots, turned to his aide and said, "You see how it is with men; they will always prefer the known way to the unknown. It is characteristic of people to be afraid of the undefined. And yet I gave him his choice."

"What lies behind the black door?" asked the aide.

"Freedom," replied the general, "and I've known only a few men brave enough to take it."

Like so many stories out of the Middle East, this one carries a pretty hefty message. The first is, of course, that we will often choose the familiar, even if it's undesirable, over the unknown, which might be a wonderful opportunity. And second, that few people are brave enough to choose freedom.

I'm not saying we should reject the familiar---not by any means. But we should question the familiar. Just because it's familiar doesn't make it good, better, or the best thing to do.

When you heard the story about the black door, you probably said to yourself, "I would have chosen the black door. I would have had nothing to lose; the firing squad was certain death." And most people would say the same thing. But actually faced with the choice, would you? How many doors to freedom have we passed up during our lives because we tend to cling so fiercely to the familiar?

How many times have events come about that we worried and stewed about--- even thought calamitous at the time---and that later proved to be blessings in disguise? Each of them was a black door through which we passed to greater freedom. But at the time, we would have chosen to keep things as they were if we had been given the chance.

At any rate, it's one of those stories that makes for interesting discussion at the dinner table, or with friends. Tell the story of the black door, and see what sort of reaction you get.

It's good to remember, if we can, that it is often those things we worry about and most fear that turn out to be blessings in disguise.

## **Time**

Imagine there is a bank that credits your account each morning with \$86,400. It carries over no balance from day to day. Every evening the bank deletes whatever part of the balance you failed to use during the day. What would you do? Draw out every cent, of course!!!! Each of us has such a bank. Its name is TIME. Every morning, it credits you with 86,400 seconds. Every night it writes off, as lost, whatever of this you have failed to invest to good purpose. It carries over no balance. It allows no overdraft. Each day it opens a new account for you. Each night it burns the remains of the day. If you fail to use the day's deposits, the loss is yours. There is no going back. There is no drawing against the "tomorrow". You must live in the present on today's deposits. Invest it so as to get from it the utmost in health, happiness, and success! The clock is running. Make the most of today.

To realize the value of ONE YEAR, ask a student who failed a grade. To realize the value of ONE MONTH, ask a mother who gave birth to a premature baby. To realize the value of ONE WEEK, ask the editor of a weekly newspaper. To realize the value of ONE HOUR, ask the lovers who are waiting to meet. To realize the value of ONE MINUTE, ask a person who missed the train. To realize the value of ONE SECOND, ask a person who just avoided an accident. To realize the value of ONE MILLISECOND, ask the person who won a silver medal in the Olympics.

Treasure every moment that you have! And treasure it more because you shared it with someone special, special enough to spend your time. And remember that time waits for no one.

Yesterday is history. Tomorrow is mystery. Today is a gift. That's why it's called the present!!