

Thanksgiving at Grandma's  
By Kathryn Cubalo

When I was a child, we always had our Thanksgiving dinner at my mother's parents' big stone farmhouse. My memories are all run together, so very few specific times stand out. Mostly it was a time to get together with aunts, uncles and cousins.

We cousins always headed outside to the hay barn or the hay stack after getting instructions from Grandpa. We could slide in the hay stack, but not tear it down. We could jump in the haymow, but not swing out on the hay forks or jump from the high beams. I was not the dare-devil type, but my cousins and my brother always managed to break the rules just a little; sometimes more than a little, but I don't think anyone was ever hurt. I was always a little in awe of my younger, red-headed cousin Donna, who could jump gleefully from the higher beam. She tried to goad me to follow, but I knew my limits.

Inside the house, the pungent smells were wonderful. No, we didn't have a big turkey. It was always chicken with brown gravy, sage stuffing with lots of onions, hubbard squash, and mashed potatoes, all things grown on the farm. And, of course, plenty of our favorite pie, apple made with brown sugar and pumpkin. Usually the table was stretched to its limit and another table set up for us children, sometimes in the front parlor, which we didn't enter except on special occasions.

One Thanksgiving I remember was when my brother and I got to sit at the grown-ups table. I think by then I was in my teens and maybe some adult was missing, so it opened up some place for half-grown people. I felt special and more grown up than my two next oldest girl cousins (Donna and Nellie Mae Piper).

On these occasions, my grandpa always said a special grace that was longer than his usual one, which I remember fully: "Bless us O God, in Whom we live and move and have our being. Make us thankful for these mercies. Forgive us our sins. In Jesus Name, Amen." It was hard to wait with our mouths watering for the longer prayer to finish.

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Addendum from the typist: One Thanksgiving, the dishes were being passed around when suddenly there was a lot of laughter from the grown-up's table. Uncle John Piper had been putting something of everything on his plate without paying much attention because he was talking and the gravy had overflowed onto the tablecloth. (hio)