

The Club Collect

Keep us, oh God, from pettiness:

What we affirm in our heart determines what we become. If we concentrate on littleness, we cannot avoid becoming petty. If we concentrate on high thoughts and high ideals, we ourselves can achieve greatness and ensure success for our club.

Let us be large in thought, in word, in deed:

In thought – keep kind thoughts towards others, especially at those times when misunderstanding occurs.

In word – try to develop points of discussion on which you and others can agree.

In deed – be truly concerned for the welfare of others. Sympathy for others will put a sense of happiness and well-being in your heart.

Let us be done with fault finding:

Have a positive attitude. A wise person said, “Conditions are essentially neutral. “Your own attitude determines whether they are positive or negative for you”.

And leave off self-seeking:

Don't think of yourself doing a project, think instead of the project being accomplished. If your ego holds the project's success in your own circle of self-esteem, then the energy used on said project will not be focused on the project- but instead on you.

May we put away all pretense:

Be modest. A lot was accomplished before you were born.

And meet each other face to face:

Every face-to-face encounter, regardless of how brief, leaves something of you within the other.

Without self-pity:

Drown in self-pity in the recognition that emotional self-indulgence only

limits your ability to accomplish anything. Instead, swim in patience, sensitive insight, and determination.

And without prejudice:

Every person you meet knows something you don't. In learning from others, your own prejudice thoughts will fail to exist.

May we never be hasty in judgment:

Never judge others. When tempted to do so, concentrate on what it is in your friends that's attracts you.

And always be generous:

Always remember, a person's greatest emotional need is to be appreciated.

Let us take time for all things:

Practice self-control in all aspects of your life. Overindulgence only wastes vitality; self-control insures a time for all things.

Make us to grow calm, serene, gentle:

Life can be a roller-coaster ride – up one day and down the next – if you allow it to be. Act always from your inner center. Whether things go well or ill, reflect: all things change. Be neither elated nor depresses, for nothing in this universe remains the same forever.

Teach us to put into action our better impulses:

Great opportunities await those who give more than what is asked. Put the uncommon touch on even the most common task. We may never have the opportunity to do great things in a great way, but we all have the chance to do small things in a great way.

Straight forward and unafraid:

Develop magnetism. Project your opinions and beliefs with the energy and conviction you yourself feel for them.

Grant that we may realize it is the little things that create differences:

Baskins-Robbins advertises thirty-one flavors of ice cream because, "It is

the little things in life that create differences” – life would be dull without differences.

That in the big things of life we are at one:

Baskins-Robbins also advertises that. “I like, you like, and everyone likes ice cream.... And that is why we are a successful business venture. Successful volunteers row in the same direction.

And may we strive to touch and to know the great common human heart of us all:

Allow your heart’s natural love to unfold by renouncing selfishness, self-righteousness, and pride. In doing so, your heart beat will become as one with those around you.

And oh, Lord God, let us forget not to be kind.

The wisdom of kindness is the greatest kindness of all.

“I’ll shape you,” said the hammer to a piece of iron as his blows fell upon it. But every blow dulled the edge more and more.

“Let me change you,” said the saw as he ripped into the cold metal.

However, after losing several teeth, the saw had to quit.

Next the little flame gently said, “Let me try.” And it warmly embraced the iron and stayed there until the hardness melted. The forging was then an easy task.

There are hearts like this. They resist blows and cuttings, but soften under the warmth of kindness.

Let your kindness shine as a leader going forward with love from your heart.

The Collect – Mary Stewart, 1904 - Author of the interpretation unknown

The Collect was written as a personal prayer by Mary Stewart in 1904. She was just out of college and was entering her first job as a high school principal. The first printing was in an obscure paragraph in Delineator magazine. A local printer in Longmont, Colorado later made copies for a local federated club. Mary Stewart wrote the Collect while in

Longmont. The first organization to use the Collect, or to print it in its yearbook was the General Federation of Women's Clubs. It has since been reprinted in many forms, in many lands. The Collect has also been set to music. Mary Stewart said she offered the prayer for publication as a club woman's Collect because she felt "women working together for large ends was something new." The Collect was not intended to be a creed. Every line of it is a petition, a prayer that is, a Collect.

A detailed history of Mary Stewart and the Collect is available from the General Federation of Women's Clubs Headquarters, 1734 N Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20036.