

ברכת הגומל Blessing of Ha-Gomel

1. Siddur Ashkenaz, Blessing of Ha-Gomel

ברוך אתה יְקוֹק אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם הַגּוֹמֵל לְחַיִּים טוֹבוֹת שְׁגָמְלָנִי כָּל טוֹב:
וְהַקָּהָל עֹנִים: מִי שְׁגָמְלָךְ טוֹב הוּא יִגְמָלְךָ כָּל-טוֹב סָלָה:

Blessed are You, Hashem our God, Sovereign of the Universe, Who bestows goodness upon the guilty, Who has bestowed every goodness upon me.

The congregation responds: He Who has bestowed goodness upon you, may He bestow every goodness upon you, forever.

2. Babylonian Talmud, Berakhot 54b

אמר רב יהודה אמר רב: ארבעה צרכין להודות: יורדי הים, הולכי מדברות, ומי שהיה חולה ונתרפא, ומי שהיה חבוש בבית האסורים ויצא. יורדי הים מנלן? — דכתיב: "יורדי הים באניות וגו' המה ראו מעשי ה'". ואומר: "ויצמד רוח סערה יעלו שמים ירדו תהומות", ואומר: "יחוגו וינועו כשכור", ואומר: "ויצעקו אל ה' בצר להם וממצוקתיהם יוציאים", ואומר: "יקם סערה לדממה", ואומר: "וישמוחו כי ישתקו", ואומר: "יודו לה' חסדו ונפלאותיו לבני אדם". הולכי מדברות מנלן? דכתיב: "תעו במדבר בישימון דרך עיר מושב לא מצאו ... ויצעקו אל ה' ... וידריכם בדרך ישרה ... יודו לה' חסדו". מי שחלה ונתרפא, דכתיב: "אילים מדרך פשעם ומעונותיהם יתענו. כל אכל תתעב נפשם וגו' ויצעקו אל ה' בצר להם וגו' וישלח דברו וירפאם וגו' יודו לה' חסדו". מי שהיה חבוש בבית האסורין מנלן? — דכתיב: "וישבי חשך וצלמות וגו' כי המרו אמרי אל וגו'". ואומר: "ויכנע בעמל לבם וגו'", ואומר: "ויצעקו אל ה' בצר להם", ואומר: "ויציאם מחשך וצלמות וגו'", ואומר: "יודו לה' חסדו".

מאי מברך? אמר רב יהודה: "ברוך גומל חסדים טובים". אביי אמר: וצריך לאודונו קמי עשרה, דכתיב: "וירוממוהו בקהל עם וגו'".

Rav Yehuda said that Rav said: Four must offer thanks to God. They are: Seafarers, those who walk in the desert, and one who was ill and recovered, and one who was incarcerated in prison and went out. From where do we derive that **seafarers** are required to thank God? As it is written: "They who go down to the sea in ships... they see the works of the Lord." And it says: "For He commands and raises the stormy wind... They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths..." And it says: "They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man..." And it says: "Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and He brings them out of their distress." And it says: "He makes the storm calm..." and it says: "Then are they glad because they be quiet..." and it says: "They are grateful to God for His loving-kindness and His wonders for mankind" (Psalms 107:23-31). From where do we derive that **those who walk in the desert** are required to thank God? The Gemara answers: As it is written: "They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city in which to dwell." "And then they cried unto the Lord... And He led them forth by the right way." And then: "They are grateful to God for His goodness." (Psalms 107:4-8). That **one who was ill and recovered** must offer thanks is derived, as it is written: "Fools, because of their transgression and because of their iniquities, are afflicted. Their soul abhors all manner of food..." and: "Then they cry unto the Lord in their

trouble...” and then: “He sent His word and healed them...” And then: “They are grateful to God for His goodness” (Psalms 107:17-21). From where do we derive that one who was incarcerated in prison must offer thanks? As it is written: “Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death... Because they rebelled against the words of God...” And it says: “Therefore He brought down their heart with labor...” and it says: “Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble...” and it says: “He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death...” And it says: “They are grateful to God for His goodness” (Psalms 107:10-14).

The Gemara asks: What blessing does he recite? Rav Yehuda said: Blessed is... Who bestows acts of loving-kindness. Abaye said: And he must offer thanks before ten people, as it is written: “Let them exalt Him also in the congregation of the people” (Psalms 107:32) [congregation indicates a group of at least ten].

3. Psalms 107:1-32

הַדּוֹ לִיקוּק כִּי-טוֹב כִּי לַעֲלֹם חֲסִדּוֹ:
 יֹאמְרוּ גְאוּלֵּי יְקוּק אֲשֶׁר גָּאֲלָם מִיַּד-צָר:
 וּמֵאֲרָצוֹת לְבָבָם מִמִּזְרַח וּמִמַּעֲרֵב מִצָּפוֹן וּמִיָּם:
 תָּעוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר בִּישִׁימוֹן דֶּרֶךְ עִיר מוֹשֵׁב לֹא מָצְאוּ:
 רַעֲבִים גַּם-צִמְאִים נָפְשָׁם בָּהֶם תִּתְעַטֵּף:
 וַיִּצְעְקוּ אֶל-יְקוּ בָּצָר לָהֶם מִמַּצְוִיקוֹתֵיהֶם יִצִּילֵם:
 וַיִּדְרִיכֵם בְּדֶרֶךְ יִשְׁרָאֵל לְלֶכֶת אֶל-עִיר מוֹשֵׁב:
 יוֹדוּ לִיקוּק חֲסִדּוֹ וְנִפְלְאוֹתָיו לִבְנֵי אָדָם:
 כִּי-הִשְׁבִּיעַ נֶפֶשׁ שִׁקְקָה וְנֶפֶשׁ רָעָבָה מִלֶּא-טוֹב:
 יִשְׁבִּי חֶשֶׁךְ וְצִלְמוֹת אֶסִּירִי עָנִי וּבְרָזָל:
 כִּי-הִמְרוּ אִמְרֵי-קָל וַעֲצַת עֲלִיוֹן נָאָצוּ:
 וַיִּכְנַע בַּעֲמַל לָבָם כָּשְׁלוּ וְאִין עֲזָר:
 וַיִּזְעְקוּ אֶל-יְקוּק בָּצָר לָהֶם מִמַּצְוִיקוֹתֵיהֶם יוֹשִׁיעֵם:
 וַיִּצִּיאֵם מִחֹשֶׁךְ וְצִלְמוֹת וּמוֹסְרוֹתֵיהֶם יִנְתֵּק:
 יוֹדוּ לִיקוּק חֲסִדּוֹ וְנִפְלְאוֹתָיו לִבְנֵי אָדָם:
 כִּי-שִׁבַּר דְּלִתּוֹת נַחֲשֶׁת וּבְרִיחֵי בְרָזָל גִּדְּעוּ:
 אֲוִלִּים מִדֶּרֶךְ פֶּשַׁעַם וְעֵצָה וְעֵצָה יִתְעַנּוּ:
 כָּל-אֶחָד תִּתְעַב נֶפְשָׁם וַיִּגְעוּ עַד-שַׁעֲרֵי מוֹת:
 וַיִּזְעְקוּ אֶל-יְקוּק בָּצָר לָהֶם מִמַּצְוִיקוֹתֵיהֶם יוֹשִׁיעֵם:
 יִשְׁלַח דְּבָרוֹ וַיִּרְפָּאֵם וַיִּמְלֹט מִשְׁחִיתוֹתָם:
 יוֹדוּ לִיקוּק חֲסִדּוֹ וְנִפְלְאוֹתָיו לִבְנֵי אָדָם:
 וַיִּזְבְּחוּ זִבְחֵי תוֹדָה וַיִּסְפְּרוּ מַעֲשָׂיו בְּרִנָּה:
 ׀ יוֹרְדֵי הַיָּם בָּאֲנִיּוֹת עָשִׂי מְלָאכָה בַּיָּם רַבִּים:
 ׀ הִמָּה רָאוּ מַעֲשֵׂי יְקוּק וְנִפְלְאוֹתָיו בְּמִצְוֹתָהֶם:
 ׀ וַיִּאֲמָרוּ וַיַּעֲמִד רוּחַ סְעָרָה וַתִּרְוּמָם גָּלְיוֹ:
 ׀ יַעֲלוּ שָׁמַיִם יִרְדּוּ תְהוֹמוֹת נֶפֶשָׁם בְּרָעָה תִתְמוּגַג:
 ׀ יִחוּגוּ וַיִּבְנוּ כֶּשֶׁף וְכָל-חֲכָמָתָם תִּתְבַּלַּע:
 ׀ וַיִּצְעְקוּ אֶל-יְקוּק בָּצָר לָהֶם מִמַּצְוִיקוֹתֵיהֶם יוֹצִיאֵם:
 יָקָם סְעָרָה לְדִמְמָה וַיַּחֲשֹׁ גִלְיָהֶם:
 וַיִּשְׁמְחוּ כִּי-יִשְׁתַּקּוּ וַיִּנָּחֵם אֶל-מַחֲזִיז חִפְצָם:
 יוֹדוּ לִיקוּק חֲסִדּוֹ וְנִפְלְאוֹתָיו לִבְנֵי אָדָם:
 וַיִּרְוּמוּהוּ בְּקֶהֱלָעַם וּבְמוֹשֵׁב זִקְנִים יִהְלִילוּהוּ:

“Praise the LORD, for He is good;
His steadfast love is eternal!”
Thus let the redeemed of the LORD say,
those He redeemed from adversity,
whom He gathered in from the lands,
from east and west,
from the north and from the sea.

Some lost their way in the wilderness,
in the wasteland;
they found no settled place.
Hungry and thirsty,
their spirit failed.

In their adversity they cried to the LORD,
and He rescued them from their troubles.
He showed them a direct way
to reach a settled place.

Let them praise the LORD for His steadfast love,
His wondrous deeds for mankind;
for He has satisfied the thirsty,
filled the hungry with all good things.

Some lived in deepest darkness,
bound in cruel irons,
because they defied the word of God,
spurned the counsel of the Most High.
He humbled their hearts through suffering;
they stumbled with no one to help.

In their adversity they cried to the LORD,
and He rescued them from their troubles.
He brought them out of deepest darkness,
broke their bonds asunder.

Let them praise the LORD for His steadfast love,
His wondrous deeds for mankind;
for He shattered gates of bronze,
He broke their iron bars.

There were fools who suffered for their sinful way,
and for their iniquities.

All food was loathsome to them;
they reached the gates of death.
In their adversity they cried to the LORD
and He saved them from their troubles.
He gave an order and healed them;
He delivered them from the pits.

Let them praise the LORD for His steadfast love,
His wondrous deeds for mankind.
Let them offer thanksgiving sacrifices,
and tell His deeds in joyful song.

Others go down to the sea in ships,
 ply their trade in the mighty waters;
 they have seen the works of the LORD
 and His wonders in the deep.
 By His word He raised a storm wind
 that made the waves surge.
 Mounting up to the heaven,
 plunging down to the depths,
 disgorging in their misery,
 they reeled and staggered like a drunken man,
 all their skill to no avail.
 In their adversity they cried to the LORD,
 and He saved them from their troubles.
 He reduced the storm to a whisper;
 the waves were stilled.
 They rejoiced when all was quiet,
 and He brought them to the port they desired.
 Let them praise the LORD for His steadfast love,
 His wondrous deeds for mankind.
 Let them exalt Him in **the congregation of the people**,
 acclaim Him in **the assembly of the elders**.

4. Shulhan Arukh, Arukh Hayyim, 219

ארבעה צריכים להודות יורדי הים כשעלו ממנה והולכי מדברות כשיגיעו ליישוב ומי שהיה חולה ונתרפא ומי שהיה חבוש בבית האסורים ויצא וסימנך וכל החיים יודוך סלה "חולה" יסורין "ים" מדבר...
 באשכנז וצרפת אין מברכין כשהולכין מעיר לעיר שלא חייבו אלא בהולכי מדברות דשכיחי ביה חיות רעות ולסטים ובספרד נוהגים לברך מפני שכל הדרכים בחזקת סכנה ומיהו בפחות מפרסה אינו מברך ואם הוא מקום מוחזק בסכנה ביותר אפי' בפחות מפרסה:
 בכל חולי צריך לברך אפילו אינו חולי של סכנה ולא מכה של חלל אלא כל שעלה למטה וירד מפני שדומה כמי שהעלוהו לגרדום לידון אין הפרש בין שיש לו מיחוש קבוע ובא מזמן לזמן ובין שאינו קבוע:
 הגה ויש אומרים דאינו מברך רק על חולי שיש בו סכנה כגון מכה של חלל (טור בשם הראב"ד והר"ר יוסף וכן נוהגין באשכנז):
 הני ארבעה לאו דוקא דה"ה למי שנעשה לו נס כגון שנפל עליו כותל או ניצול מדריסת שור וגניחותיו או שעמד עליו בעיר אריה לטרפו או אם גנבים באו לו אם שודדי לילה וניצל מהם וכל כיוצא בזה כלם צריכים לברך הגומל:
 ויש אומרים שאין מברכין הגומל אלא הני ארבעה דוקא וטוב לברך בלא הזכרת שם ומלכות:

There are four [classes of people] who have to offer thanksgiving: those who had gone out to sea when they return to land; those who cross the desert when they reach civilization; one who has recovered from an illness, and a prisoner who has been set free. And your sign is "And all the living (*ba-chayyim*) shall thank you. Sela", *chole*, *yissurim*, *yam*, *midbar* [= *chayyim*].

In Ashkenaz and Tzarfat, the blessing is not recited when traveling from one city to the next, for [the Sages] only required a blessing of those who crossed deserts, where wild beasts and bandits are found. In Spain, it is customary to recite the blessing, because all roads are presumed to be

dangerous. However, when traveling less than a *parsa*, a blessing is not recited. If it is a place that is presumed to be particularly dangerous, [a blessing is recited] even for less than a *parsa*.

In every case of illness, a blessing must be recited, even if it is not a dangerous illness, or a deadly wound. Rather, whenever a person was bedridden and he recovered, [he recites the blessing] because it is as if he had been taken up to the gallows for judgment. And there is no difference between one who has a fixed pain which afflicts him from time to time, and one whose pain is not fixed.

Rema: Some authorities say that a blessing is recited only over an illness that involves a danger, like a deadly wound.

Not just these four, but rather the same applies to anyone on behalf of whom a miracle had been performed. E.g., where a wall collapsed upon him, or he was saved from being trampled or gored by a bull, or a lion found in the city threatened to tear him to pieces, or if thieves came, and they were night bandits and he was saved from them, or anything like this, they all must recite the *Ha-Gomel* blessing. And some authorities say that *Birkat Ha-Gomel* is recited only by these four categories of people.

5. Hagahot Maimuniyot, Hilkhhot Berakhot 10:8, no. 5

פירש רבינו יוסף, דדווקא חולה שנפל למשכב, אבל חש בראשו או במעיו ולא נפל למשכב - אין צריך לברך. אמנם, בערוך בערך 'ארבעה' פירש בשם רב האי גאון שאפילו חושש בראשו או בגרונו - נהגו לברך אחר שקרא בתורה.

Rabbenu Yosef explained: Only if the sick person was bedridden. But if he [only] had a headache or a stomachache, but was not bedridden, he is not obligated to recite a blessing. However, the *Arukh* (s.v. *arba'a*) explained in the name of Rav Hai Gaon, that even if a person had a headache or a sore throat, it was customary to recite a [*Ha-Gomel*] blessing following the Torah reading.

6. R. Aharon Lichtenstein, Birkat Ha-Gomel, the Israel Koschitzky Torat Har Etzion Virtual Beit Midrash

It may have been argued that the blessing was not instituted because of what might have happened, but rather because of what actually happened. In the four cases described by the Gemara, the various people experienced troubles and suffering, and their lives had been put in danger. The wording of the Gemara and even more so the verses cited therein imply that the suffering and difficulties of the various events are what obligate the blessing. The Gemara troubles itself to emphasize the fact that those who had crossed the sea "were mounted up to the heaven, and went down to the deeps," and those who were released from prison sat for many days "in darkness and in the shadow of death." If what we say is correct, then the obligation to recite a blessing does not stem from the danger itself, but from life lived in the shadow of distress, difficulty and fear.

7. R. Eliezer Melamed, "When Do We Recite 'Ha-Gomel' Today", Revivim

And even though the ruling of the Shulchan Aruch states that every patient who is cured should recite "HaGomel," this is because in the past, every person who fell ill was considered to be in a somewhat dangerous situation, because many times they did not know whether it was the flu, or

heart disease, if the patient had angina, or was a diabetic patient who was in a dangerous condition. And as we sometimes find in stories from the past, people who functioned as perfectly healthy fell ill suddenly, and died the following day...

Therefore, after medical science has developed, and it is now possible to diagnose a patient's condition and determine whether there is a danger of his illness, the members of all communities, both Sephardim and Ashkenazim, should be instructed to recite the blessing only after an illness that had a certain danger. And the sign is that this is a disease that is permitted to violate the Sabbath in order to save the patient...

It should be added that the "HaGomel" blessing is intended for special cases and not as a routine blessing. Proof for this is that some say that anyone who needed to recite "HaGomel" in the times of the Temple would have had to sacrifice a **korban todah** (thanksgiving offering).

8. Rashi, Zevachim 7a

Even if they are not brought for one [cause of] thanksgiving, for four categories of people are required to offer thanksgiving, as it is stated in *Berakhot*. And it says: "And let them sacrifice the sacrifice of thanksgiving" ([Tehilim 107:22](#)). And he slaughtered a thanksgiving offering when he disembarked from a sea voyage for the sake of a thanksgiving that he had set aside for having been released from prison.

9. VaYikra Rabbah 9:7

רבי פנחס ורבי לוי ורבי יוחנן בשם רבי מנחם דגליא, לעתיד לבוא כל הקרבנות בטלין וקרבן תודה אינו בטל, כל התפלות בטלות, ההודאה אינה בטלה.

Rabbi Pinchas, Rabbi Levi and Rabbi Yochanan [said] in the name of Rabbi Menachem from Gallia: In the time to come, all sacrifices will be annulled - but the sacrifice of thanksgiving will not be annulled. All prayers will be annulled, but the prayer of gratitude will not be annulled.

10. R. Mani Gal

יהודים שנצלו מסכנה נהגו במשך דורות רבים להוסיף, אחרי עליה לתורה בבית הכנסת, את ברכת הגומל, ואנו נאמר במלים שלנו:
רגע קצר ומלא אימה של סכנה מפריד בין כל חיינו שלפני רגע זה לבין החיים החדשים שנתנו לנו אחריו. כפסע קיה בינינו ובין המוות, ונצלנו. לבנו מלא פליאה ותודה. את המתנה שקבלנו לא נקח כמובנת מאליה. תודה על החיים!

Jews who were saved from danger have had the custom for many generations to add, after being called up to the Torah in the synagogue, the Birkat HaGomel [blessing of thanksgiving], and we will say in our own words: A short and terrifying moment of danger separates all our life before that moment from the new life given to us afterward. We were a step away from death, and we were saved. Our heart is filled with wonder and gratitude. We will not take for granted the gift we have received. Thank you for life!

11. R. Eliezer Melamed, *Peninei Halakha*, Ha-Gomel Blessing

שגרת החיים מפריעה מאוד להכרה בכל הטוב שברא ה' בעולם, וכך לעיתים במקום להודות לה' אנחנו מתלוננים שחם מדי או קר מדי, צפוף מדי או ריק מדי וכו'. אבל אדם שהפליג בספינה, סבל מהגלים והקיא את בני מעו, כשהוא חוזר ליבשה הוא יודע עד כמה החיים הרגילים נעימים וטובים, וראוי לו שיוודה לה'. ולעיתים אדם מרגיש מועקה מחיי החברה שלא מספקים אותו ואולי אף מעיקים עליו, אולם כשהוא נודד במדבר, רחוק מחבריו, הוא מבין עד כמה החברה מגינה עליו, ועד כמה נוח וטוב לחיות בתוך חברה מסודרת עם שירותים

בסיסיים, כתשתיות מים, חנויות למזון, מסחר ושירותי בריאות. ועל כן כשיחזור לשוב עליו להודות. וכן אדם בריא לא תמיד יודע להוקיר כראוי את מצבו הטוב, ורק לאחר שנחלה הוא נוכח לדעת עד כמה הבריאות יקרה, וכשיבירא עליו להודות. וכן מי שנכלא בבית האסורים, בדרך כלל הוא אדם שלא הכיר בערכם של החיים המסודרים על הצדדים המגבילים שבהם, ושאיף ליותר ממה שניתן להשיג בדרך השגרתית, ופשע כנגד חבריו ונתפס ונענש. כשייצא ממאסרו עליו להודות ולהכיר עד כמה נפלאים הם החיים הרגילים בעולמו של הקב"ה, ולהתחרט על שלא הכיר בכך לפני שחטא. ועל כן בנוסח הברכה אומרים: "הגומל לחייבים טובות". ואף שלושת מברכי 'הגומל' האחרים נחשבים במידת מה 'חייבים', שלא הכירו עד כמה ראוי להודות לה' על הטוב שבחיים השגרתיים (עולת ראה ח"א עמ' שט-שיב).

The routine of daily life often makes it difficult for us to recognize all the goodness that God created in the world. As a result, instead of thanking God, we sometimes complain that it's too hot or too cold, too crowded or too empty, and so on.

But a person who has sailed on a ship, suffered from the waves, and vomited from seasickness—when he returns to dry land, he truly understands how pleasant and good ordinary life is, and he should give thanks to God.

Similarly, a person may sometimes feel burdened by social life, which doesn't satisfy him or even oppresses him. Yet when he wanders in the desert, far from his companions, he realizes how much society protects him, and how comfortable and good it is to live within an organized community that provides basic services such as water infrastructure, food stores, commerce, and healthcare. Therefore, when he returns to civilization, he should give thanks.

Likewise, a healthy person does not always appreciate his good condition; only after falling ill does he recognize how precious health truly is, and when he recovers, he should give thanks.

And a person who has been imprisoned is usually someone who failed to appreciate the value of orderly life, with all its limitations. He desired more than could rightly be attained through normal means, sinned against his fellow human beings, and was caught and punished. When he is released from prison, he should give thanks and acknowledge how wonderful ordinary life in God's world is—and regret that he did not recognize this before he sinned.

For this reason, in the wording of the blessing, we say: "Who bestows goodness upon the undeserving." Even the other three who recite the *HaGomel* blessing are, to some degree, considered "undeserving," because they too had not fully recognized how much we ought to thank God for the goodness found in everyday life. (*Olat Re'iyah*, vol. 1, pp. 309–312.)

12. Matt Axelrod, "Two Wings and a Prayer," Tablet Magazine

I've come to understand that the words of the *Gomel* reflect the fact that as much as we seek to control every facet of our lives, we simply can't... Life is made up of random, chaotic moments that exist alongside our own attempts at controlling every aspect of our day. Deciding to personally recite *Gomel* allowed me to take a transformative event and find meaning and gratitude in these two disparate aspects of our lives, which are forever intertwined.

13. R. Jonathan Sacks, *Celebrating Life*, p.16

Making a blessing over life is the best way of turning life into a blessing.

14. R. Neal Gold, “Birkat Hagomel: A Blessing for Coming through Trauma — and Prevailing,” myjewishlearning.com

In some ways, too, Birkat Hagomel as an expression of the extraordinary power of public prayer, and grateful recognition that sometimes prayers do indeed succeed. It is kind of the flipside — or culmination — of the [*Mi Shebeirach*](#) prayer for healing which might be recited for weeks or months or even longer while a person battles serious illness. When that person finally recovers, it feels appropriate to mark the moment with public prayer. Birkat Hagomel is just that opportunity to express gratitude for the miracle of healing and the full restoration to family and friends — and, indeed, to life itself.

15. R. Jennifer Gubitz, “From MiShebeirakh to Birkat HaGomel,” Ritualwell.org

We will soon have an opportunity
to experience this ritual of
Gomel Benschon,
this public act of gratitude for deliverance.
In some ways,
just being here as a witness is enough –
but actually, in this ritual,
it is not enough.
rather, it is incumbent upon us to respond aloud...

And why?

We all know illness,
We all know calamity...
in various gradations
we all know the grievous
and grief-ridden blow
of brokenness...
how it is so isolating...
how it causes us to feel so alone,
how it seems that somehow
everyone else’s experience improves,
but ours...
isolated
such that no one else could ever understand our experience.
and this is true...
We don’t know another’s experience...
and yet
we do...
we do know.

Birkat HaGomel as a public ritual,
as a public response,
is our way of saying aloud,
before God and one another,
we know you suffered,
we know you felt isolated,
we know your family and friends felt this pain, too,
we felt pain on your behalf...

and while we don't know exactly what it was like for you...
from our own experience,
we do know...
and because we know,
we're here now...
and we pray for you,
we give thanks for you,
we celebrate with gratitude the goodness bestowed upon you...
and we welcome you back into our midst...
healed,
or perhaps always healing...