

Prayers, September 20

Dear God,

Today we'd like to thank you for the love that we feel both for you and for our fellow creatures here on earth. Where would we be without love in this world?

The Ancient Greeks identified seven different kinds of love. We've probably experienced all of them at one time or another in our lives and we thank you, sincerely, for the emotional capacity to love and to receive love.

Firstly, we'd like to thank you for the love that we feel for equals, for our friends, brothers and sisters. This love is so important for our wellbeing. We each need someone who enables us to share our deepest, most honest feelings, someone who will support us through good and bad and someone we can love and support in return. We thank you, God, for giving us the capacity for this type of love that makes our lives on earth possible and deeply gratifying.

There is another type of love that the Greeks identified: the unconditional selfless love which passes all understanding. The Greeks called it Agape. It is the type of love we experience in the love of God and, dear God, we thank you.

There are five other types of love that the Greeks identified, in addition to the two mentioned. There's the playful puppy love that we often feel towards someone when we're growing up; there's the eros that we feel in marriage; there's the love a mother feels for her child; there's the compassionate longterm love that old partners have for one another; and there's self-love, which is where all other loves begin.

Lord, please help us to nurture these various types of love within ourselves. Help us to love our fellow humans and have love for all of your creation around us. Help us to give love to the sick along with our care. Help us to love others who are deserving of our compassion. Help us to love the unloveable so that they may find self-love. Please show your love and support for all in this world who are suffering the trauma of war and hunger and please allow the despots and dictators of our world to know selfless love in order to become more compassionate to the needs of others.

Finally, something that isn't mentioned by the Greeks. God, help us as humans to show love to those who share this world with us. Help us to show love and empathy to dogs and cats, to all family pets, to those animals who provide us with food, to the wild creatures who live on the fringes of our civilization. Please help us to respect them and their habitats and to love the world that you have given us.

Amen

