

The Club Collect

Mary Stewart wrote the Collect in 1904 as a prayer to install a sense of unity among women working together with wide interests and important goals. It was not written for any one specific organization, but for unity among all women in all organizations. 118 years later- the prayer is still used among many women's organizations and still applies to our relationships with one another today.

We are called to serve the GFWC mission "to improve our community and enhance the lives of others through volunteer service". That requires everyone taking a role, working together and achieving the goal as a team!

Let's break down the Collect.

Keep us, oh God, from pettiness; let us be large in thought, in word, in deed:

The opening line seems very direct and sets the tone for how we are to achieve the goal. We are a club made up of very different women from different backgrounds with different personalities, yet we come together for the same reason: we want to make a difference. It requires us to leave out envy, jealousy, harsh words and gossip – and instead respect, encourage and support each other and the ideas they bring.

Let us be done with fault finding and leave off self-seeking.

Don't seek to destroy or drag down another person and don't put your personal agenda ahead of what is for the good of the club. It has been said, "Conditions are essentially neutral. Your own attitude determines whether they are positive or negative for you." Remember, the project is not YOUR project, it is the work of the CLUB.

May we put away all pretense and meet each other face to face, without self-pity and without prejudice.

Every encounter, regardless of how brief, leaves behind something of you. Make it a positive impression. Self-pity only limits the ability you give to accomplish something. Instead, offer patience, insight and determination. Every person you meet knows something you don't know or has something you don't have- embrace the opportunity to learn from her and appreciate that she is on your team willing to share. Meet every member and guest at our door with hospitality and support.

May we never be hasty in judgment and always generous.

Never judge others, especially because they don't think or look like you. You don't know what they are going through or what they have overcome. Be generous with your friendship, time and resources.

Let us take time for all things

We must assure that each member is enriched by the experience of education, service and friendship. This can contribute to the growth of each member and can create a strong, motivated club.

Teach us to put into action our better impulses, straight forward and unafraid.

Great opportunities await those who give more than what is asked. Offer your best, with the best interest of the club in mind. Present your opinions and ideas with the energy and conviction you yourself feel for them.

Grant that we may realize it is the little things that create differences; that in the big things of life we are at one.

Again, we are all different with different backgrounds and experiences, but we are all members of BWC. Baskin-Robbins advertises it best- "31 flavors of ice cream" because it is the little things in life that make differences. Life would be dull without differences. But "everyone likes ice cream"- at the big things of life we are at one.

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 heartbeat 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. Our attitudes, words and tone can form or break relationships. At all times, let us be respectful and kind.