

# Opening Prayers

Contributed by [Michelle Wood](#)

Source: The New Union Haggadah

## Introduction

*At the beginning of the Seder we announce:*

This is the bread of affliction that our fathers ate in the land of Egypt. Whoever is hungry, let him come and eat; whoever is in need, let him come and join the Seder of Passover. This year we are here; next year in the land of Israel. This year we are slaves; next year we will be free people.

## Opening Prayers

*Leader:*

Now, in the presence of loved ones and friends,

Before us the emblems of festive rejoicing,

We gather for our Seder celebration.

With the household of Israel, our elders and young ones,

Linking and bonding the past with the future,

We heed once again the divine call to service:

Living our story, that is told for all people,

Whose shining conclusion is yet to unfold,

We gather to observe Passover!

As it is written:

*Response:*

You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this very day I brought your ancestors out of Egypt. You shall observe this day throughout the generations, a sacred remembrance of the day on which God freed you with a mighty hand!

*Leader:*

God of all generations, we welcome this festival of freedom with joyful hearts. We have assembled together seeking Your Presence. As You redeemed our ancestors from the slavery of Egypt, so have You been our Redeemer and Guide throughout the centuries. You have watched over us at all times.

*Response:*

We are grateful that our lot has fallen in this blessed land dedicated to freedom and peace. May we be imbued with a deep sense of our duty to free people. When we gather in our homes with our families and friends, may we ever be mindful of those who still dwell in poverty and deprivation, who still eat the bread of affliction. May the good tidings of redemption soon be heard in every land. May those who hunger for freedom and justice be satisfied, and may all people be blessed with the joy of harmony and peace. **Amen**

