**Eating Together - 1**

*“They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts.” (Acts 2:46)*

Greetings!  Today we move on to the 7th of the 10 Holy Habits we are exploring – Eating Together!  “What?”, I hear you say, “is that really a holy habit?  At least that’s one of the 10 that I’m good at!  Oh, by the way, pass the sprouts, somebody …”.

This really does seem like the easiest one of the habits that we’ve tackled so far, doesn’t it.  All that stuff about prayer and making disciples: it’s REALLY challenging.  But eating together?  What’s so holy about that habit?  Well, let’s see if we can find out …

**Time for the first course**

Eating together is something that millions of people do every day, the world over, Christian or not.  (Though for those that live alone probably not as often as they would like – we will touch on that shortly).  But for Christians it can and should have a special significance.  When Christians come together to eat, as a people thankful to God, then Christ is present in the feast, in a way that those outside the church cannot know.

There are 10 occasions in Luke alone when Jesus is seen sharing a meal.  We shall probably look at several of these during the course of the next 3 months but, as a starter J, here’s a few suggestions as to some of the directions we might travel in …

**Getting our teeth into it!**

Eating Together can be a great mission opportunity, inviting those on the fringe of the church (or completely outside it) to join us for food and to hear our personal stories of faith.  Something for us to do as a church together, maybe on a regular cycle?  But it should certainly be a habit for all of us who are able to offer hospitality to others.  **Pray for the passion to share and for the people you might share your meals with – especially those who cannot repay you**.

Eating Together can be in a whole church context, as a fellowship group or as individuals.  But the emphasis of Acts 2:46 is on the home.  **Pray that your home might be a place where Christ is always shared, in your words and your peace in Christ, even over simply tea and biscuits!**

The act of Eating Together often forges bonds in ways that doesn’t happen in other forms of interaction.  **Consider having food together on occasion in your house group or other small group context, to develop a closer connection between you.  Give a special focus on God’s work in your lives on such occasions.**  Pray that we might develop such opportunities (or similar) within Bents Green to deepen our commitment to one another.

Eating Together doesn’t have to be only pre-arranged, ‘best cutlery’ occasions!  Look for opportunities to be spontaneous in sharing food with others where you see a need. **Pray for a readiness to share hospitality just as you are, warts and all.**

**Hungering for more**

There He goes again.  Just like with the other habits we’ve looked at, Jesus has gone and opened up eating together to give us a whole menu of challenges, alongside the joys of consuming food.  But please don’t let that thought stick in your throat but rather hunger for the opportunities to practice making so much more of your meal times, with family, friends and friends-yet-to-be.  You have three whole months to do it, including the great ‘feastival’ of Christmas itself, with the extra opportunities that this brings.

God bless you – and we’d love you to tell us how you are getting on!  And remember: this time you really can make a meal of it!

*Produced by Martyn Read on behalf of the Bents Green Holy Habits Planning Group (Debs Barnett, Glenn Evans, Martyn Read, Graham Wassell, Daphne and John Wilkins).  You can find more information on the Circuit Holy Habits Programme on the Sheffield Methodist Circuit website and also the Sheffield Methodist Circuit Facebook page.*