



# The Practice of Eating Well

*Experiences of Eating Well*

## Eating Well Involves Sharing Food and Serving Others

When Jesus was at a meal in the home of a prominent religious leader of his day, he taught the guests that their meal was not only for themselves but that they were called to serve the poor in their community as well.

The Jesus said to his host, “When you give a lunch or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or your rich neighbors—for they will invite you back, and in this way you will be paid for what you did. When you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind; and you will be blessed, because they are not able to pay you back. God will repay you on the day the good people rise from death.” (Luke 14:12–14; read the whole story in Luke 14:1–24)

Sharing food with those in need is central to the Christian way of life and to the practice of eating well. In Matthew 25 Jesus identifies himself with the hungry and tells us that when we share our food with the hungry, we are sharing our faith with him. Here is the story of one woman’s experience.

Each Tuesday Linda prepares a meal for the women and children at the local homeless shelter. She makes a special point to cook a healthy, homemade meal, something that the homeless rarely have. It is her Tuesday evening ritual: arriving home a little early from work, cooking the meal, carrying it to the shelter, serving the food, talking with the ladies, playing with the children while their mothers eat. Her Tuesday meal is shared with those who are hungry and homeless. Her food and presence show her respect for the dignity and value of each person at the shelter. Over a shared meal, she listens to their stories and carries them with her all week long.

One family decided to simplify its food purchases by reducing meat consumption and eliminating some foods altogether (unhealthy snacks, candy). They took the \$20-a-week savings in their food bill—about \$1000 per year—and invested the money into providing food for the local food bank, and sponsoring a child with an international relief agency.

There are many ways to share food with those in need:

- F Many churches gather regularly to prepare and serve a meal at a homeless shelter or soup kitchen. Look for opportunities to participate with your church in serving the hungry in your community and in the world.

- F Work with local organizations who feed people at homeless shelters, soup kitchens, and food banks.
- F Support the international work of organizations that help people become food sufficient, such as Heifer ([www.heifer.org](http://www.heifer.org)), World Vision ([www.worldvision.org](http://www.worldvision.org)), Church World Service ([www.churchworldservice.org](http://www.churchworldservice.org)), and Catholic Relief Services ([www.crs.org](http://www.crs.org)).
- F Support organizations that advocate for policies that will feed the hungry in our country and world, such as Bread for the World ([www.bread.org](http://www.bread.org)).
- F Support the poor economically by purchasing fair trade products, such as coffee, whenever possible. Find fair trade products online at sites such as Equal Exchange ([www.equalexchange.com](http://www.equalexchange.com)) and Ten Thousand Villages ([www.tenthousandvillages.com](http://www.tenthousandvillages.com)).

## Reflection

- F **How do we share food and serve those in need?**
- F **How can we share food and serve those in need?**

## Mealtime Blessings

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Loving Father, we thank You for the family gathered around the table, the friends who extend your goodness, the food which nourishes our bodies and the Faith that strengthens our souls. Keep us ever mindful of these blessings, and may this food inspire us to bring these blessings to those who go without family, friends, food and faith. We ask all of this through Christ our Lord. Amen. (Father Leo E. Patalinghug, *Grace Before Meals*)

Lord God and Giver of All Good Gifts, we are grateful as we pause before this meal, for all the blessings of life that You give to us.  
Daily, we are fed with good things, nourished by friendship and care, feasted with forgiveness and understanding.  
And so, mindful of Your continuous care, we pause to be grateful for the blessings of this table.  
*(Pause for silent reflection)*  
May Your presence be the “extra” taste to this meal which we eat in the name of Your Son, Jesus.  
Amen

The day is coming to a close, and, like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, we pause to break bread together.  
May our eyes be opened, and, in this act of common sharing, may we see the risen Lord in one another.  
May we see the Lord of Life in our food, our conversation and lives shared in common.  
May these gifts strengthen us to continue your work in our world.  
May the blessing of God, His peace and love, rest upon our table. Amen

We thank you, our God, for the food you have given us.  
Make our sharing this bread together lead to a renewal of our communion with you, with one another, and with all creatures.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen

Lord, you feed every living thing.  
We have eaten together at this table; keep us in your love.  
Give us true concern for the least of our sisters and brothers, so that as we gladly share our food with them, we may also sit down together with them at the table of the kingdom of God.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen

Lord, you have fed us from your gifts and favors; fill us with your mercy, for you live and reign for ever and ever. Amen