

God and Fellowship at the Table The Day with Others: Part IV

Discussion Question:

1. Do you prefer to eat alone or with others?

2. Other than keeping your stomach full, why are mealtimes important to the Christian life?

3. Why is it important to say a prayer of thanksgiving before we eat?

Not until the fellowship has been nourished and strengthened with the bread of eternal life does it come together to receive from God earthly bread for this temporal life. (p. 66)

1. Jesus ate meals with people from all walks of life during his ministry. The Scriptures speak of three kinds of meals Jesus spoke and demonstrated.
 - a. Daily Meals: Luke 19:5-10 (the story of Zacchaeus); Mark 6: 33-44 (Jesus feeding 5,000)
 - b. The Lord's Supper: Matt 26: 26-29
 - c. The Banquet in Heaven: Luke 14: 12-24;

Each of these meals was for a different purpose. The uniting characteristic for these meals was the disciples had learned and understood something about Jesus. They experienced God's blessing by eating with Jesus.

^[30] When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. ^[31] And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. ^[32] They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?" (Luke 24:31-32 ESV)

2. Mealtime allows us to know more Jesus Christ through prayer and fellowship with other Christians. We acknowledge in our mealtime the grace, authority and presence of Jesus Christ in our lives.

- a. *It means, first, to know him as the giver of all gifts, as the Lord and Creator of this our world, with the Father and the Holy Spirit. The table fellowship therefore prays, "And let Thy gifts to us be blest," and thus acknowledges the eternal divinity of Jesus Christ. (p. 66-67)*

We acknowledge that Jesus Christ is the giver of everything because of his relationship with God and the Holy Spirit

- b. *...the fellowship acknowledges that all earthly gifts are given to it only for Christ's sake, as this while world is sustained only for the sake of Jesus Christ, his Word, and his message. He is the true bread of life. (p. 66)*

Everything in the universe is dependent on Jesus Christ through his sacrifice on the Cross.

- c. *... the congregation of Jesus believes that its Lord wills to be present when it prays for his presence. So it prays: "Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest" – and thereby confesses the gracious omnipresence of Jesus Christ. (p. 67)*

The fellowship acknowledges and invites the presence of Jesus Christ during that time of eating and communing.

So in a singular way, the daily table fellowship binds the Christians to their Lord and one another. At table they know their Lord as the one who breaks bread for them; the eyes of their faith are opened. (p. 67-68)

3. The result of eating together as a fellowship brings us into a deeper understanding of what it means to be in a Christian community.

- a. *The fellowship of the table has a festive quality. It is a constantly recurring reminder in the midst of our everyday work of God's resting after His work, of the Sabbath as the meaning and goal of the week and its toil. (p. 68)*

Through our daily meals He is calling us to rejoice, to keep holiday in the midst of our working day. (p. 68)

Meal times becomes a time of rest and joy because we understand that there is a proper time to work and then a time to rest.

- b. *The table fellowship of Christians implies obligation. It is our daily bread that we eat, not my own. We share our bread. Thus we are firmly bound to one another not only in*

the Spirit but in our whole physical being. The one bread that is given to our fellowship links us together in a firm covenant. (p. 68)

- c. *The fellowship of the first table teaches Christians that here they still eat the perishable bread of the earthly pilgrimage. But if they share this bread with one another, they shall also one day receive the imperishable bread together in the Father's house. (p. 69)*

Mealtime fellowship reminds us that we are still mortal and that living on this earth is temporary. We remind ourselves that one day we will be sitting at God's banquet table.