

A Shared Food

REAL COMMUNITY #3 - Pastor Jonathan Combs - September 8, 2024 - Acts 2:42-47

INTRO: Good morning church! We're continuing a sermon series today entitled "REAL COMMUNITY: Four Devotions for Authentic Fellowship." We're unpacking the four foundational devotions that led to the tremendous blessing of the New Testament Church. Today, we're talking about the third devotion: "A Shared Food."

Need: When you visit another country one of the most noticeable differences that you'll notice is the food. Every culture and region has different food. For that matter, food somewhat defines a culture:



Every nationality has unique taste in food. Some like it spicy and hot, some sweet, some sour. But it's all about their community, their family. Most cultures are very serious about their food, proper ingredients, proper cooking techniques, and they'll let you know if you got it right. The food reminds them of home. Food brings people around the table for honest conversation and genuine togetherness. Food is perhaps the most common language.

Trans: There's something about shared food, a shared meal that leads to real community. The same was true of the first century church...

BODY: In the book of Acts, Luke described the "real community" of the first century church. He said they were marked by four "devotions." They were:

- A shared faith
- A shared family
- A shared food
- A shared focus

We can experience this real community when we pursue these four devotions. Today, we're going to focus on the third devotion, "A Shared Food." The text gives **three reasons** why the breaking of bread is essential for living in Christ's community.

Read text: Acts 2:42-47 (ESV) ⁴² And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. ⁴³ And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. ⁴⁴ And all who believed were together and had all things in common. ⁴⁵ And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶ And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Why the breaking of bread is essential to Christ's Community:

1. It recognizes the Lord's provision.

EXP: (42) ⁴² And they **devoted** themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to **the breaking of bread** and the prayers.

"**Devoted**" – *proskartereo*, *pros* – to face towards, *kartereo* – strong, steadfast – to earnestly attend to, to continue in, to be constantly diligent towards, to adhere closely to, to give oneself to wholly.

"**The breaking of bread**" (τῆ κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου) – Again, the definite article "the," this was a specific pursuit. Could be literally translated, "breaking the loaf." This was more than a meal, it was a sacred recognition and awareness of our common dependence on the Giver of Life. Some see the Lord's Supper here, certainly that is in view, but every meal should be so. Perhaps this is also the "agape feast."

A Shared Food

REAL COMMUNITY #3 - Pastor Jonathan Combs - September 8, 2024 - Acts 2:42-47

ILL: Why would you need to devote yourself to something you have to have? Well, you see mankind's relationship with food is an important aspect of creation. We are all born with a common need and we never grow out of it. From day one we nurse and we eat again in our last hours. Man's need for food points to man's need for God. Fasting more fully points out our need for God in this. Food then is God's way of reminding us to come to Him in fellowship and the people of God do this together.

ARG: **We are valuable to God**

Luke 12:24 (NLT) Look at the ravens. They don't plant or harvest or store food in barns, for God feeds them. And you are far more valuable to him than any birds!

He supplies

Philippians 4:19 (ESV) And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

He provides

Psalms 145:15 (ESV) The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season.

Psalms 105:39-41 (ESV) ³⁹ He spread out a cloud as a covering, and a fire to give light at night. ⁴⁰ They asked, and he brought them quail; he fed them well with the bread of heaven. ⁴¹ He opened the rock, and water gushed out; it flowed like a river in the desert.

ILL: Are you satisfied with God's provision? The Israelites had miraculous manna from heaven and quail basically landing on their dinner plates. (Exodus 16:13) God's provision is quite supernatural at times. But the people complained and longed for the food they had in slavery. How about you ... do you recognize and appreciate His provision?

APP: Are you teaching your children about the Source of Life when at the table? Are you part of a CG that breaks bread together every week and recognizes the Lord's provision?

2. It unifies the Lord's family.

EXP: (46) ⁴⁶ And **day by day**, attending the temple together and **breaking bread in their homes**, they received their food with **glad** and **generous** hearts,

"Day by day" - daily, with regularity, this was a common and consistent practice. They had a habit of eating meals together with the family of God.

Acts 2:46 (NKJV) So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart

"Continuing daily" (NKJV) - The same Greek word (*proskartereō*) translated "devoted" is here translated "continuing."

"One accord" (*homothymadon*) - "together" in the ESV is literally, "same mind" or "one mind" in Greek. One accord.

"Breaking bread in homes" - Where did this occur? In their homes. They shared not only the food but their homes. Sharing bread, meant sharing life.

"Glad" (ἀγαλλίασις, *agalliasis*) - exultation, exceeding joy, gladness. Celebratory in heart.

"Generous" (ἀφελότης, *aphelotēs*) - Sincerity, simplicity, singleness, oneness. The word is a *hapax legomenon* which means it only appears this one time in the bible. The KJV says singleness of heart which expresses so well the unity of the body of believers as they eat.

A Shared Food

REAL COMMUNITY #3 - Pastor Jonathan Combs - September 8, 2024 - Acts 2:42-47

ILL: "Eating ordinary, average everyday supper with your family is strongly linked to lower incidence of bad outcomes such as teenage drug and alcohol use, and to good qualities like emotional stability. It correlates with kindergarteners being better prepared to learn to read... Regular family supper helps keep asthmatic kids out of hospitals. It discourages both obesity and eating disorders. It supports your staying more connected to your extended family, your ethnic heritage, your community of faith. It will help children and families to be more resilient, reacting positively to those curves and arrows that life throws our way. It will certainly keep you better nourished. The things we are likely to discuss at the supper table anchor our children more firmly in the world. Of course eating together teaches manners both trivial and momentous, putting you in touch with the deeper springs of human relations." – Miriam Weinstein, *The Surprising Power of Family Meals – How Eating Together Makes Us Smarter, Stronger, Healthier and Happier*

"A family that eats together, stays together" — Anonymous

ARG: **Recognizing Christ's presence, we are unified into one body and one family.**

1 Corinthians 10:17 (CEV) By sharing in the same loaf of bread, we become one body, even though there are many of us.

1 Corinthians 11:33 (NIV) So then, my brothers and sisters, when you gather to eat, you should all eat together.

So who is the family ... those adopted by the cross of Christ:

Ephesians 1:5 (NLT) God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure.

APP: Eating meals together improves family life and it also improves your spiritual life. Are you sitting around the family dinner table talking and praying? Are you part of a CG that keeps this practice weekly? Sharing your house, your food and your life? Is this a priority that you're ready to make today?

3. It remembers the Lord's sacrifice.

EXP: (47)⁴⁷ **praising God** and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being **saved**.

"Praising God" (αἰνοῦντες τὸν θεὸν) - to praise, extol, honor God.

"Saved" (σῶζω) - to save, rescue, deliver. The breaking of bread points to both the agape meal as well as the Lord's Supper. Praising and remembering Christ's sacrifice at every gathering and meal reminded the family of Christ's sacrifice and proclaimed its reality to those outside the family.

ARG: **Christ isn't just the source of life, He is the life.**

John 6:35 (ESV) Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.

The sacrifice of Christ's life is to be remembered and proclaimed as often as we eat together.

1 Corinthians 11:23-26 (ESV) For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Jesus broke bread so often that it caused those disciples on the road to recognize Him.

A Shared Food

REAL COMMUNITY #3 - Pastor Jonathan Combs - September 8, 2024 - Acts 2:42-47

Luke 24:30-32 (ESV) When he [Jesus] was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. 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?"

ILL: Now the blessing that Jesus likely prayed like so many before Him takes on new meaning:

Hebrew blessing: "Baruch ata Adonai Eloheinu melech ha-olam, ha-motzi lechem min ha-aretz. Amen."

Translation: "Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who bringeth forth bread from the earth." Amen.

"Now here's the best part. When He gave thanks for the unleavened bread, we believe using the age-old Hamotzi prayer, He used the words, God . . . Who brings forth bread from the earth. Messiah had already specifically made the connection between bread and His body. Therefore, bring forth bread from the earth - RESURRECTION!" — Jeffrey Miller

APP: Receiving physical food together we are to remember Christ's body as our spiritual food. We remember this together every Sunday morning at these tables down front. God not only provided for our physical sustenance, He also provided for our spiritual need— in Christ. Got Jesus? Got life.

CONCLUSION: Every culture has its own distinct food. So does the family of God. However, it isn't only the physical, but the spiritual food, which is the Bread of Life in Christ that makes for an authentic Christian community.

Will you...

1. Recognize the shared blessing of the Lord's provision?
2. Reveal the shared need of the Lord's grace?
3. Receive with the joy the shared life of the Lord's sacrifice?

Let's pray.