

Lessons in Living

Meals Matter

Elma Allen Milan

Why is it that infants have such a hard time adjusting to new formulas? Why is it that before two-year-olds even taste a strange food they pull a face, shudder, and exclaim, "yuk!"? Why are teens set on eating only their favorite cold cereal? Why is it hard for newlyweds to adjust to each other's favorite dishes? Does food really matter that much? We can rest assured, it really does matter! Historical occasions such as the Last Supper, the Passover, Thanksgiving, wedding feasts, funeral luncheons, birthday parties all testify to the importance of food.

Does having regular meals really matter? Yes, having regular meals matters a great deal. And not only for nourishment. They matter for fellowship; they matter for communication; they matter for teaching and they matter for nurturing. Each home should plan for a family meal at least once a day and protect it from interruptions as much as possible. What other time during the day do we sit facing one another and looking into each other's eyes instead of the side of our faces?

Here is a favorite song our family sang to motivate the little ones to eat right:

Simple Sal

I eat vegetables every day; Simple Sal shoves hers away.
I eat carrots, peas and beets; she stuffs up on lots of sweets.
I drink creamy milk every day; Simple Sal shoves hers away.
I drink milk and juices too; she drinks things kids ought not to.
I'll grow up so fine and tall; Simple Sal will stay so small.
Guess one thing she doesn't know:

Milk and vegetables make you grow!

(My Picture Book of Songs by Alene Dalton, Myriel Ashton, Erla Young)

I loved staying at my Grandma Allen's house where she had a round, oilcloth-covered table set with bowls, spoons, glasses and food three times a day. The fare was not fancy but it was regular, on time, and nourishing. Her children were healthy, happy, and the top athletes at school.

I fear that some of our younger homemakers feel inferior viewing the cooking shows on TV. Their time-consuming, fancy dishes seem overwhelming. We need to keep our foods simple. After all, when I married, I had never even boiled water! When I had our first child, I had never even held a baby! But patience and persistence paid off and I soon learned and so can others.

One of my daughters and her family lived with me for a year while their home was being built. During this period I was working at the store and remember thinking how nice it was to come home and find dinner on the table. It gave me the same comfort that a tired, hungry husband must surely have. I decided what I needed was a "good wife" (ha!).