



FOOD AND FELLOWSHIP IN TANDEM

By Bobby Schuller

I'm looking forward to a time when I don't feel the need to mention the "P" word: "*Pandemic*." But for now, I would be remiss if I didn't continue to acknowledge that there are Godly lessons to be learned from this experience. As I reflect on the past two years, my thoughts drift to the simple pleasures in life that came to a screeching halt. One in particular was the rudimentary act of gathering with other people. The old adage, "You don't know what you have until it's gone," hit us square in the face, and most were not prepared to deal with this abrupt "new normal" — me included! Instead of focusing on what we lost, the Holy Spirit nudges us to think about what we *gained*. Most would agree that what we gained is an understanding that — in simplistic terms — *we took things for granted*.

One activity I think most of us took for granted, including myself, was the simple, yet joyous act of *gathering with friends, loved ones and colleagues*. When we come together in a group, food and drink are usually involved, and if you're like me, I look forward to the delicious and special dishes at these celebrations! But more importantly, dining together in Christian fellowship builds wonderfully-sustainable relationships with each other, as well as God.

Jesus Had an Eating Ministry

A concept I've covered while preaching is that *Jesus had an Eating Ministry*. He actually ministered by going out and eating with others — having food and wine, and gathering with people. And in the process,

Continued on Page 2

FOOD AND FELLOWSHIP IN TANDEM

Continued from Page 1

these people were healed, transformed, and redeemed! Jesus talked about how the Kingdom of God is like a wedding or a party. He invites us to dine with Him, and at the end of time, we will feast with Him: ***Then the angel said to me, Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb! And he added, These are the true words of God. – Revelation 19:9.*** Jesus broke bread with people from all walks of life, including people the Bible deemed as “outsiders” or “sinners.” In Biblical times, eating with someone was the equivalent of calling them an honored guest. It suggested they’re a family member and they come under your protection — and they belong. So you can imagine many folks were aghast over Jesus’s choice of “unsavory” dinner companions. Most notable was the traitorous tax collector Zacchaeus (Luke 19:7). At the core of *Hour of Power*, we are mirroring the hospitality Jesus extended, and we encourage YOU to invite friends and family to the table for food and life-changing fellowship!

All this being said, it’s no surprise that the first miracle Jesus performed took place during a festive wedding! In John 2:1-11, it tells the story of how Jesus took time out of His day to attend a wedding feast in the village of Cana, with His mother, Mary, and His first few disciples. When the wine ran out, it’s here that Jesus turned water into wine! Many artists’ renderings of this event show the unencumbered joy of this celebratory wedding. You can almost smell the stew cooking and you can hear the clinking of glasses and dishes. You can almost imagine there was singing in the background and eruptions of joyous laughter. **And there’s Jesus in the middle of all this revelry, enjoying it all!**

We’ve often heard the phrase, “Food brings people together.” Something spiritual happens when people gather around a table of bountiful cuisine. Socializing with others is a gift, and now we realize we can’t take it for granted. When we come together in faith and fellowship, the very essence of life is shared. Sitting around a table also gives us the perfect opportunity to “say grace.” Not only do we take the opportunity to prayerfully thank God for the food that’s about to nourish our bodies, but we can also harness the opportunity to recognize others and give thanks for our many blessings. God is good!

In addition, just as food comes in endless varieties of tastes and textures, everyone we encounter at an event is unique and has the potential to teach us something special about themselves and our Lord. We also reflect on ourselves and the deeper meaning of life we can attain in Christ. There’s power in being with people, sharing meals, and making memories. I’ve commented in sermons on how the family dinner hour is waning, but we should work hard to preserve it!

Friend, Hannah and I pray that you invite others to your table for prayer, fellowship and relationship building! Keep inviting Him to the table of your heart as well, and eat the bread of life that will permeate the deepest part of your soul. Take the rich nourishment He gives and share it liberally with others so it can bless them too!

God loves you and so do I!

Bobby

Bobby Schuller

DOING LIFE TOGETHER AT *HOUR OF POWER*



At *Hour of Power*, we are very similar to other workplaces. We have meetings and deadlines, as well as challenges and successes. We also celebrate employees' birthdays and workplace milestones! What makes us unique is that our weekly All-Staff Meeting is held in the Chapel located on our Shepherd's Grove campus, complete with praise music, singing and prayer. The team looks forward to connecting with God and each other, and sharing food and fellowship. There's always delicious

snacks that await us, and of course, we have an endless supply of coffee! You can feel the joyous energy when we gather — and with the Holy Spirit present, we accomplish great things!

We also have an All-Staff Luncheon every month where we celebrate employees' birthdays, as well as work anniversaries and retirements. There's usually a fun theme as we celebrate each other's accomplishments, nurture relationships and basically, do life together. Recently, we celebrated the retirement of our beloved Bonnie Balloch, who has been with *Hour of Power* for 35 years! She has served in many capacities, with a focus on supporting administration. She is very grateful for the time spent working alongside the late Dr. Robert H. Schuller. Bonnie is a shining example of how the word of God inspires and creates a joyful spirit, and she will be missed dearly.



Friends, our team is called by God to help minister to the world and we don't take this task lightly. Please know that there are many caring and loving people on staff here and in your corner. We truly have your best interests at heart with Jesus guiding us along the way!

Inspiring hearts and easing minds...

I have watched your grandfather, father and now you for many years. I am an Eagle partner by the grace of God! Bobby, you are an amazing young man; I love listening to you! You are transparent, humble, funny and incredibly smart. As a retired history teacher, I simply love your references to ancient cultures, which makes understanding scripture so much more interesting in the context of the day. I pray for you and your precious family and am so proud and amazed at what a wonderful ministry you have continued. I pray for total healing of your darling son. I pray for strength for you and Hannah to continue to follow God's plan for your lives. You impact and enrich millions, and I am so very blessed by all you do. Wishing God's choicest blessings for you and your family and Hour of Power, with love in our beloved dear Jesus.

—Laurie, Florida

While praying for you and your family this morning, which I do daily, I felt led to write to you. Thank you for your encouraging, challenging and loving messages each Sunday. I feel you are my pastor, friend and brother in Christ. Thank you.

—Donna

Thank you Bobby Schuller, thank God it is Sunday and once again I can enjoy your ministry. Thank you very much God bless you and your family and all the members of the church.

—Andreas, Holland