

The Dinner Table as a Spiritual Weapon

By Brad Harrub

One of the strongest weapons you can use against the ever-increasing culture war can be found in practically every Christian home—the dinner table. This nuclear arsenal is extremely effective and yet, sadly, under-utilized. In fact, in too many homes, Satan has convinced parents that drive thrus and grab-n-go meals are just as effective and satisfying. But these weak substitutes are not nearly as effective as having your family gather around the dinner table together.

The science is undeniable. Families sitting around the dinner table are healthier in a multitude of ways. A 2015, journal article titled “Systematic review of the effects of family meal frequency on psychosocial outcomes in youth” revealed that “results show that frequent family meals are inversely associated with disordered eating, alcohol and substance use, violent behavior, and feelings of depression or thoughts of suicide in adolescents. There is a positive relationship between frequent family meals and increased self-esteem and school success.” (in the Journal of Canadian Family Physician).

Have children that are struggling with depression? Turn off the devices and gather around the table—even if they don’t want to. (That’s part of parenting!) A 2022, survey by the American Health Association found that 91% of parents reported that their families were significantly less stressed when their families eat meals together regularly. Researchers at Stanford Medicine and Stanford University demonstrated eating together also improves a child’s self-esteem. By encouraging your children to talk about their day (and genuinely listening to their responses), you’re communicating that you value and respect who they are. You learn about their priorities and what is truly important to them—which may give you indications of areas you need to tweak or help them to refocus on.

A 2006 study published in the Journal of Adolescent Health demonstrated that there is a clear relationship between how many meals families eat together versus how much high-risk behavior children get involved in. They concluded: “The findings of the present study suggest that the frequency of family dinner is an external developmental asset or protective factor that may curtail high-risk behaviors among youth.” In other words, if you want your children to not use drugs, alcohol, steal, etc. then sit around the dinner table with them and share your values and God’s wisdom!

Neurologically, I know sharing meals together contributes to the production of oxytocin. Oxytocin is a hormone released by the pituitary gland and is commonly referred to as “the love hormone” or the “cuddle hormone.” This hormone, when secreted, increases feelings of love and closeness between humans. This means when families gather around the table together it causes a physiological response that draws people to one another. Want your family to be closer together? Try sitting around the table at night.

My wife and I would whole heartedly agree with all these studies. Looking back at what truly helped bring our family closer together—and closer to God—it was gathering together as a family around the dinner table. This was one of the areas that my wife was adamant about as the children were growing up. She wanted us eating together around a table as often as possible. (Admittedly, there were nights we just physically couldn’t make it happen—but we always knew what the goal was and worked hard to be sitting around it later in the week. It was around that table that we talked about our day, we shared our hopes, dreams, and goals, we discussed some of the deeper issues of life, we laughed, and even occasionally shed tears together.

So, science has proven that families that gather around the table together are healthier. But take a moment to reflect and consider how many times the Bible talks about people gathering around the table: Where did Jesus want to go with Zacchaeus? (Luke 19:1-10). Have you ever studied where Jesus did much of His work? It was around people’s tables (see for instance Luke 7:36; Luke 11:37; Mark 14:3; John 12:2). Where did Jesus want to spend the last cherished moments with His disciples? (Matthew 26) This is huge! He could have taken them to a beach or the mountains. But instead, He timed His last days with Passover and had them gathered around a table with Him. When Jesus healed Peter’s mother-in-law the text indicates she arose and served them (Matthew 8:15). Once again, you get this intimate image of Him with people gathered around a table. The first century church literally got started around dining room tables: “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,” (Acts 2:46). Consider how many times Jesus’ parables and teachings were focused around a table or wedding feast.

The psalmist paints a beautiful picture of a family, and mentions specifically having your children gathered around the table in Psalm 128:1-4.

“Blessed is every one who fears the Lord, Who walks in His ways. When you eat the labor of your hands, You shall be happy, and it shall be well with you. Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine In the very heart of your house, Your children like olive plants All around your table. Behold, thus shall the man be blessed Who fears the Lord”.

Looking back, if I could give a piece of wisdom to every young family in the church it would be this: Cut out some of the activities in your life and gather your family around the table. Make it a habit. Eat meals together. Talk to your children and share your thoughts around that table. Use that dinner table as a teaching ground to fight some of the mess going on in our culture today. Let it become a place of wisdom, learning and healing for your family. Invite your Christian friends to sit around the table with you. Play games at the table. Just make sure you get around that table as a family! We cannot stress this enough... truly!

Our dinner table was given to us from my sweet in-laws many years ago. It was made by an Amish family in Lancaster, PA and is extremely sturdy. But after 15+ years and four children it is now showing some age. The finish is starting to come off in places, and it has a “distressed” look that we did not pay extra for. I’ve considered having it refinished, and likely will do that one day...but those little dings and scratches hold a special place in my heart these days.

As my children continue to grow up and “leave the nest” those little scuffs are a reminder every morning of all the love and laughter we have shared at that table. To all those Christian families with young children, I pray you find yourself drinking your coffee in twenty years, sitting at a table with lots of marks and scratches. For it’s those dings and dents that are just one tale-tell sign that your children have been prepared for battle!

Things to know...

Help is needed with communion preparation, if you’d be willing, please sign up on the list on the bulletin board by the entrance.

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We are rejoicing with Larry Bey for his decision to be baptized last week!

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Ladies Bible Study - The Crown
THIS Wednesday, April 10th @ 7pm

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Men’s Meeting Saturday, April 20<sup>th</sup> @ 9:00 am

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Ladies mark your calendars for the Ladies Tea on May 11th

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**HAPPY  
BIRTHDAY**

Judah Gasper 4/7                      Seth Arrell 4/11                      Laylah Thompson 4/16  
Waylon Wilson 4/9                      Chelsea Wilson 4/14                      Jaxson Schaffer 4/19

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Happy Anniversary

Greg & Michelle Buckingham 4/14 Tim & Dianna Bang 4/30

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### Serving AM & PM today and next Sunday AM:

| Sunday Rotation            | April 7, 2024 AM | April 7, 2024 PM | April 14, 2024 AM |
|----------------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Greeter                    | Dustin Dessaro   | Jerry Thompson   | Brandon Fourman   |
| Announcements              | Tim Bang         | Jerry Thompson   | Tim Bang          |
| Song Leading               | Jason Bang       | Duane Kemp       | Duane Kemp        |
| Opening Prayer/Usher Left  | Seth Arrell      | Tim Bang         | Jerry Thompson    |
| Lord's Supper Comments     | Jerry Thompson   | Jason Bang       | Tom Muter         |
| Scripture Reading          | Duane Kemp       | Tom Muter        | Tim Bang          |
| Sermon                     | John McGiffin    | John McGiffin    | John McGiffin     |
| Closing Prayer/Usher Right | Tom Muter        | Judah Gasper     | Jason Bang        |

**This week's Bible Verse**

“From the rising of the sun to its going down the LORD’s name is to be praised.” Psalm 113:3



**Remember in Prayer:**

- \*Our Country & leaders
- \*Bible Studies currently being held
- \*Phyllis Caldwell - health & comfort
- \*Rena Morgan - encouragement & health
- \*Ernst & Helen Sherrill (Bro/Sis in Christ from TN) - shut ins with ongoing health issues
- \*Larry Bey - Parkinson’s/health
- \*Maxine Jones (Laura McGiffin’s mom) - dementia and health issues
- \*Debby Braefield (Alena Brown’s Aunt) - health
- \*Terry McGiffin (John McGiffin’s dad) - health & comfort
- \*Luanne Listner (wife of Tim Bang’s friend, Jim) - health
- \*Orville Thompson (Jerry Thompson’s dad) - health - prostate cancer
- \*Lynn Thompson - health, needs hip surgery (pray for insurance to approve)
- \*Karen Oyler (Stephanie Bang’s friend) - health, strength and energy
- \*Tom Cruze (Phyllis Caldwell’s nephew) - health
- \*Laura McGiffin - health
- \*Viola Schultz - health
- \*Billy Jackson (Stephanie Bang’s dad) - prostate cancer, upcoming radiology treatments

- \*Brian Snell (Dustin & Sharon Desarro’s neighbor) - may have colon cancer
- \*Nathan Clark (friend of Dustin Desarro) - cancer has returned
- \*Suzanne Grable (Evelyn Lam’s friend) - stage 4 cancer
- \*Heather McFarland (friend of the Bang’s) - cancer
- \*Dustin & Sharon Desarro - asking for prayers
- \*Michelle Gasper - health issues
- \*Marjorie Seiber - hip/knee pain
- \*Nellie Hoff - recovering from knee surgery
- \*Paulette and her family - asking for prayers
- \*Ellen (Alexa Rohr’s aunt) - fell and is recovering from surgery for broken bones

**How can we be praying for YOU?**

Please call, text or email John (jmcgiffin.yayo@gmail.com) with any prayer requests or announcements you have for the congregation.



**Attendance and Contribution Record**

**Sunday, March 31**

Bible Classes 28  
 AM Attendance 40  
 PM Attendance 20

**Wednesday, April 3**

Bible Classes 20  
 Contribution \$



**GREENVILLE CHURCH of CHRIST**  
 CHRIST CENTERED. BIBLE BASED. FAMILY ORIENTED.

**April 7, 2024**

**Worship Times:**

Sunday Morning Bible class: 9:30am

Sunday Morning Worship: 10:30am

Sunday Evening Worship: 6:00pm

Wednesday Evening Bible Study: 7:00pm

Minister, John McGiffin

4599 Children’s Home Bradford Rd  
 Greenville, OH 45331

www.greenvillecoc.org

We are blessed that you have chosen to worship with us. If you are visiting, we would love to have you back with us again. Please take a moment to fill out a visitor’s card and let us get to know you.