



DAILY HABIT 2: ONE MEAL WITH OTHERS

The Habit at a Glance

We were made to eat, so the table must be our center of gravity. The habit of making time for one communal meal each day forces us to reorient our schedules and our space around food and each other. Thinking of the household as the school of love helps us see that the house is where we learn to be formed in love. The more the table becomes our center of gravity, the more it draws our neighbours into gospel community.

Three Ways to Start

Family meals. Getting into the rhythm of a family

breakfast or dinner may be the best way to start this. Pick which meal works best for your household, and try to make it the anchor of your schedule.

Standing coworker lunch. Establishing a regular lunchtime hour with coworkers can be great way to create a meaningful break in the workday as well as to build relationships. Try getting a group together and picking a time. Everyone doesn't have to make it every time, but having a standing hour where others know they can eat together goes a long way towards building a habit and towards creating a culture of community. Sometimes it's easier to invite a new or lonely coworker to a standing group than a one-on-one.

Eat communally while alone. If you wish you had family or friends to eat with but find yourself alone, this could be a hard for you. The vision of the Bible for every Christian is that the wedding feast of Jesus, the Lamb of God, awaits you, and there will be a day all loneliness is gone forever. Some single people make it a habit to eat at the same restaurant once a week. Have a friendly chat with the waiting staff. Do you have friends who live alone? Could you meet once a week for a coffee or a simple lunch? They might be waiting for you to take the initiative.

Three Considerations

Creating space. Space matters. If you're at home, get the clutter off your table, which is for food and conversation. Maybe put a candle on it. If it's a bar or island, do the same. You want a space that draws you in.

The table as formation. Make mealtimes intentionally relational: light a candle, say grace with prayers everyone knows so you can take turns, and have regular questions to ask and answer. In the morning, it could be "What are you hoping for today?" and "What are you not looking forward to today?" At dinner, "One good thing, one bad thing, one funny thing". With friends, try the One Conversation Rule. That means, at some point in the meal, everyone has a single conversation together, instead of lots of side conversations.

Turning meals inside out. Try holding one evening (maybe Friday?) open. Eat the same inexpensive and simple family meal. That way it is low preparation, and no one has to think hard. Then, invite someone new. This is a great way to take the family rhythm of dinner and open it up to a neighbour. This is the principle of the 'extra chair', drawing the neighbour in.

In our modern moment, the table may be the frontier of evangelism! They may not be open to the gospel, but will probably respond to an invitation to eat with you.



Service Sheet

6th March 2022, 10.30am St Mary's

The First Sunday of Lent

Welcome to St Mary's Church! We are so glad you are here – whether you are in the church building or watching online. If you are here for the first time or visiting, please say hello (in the chat feature online, or to the service leader or a member of the welcome team in church). You can find out more about our church on our website (www.denhamparish.church). *Christoph Lindner, Rector*

WELCOME

HYMN

Forty days and forty nights
thou wast fasting in the wild;
forty days and forty night
tempted yet undefiled.

Shall not we thy sorrows share,
and from earthly joys abstain;
fasting with unceasing prayer
glad with thee to suffer pain?

Keep, O keep us, Saviour dear
ever constant by thy side
that with thee we may appear
at th'eternal Eastertide.

CONFESSION

**Lord our God, in our sin we have
avoided your call. Our love for you
is like a morning cloud, like the dew
that goes away early. Have mercy
on us; deliver us from judgement;
bind up our wounds and revive us;
in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

May the God of love and power
forgive you and free you from your
sins, heal and strengthen you by his
Spirit, and raise you to new life in
Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

COLLECT

Heavenly Father, your Son battled with
the powers of darkness, and grew
closer to you in the desert:
help us to use these days to grow in
wisdom and prayer that we may
witness to your saving love in Jesus
Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

SONG

Some of us are big and tall
Some of us are very small
Some of us like pink and some like blue
Some of us like reading books
Some of us like feeding ducks
That's because we're different me and you

But God loves everyone He's made
God loves each of us in a special way

*That's you and you and you and you
And you and you and you and you
God loves you God loves you
That's you and you and you and you
And you and you and you and you
We're part of the big family of God*

Some of us have curly hair
Some of us have specs to wear
All of us have different families
Some of us are very loud
Some of us don't make a sound
That's because we're different you and me

But God loves...

(Children leave for Sunday Club now)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

FIRST READING: Luke 22. 14-20

When the hour came, he took his place at the table, and the apostles with him. He said to them, 'I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.' Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said, 'Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.' Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.'

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God

SECOND READING: Rev 19. 6-9

Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty thunder-peals, crying out, 'Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready; to her it has been granted to be clothed with fine linen, bright and pure'—for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. And the angel said to me, 'Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.' And he said to me, 'These are true words of God.'

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God

SERMON

HYMN

God I look to You
I won't be overwhelmed
Give me vision to see things like You do
God I look to You
You're where my help comes from
Give me wisdom You know just what to do

I will love You Lord my strength
I will love You Lord my shield
I will love You Lord my rock
Forever all my days I will love You God

Hallelujah our God reigns
Hallelujah our God reigns
Hallelujah our God reigns
Forever all my days hallelujah

OFFERTORY

Yours, Lord, is the greatness, the power, the glory, the splendour, and the majesty; for everything in heaven and on earth is yours.

**All things come from you,
and of your own do we give you.**

PRAYERS

Merciful Father,
**accept these prayers for the sake
of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus
Christ. Amen.**

**Our Father in heaven
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be
done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

(Children return from Sunday Club)

HYMN

Hope for the world's despair:
we feel the nations' pain;
can anything repair
this broken earth again?
For this we pray: in every place
a spark of grace to light the way.

Wisdom for all who bear
the future in their hand,
entrusted with the care
of this and every land.
When comes the hour, O Lord, we pray,
inspire the way we spend our power.

Ease for the troubled mind
in endless conflict caught,
each soul that cannot find
the peace beyond all thought.
May they be blessed with healing balm
for inner calm and perfect rest.

Love for the human heart:
when hate grows from our fears
and inwardly we start
to turn our ploughs to spears.
Help us to sow love's precious seed
in word and deed,
that peace may grow.

BLESSING

The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

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Weekly Diary

Weds 9th , 9.30 and 11am -
Little Lions toddler group
St Mark's

Thurs 10th , 7.30pm - Alpha
The Rectory



THE HAVEN: A Bereavement Drop-In

A place of safety, welcome and hope renewed.

This monthly get-together is a safe space for all who are living through pain of bereavement and the heartache of loss. It is facilitated by Rev Ian Jennings, Associate Minister of St Mary's, and author of *By a Departing Light* and *What is Life without my Love?*

Do join us monthly in a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere over a cup of tea or coffee and light refreshments.

St Marks Hall, Denham Green

Friday March 18th 4pm
Friday April 22nd 4pm
Friday May 20th 4pm
Friday June 17th 4pm



DIARY DATE: APCM 8th May

Our Annual Church Meeting will take place on Sunday 8th May. Please make a note in your diary!

Let's pray together ...

- For joyful courage as we live out the good news of Jesus in our daily lives.
- For peace in families, communities and between nations.
- For our health service, the vulnerable and the sick.
- For the families and friends of Rita Lines and all those who have lost loved ones.