

NAD Health Sabbath

July 24, 2021

[NADhealth.org/healthsabbath](https://NADhealth.org/healthsabbath)

Sermon Notes

# The Joy of Eating Together



Adventist<sup>®</sup>

HealthyYOU

JOY OF EATING

# The Joy of Eating Together

## Suggested Scripture Verses

*Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.* Revelation 3:20

## Sermon

How would you like to be a better negotiator? Close that deal more efficiently? How would you like to connect on a deeper level? How would you like to develop trust or build better friendships? How about strengthening family bonds? Healing past hurts? Or just get healthy.

Well, there's a very simple way that you can do all those things, and that's by **sharing a healthy meal together.**

Let's pray as we begin our study on "The Joy of Eating Together."

Heavenly Father, thank you so much again for this beautiful time that we can share your word. We pray and ask that you would bless us with the Holy Spirit because we pray in the name of Jesus, Amen.

The Bible tells us that in the very beginning, God created this very beautiful, pristine paradise for mankind and it was called Eden. The Bible teaches us that this beautiful place was a healthy environment and it had healthy people in it and it had healthy food in it. The Bible tells us in Genesis 2:8:

“the Lord God had planted a garden in the east in Eden, and there he put the man who he had formed, the Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground. Trees that were pleasing to the eyes and good for food.”

The Bible teaches us that God made food for pleasure, for health and for connection. In the Old Testament, you can read about various times that God commanded the Israelites to come together. These special events or days were called the feast days and the purpose of these feast days was to build solidarity and spirituality. In fact, when you study out Psalm 22, the Psalm of the suffering Messiah, the Bible teaches us that one of the fruits of the Messiah's victory is that the people would be able to eat and worship.

And when you read the New Testament, you learn about many times that Jesus Ministry was focused around the dinner table. Oftentimes He would spend time eating with a person and share powerful truths for their salvation.

When you read the Book of Revelation, you can read about various scenes of God's people partaking of the fruit of the tree of life, and the leaves that were for the healing of the nation.

In a time that community is so important, we can go to the book of Acts 2:42. The Bible tells this about the early church:

“They devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and to fellowship and to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”

The early church was defined as a people who broke bread together. In other words, they ate meals together and what a remarkable example they left for us.

There's some powerful research found in the Journal of Consumer Psychology, January 2017. These researchers looked at the benefits of eating together well. What are they?

1. The first benefit was this. They found that people who had a shared meal were more trusting of each other when they played trust games later on.
2. The second thing they found is that food consumption further influences conflict resolution with strangers who are assigned to eat similar foods. In fact, they found that there were more successful labor negotiations.
3. The third thing they found is that consumers are more trusting of information of non-food products with the advertiser in the product testimonial eats similar food together. In other words, they were more willing to hear and believe information about non-food products when they were willing to sit down with the person and have a meal together.
4. And the 4th benefit they found of people who had a shared meal. They found that those that had a shared meal, that there were strong cues of trust compared with incidental similarity. In other words, people perceive that people who eat together, eating similar foods, are more trusting of one another.

This is remarkable and friends this is not just about having meals with your friends or your workers associates. There's remarkable research that shows the benefits of when families eat together.

***[Insert your personal family memory]*** I remember growing up down in Orange County, and I remember my father would gather the family around the dinner table where we'd partake of delicious Indian food and talk about the day.

There are so many benefits of when a family shares a meal together, here are just a few.

1. Number one – family dinners means better family relationships. A study by Columbia University found that 71% of teenagers said that they consider talking and catching up and spending time with the family members as the best part of family dinners.
2. Number two – here's another benefit of families that share meals together. Family meals lead to healthier food choices. A 2000 survey found that 9 to 14 year olds who ate dinner with their families more frequently consumed more fruits and vegetables and less soda and fried foods. What a remarkable benefit. But there is more than that...
3. Number three – eating as a family leads to better grades. Studies actually showed there's a significant link between family dinners and academic performance. The report by the CSA found that teens who have between 5 and 7 family dinners per week were twice as likely to report receiving mostly A's and B's in school compared to those teens who have fewer than three family dinners together. What a remarkable benefit, but there's more...
4. Number four – family dinners are a chance to explore new foods. And this is exciting especially if you're wanting to introduce healthier options for your



family. Family meals have been proven to be a perfect opportunity for parents to expose children to different kinds of foods and expand their tastes. In a 2003 study published in the *European Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, this was proven through family research.

5. What else could be another benefit of families that share meals together? Listen to Number five – family dinners lead to greater happiness. Family dinners lead to greater happiness. Research examining 5,000 teenagers showed that when children eat with their parents regularly, they are more likely to be emotionally strong and have better mental health. And if there ever is a time that we need to incorporate better family meals it is now.
6. What else could there be? Homemade meals promote portion control. The average restaurant meal has as much as 60% more calories than a homemade meal. Combine that with the fact that portions served in restaurants are continually expanding with the fact that we're presented with more food – means that we are more likely to eat more food.
7. Number seven – eating at home saves money. According to the national Consumer Expenditure Survey from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, they found that meals eaten outside the home are twice as expensive than those that are eaten inside the home. You want to save money, eat some food at home together.
8. And the next benefit. Family dinners relieve stress. Family dinners relieve stress. In a 2008 research project, researchers at the Brigham Young University conducted a study of IBM employees and found that sitting down together at a

family meal helped working moms reduce the tension and strain from long hours at the office.

Friends, what are we learning from this research? We are learning that the center of the home, the center of strong families isn't the TV or the Internet. It's the dinner table. It's the dinner table.

You know there was a theologian who said these very powerful words. His name was Miller J Erickson, and he said this,

“if reality is fundamentally physical, then the primary force binding it together is electromagnetic. If however, reality is fundamentally social, then the most constituting force is that which binds persons together, namely love.”

We learned this during this pandemic crisis. While quarantine was saving lives, mental health was decreasing. Mental health was decreasing. When people are separated for long periods of time there can be a decrease in mental health in connection in relationships. So if there ever is a time that we need to build strong community through food, it is now.

Want to build better trust? Have a meal. Want to connect? Eat some food together. Want healthier and happier kids? Eat around the dinner table.

Ellen White says these powerful words.

“It is through the social relations that Christianity comes in contact with the world.”

Let me repeat that one more time.

“It is through the social relations that Christianity comes in contact with the world...Social power sanctified by the Spirit of Christ must be improved to win souls to the Savior.” *Ministry of Healing*, 496.

Being social to save is what Jesus did and what God’s people are called to do. In fact, when you study out the Gospel of Matthew, we learned that the word “eat” appears 18 times. When you take a good look at the Gospel of John, the word “eat” appears 15 times. But in the Gospel of Luke it appears 33 times. Mark uses the word 25 times. But overall, Luke uses a number of eating and food related words, twice as many as Mark and the other Gospels.

So the emphasis on this is clear, you can read the story in the Gospel of Luke of Jesus having a feast at Simon's house. The Last Supper with the disciples. He broke bread with Cleopas and the other disciple on the road to Emmaus. Or the beautiful story of how Jesus spent time at Zaccheus’ house and partook of a meal.

The Bible tells us in Luke, Chapter 19 the story of this man by the name of Zaccheus, who was a tax collector and considered a traitor by the Jews. The Bible also tells us he was a man of short stature and he was seeking to see Jesus. He was curious about this Man who had done many wonderful works, so he decided to climb up a tree, and was able to look over the crowd and see Jesus.

In Luke 19, we learn that Jesus all of a sudden stopped, made eye contact with Zaccheus, and says “Zaccheus come down from that tree. For today I'm going to spend time at your house.” The Bible tells us Zaccheus raced to his house and prepared a meal for Jesus and because of the time that he spent with the loving Savior, Zaccheus experienced powerful repentance and change of heart.



The Bible tells us that Jesus proclaimed

“salvation has come to this house for Zaccheus is also a son of Abraham.” Luke 19:9

And then it says these amazing words

“for the son of man came to seek and save that which was lost.” Luke 19:10

The reason why that's so remarkable is because when you're reading the story, Zaccheus seems to be doing the seeking. But in reality it is Jesus who is doing the seeking. So what lessons can we learn from this wonderful story and about sharing a meal together?

1. Number one – Jesus used meals to encourage people. Jesus used meal times to encourage people.
2. Number two – Sometimes Jesus would invite Himself over. He understood the love language of certain people and He took advantage of that in the story of Zaccheus. But Zaccheus was excited about serving Jesus and spending time with Him.
3. Number three – Jesus ate with various classes of people. Sometimes it was Pharisees and sometimes it was tax collectors.
4. Number four – Jesus fed people who were just hungry. You know there's a miracle that appears in every one of the Gospels. It's the feeding of the 5,000. The Bible teaches us that Jesus made a simple meal to feed the multitude simply because they were hungry.
5. Number five – Jesus ate with people to meet new people. When you read the story of Matthew, the tax collector who wanted to spend time with Jesus, Jesus

went to his house and Matthew invited all of his friends. Jesus went to meals with other people to network and connect and to share the gospel.

6. And Number six – Jesus wasn't always about extravagance. Sometimes it was just a simple meal and that was good enough to connect with others.
7. And Number seven – Jesus used meal times to reveal who God was – to reveal who God was. You see, Jesus is the perfect photograph of God. He came to reveal the love of God and when He spent time with sinners He was showing God's love for them.

The Bible tells us in the Book of Revelation, a very powerful appeal to God's End time people. It says this in Revelation 3.

“Behold, I stand at the door and knock if any man will open the door, I will come in and Sup with him.”

In other words, have a meal with them. Jesus wants to spend time with you. Jesus wants to spend time with you.

The Scriptures teach us that Jesus is a friend of sinners. He cares about broken humanity. In our world today, sometimes the only gospel that people will read is the gospel that's manifested in your life. One theologian said this, there are five gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and the Christian, and the only gospel that someone may ever read is the fifth one.

You can be the hands and feet of Jesus when you spend time with people and share the love of God with them. Friends, thank you so much for joining us during this wonderful health presentation. We hope you've been blessed. Let's bow our heads for a prayer.

Father in heaven. Thank you so much again for this time. Thank you for blessing us. Thank you for that promise in John that the word became flesh and dwelt among us. Thank you, Lord, that You desire to spend time with us. We pray and ask that we can be a blessing to others by simply sharing the meal with them. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

God bless you friends.