

We Are All Foodies: How Feasting with the Lord Retrains Our Appetites

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Where should we eat? What should we eat? Where's the best place to eat?

Whether we take time to think about it or not, questions about food come up every day. Wherever you live, food plays a large part in who we are. Restaurants are often associated with various countries, ethnicities, or even religious practices. Shall we eat at the Mexican grocery or the Kosher deli? Is this food on my diet? Where did it come from?

How we eat—or refuse to eat—says a lot about us. In a sense, we are all foodies—even if you prefer McDonald's over the farmer's market. Or to turn it around, dietary practices and table fellowship shape who we are. [Studies](#) have shown that children thrive on family dinners, while rigid commitment to veganism may result in deeper relationships with other herbivores and increased disgust with carnivores.

In these ways, food choices are ethical decisions. Eating is an undeniably moral activity. Therefore, as we sit down to "eat" the Lord's Supper, we should ask: How does Scripture speak about food?

In the beginning...

In the beginning God created food.

On the third day (Genesis 1:11–13), God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth." To Adam and Eve, God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food." Made in his image, humanity lives out its daily life craving and acquiring food. To resist that urge results in death. Therefore, God's creation of food reveals something formative about our lives.

At the same time, food came with a command. Genesis 2:9 records the bounty of Eden's garden: "And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food." That verse also speaks of the tree of life, a fruit-bearing tree that enabled God's children to live forever (see Genesis 3:22), and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This is the tree which God restricted his children: "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, 'You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die' (Genesis 2:16–17). While food was given for life, there was the specter of death that loomed over this tree.

Genesis 3 relates how eating from this tree, Adam and Eve brought disaster to the human race and all creation (Romans 5:12, 18–19; 8:18–22). We groan because of

Adam's sin and our eating has never been the same. God gave us stomachs and taste buds so that we might eat and live. And he gave us food so that in the process of tilling, planting, harvesting, cooking, and sitting down to table, we would enjoy the fellowship of one another. Food, in God's good creation, was given for the sake of worship and fellowship—enjoyment of God *and* one another.

Food in the Bible: More Than Just Making a Meal

We can see repeated through the rest of Scripture how food plays a part in the lives of God's people. Adam and Eve were cast out of the garden with the commission to "work the ground." From this thorny soil, every son and daughter of Adam has brought food.

Ecclesiastes tells the pain of this plight, but it also recalls the Edenic gift that food is: "Behold, what I have seen to be good and fitting is to eat and drink and find enjoyment in all the toil with which one toils under the sun the few days of his life that God has given him, for this is his lot" (Ecclesiastes 5:18). Indeed, Paul confirms the goodness of food when he says, "For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer" (1 Timothy 4:4–5).

Still, Scripture's teaching about food is far more than its intrinsic goodness. Because Scripture tells the story of salvation, we could speak of foods abuses and how meals form relationships, broker partnerships, and create covenants. The Law contained dozens of food laws, sacrificial meals, and stories of God's people abusing the food God gave.

Only in the fullness of time, with the coming of Christ, did God establish a meal that would bring us into the eschaton. Indeed, that Jesus Christ *is* the bread of life (John 6:35), gave his covenant people a meal of remembrance (Luke 22:14–23), and promises to feed his flock (Revelation 7:15–17) with a final wedding feast (19:6–9) indicates the significance God puts on meals in our own experience of salvation. In truth, Christians are the people who feed on the Lord, even as we gather to feast with him in the Lord's Supper.

Let Us Feast with the Lord

In the beginning God in his goodness gave us food as a means of praising him (1 Timothy 4:4–5). Now, God's goodness has been infinitely multiplied. The children of God do not merely come to table to eat bread and meat. We partake of the body and blood of Jesus Christ. While the elements of the Lord's Supper are a memorial (i.e., they do not *become* Christ's body and blood), they are eschatological. They enable us to behold the triune God, to eat and drink with hope that these wafers and wine are a foretaste of the feast that is to come.

Indeed, as we come to the Lord's Table this Sunday, this is our hope. We are a people who feast with the Lord, by feasting on the Lord. Truly, this confuses some and offends others, but for those whom the Lord calls, the Lord's Table is a like eating from the tree of life. And we who gather in Christ's name and partake of his food, do so as those whose salvation, ethics, and everything else are shaped by this meal.

Truly, just as diets, meal plans, and social dinners confer status and define identity, so does the Lord's Supper. Because of that, let us consider what Christ did in dying for us and how his gracious gift should inform, reform, and transform our daily lives. In truth, we are what we

eat. So let us feed on God and his gospel, so that our appetites would increase for the Lord as we await his glorious return.

For His Glory and your joy,

Pastor David