WHY MEALS@HOME?

Studies reveal that the single most decisive factor among kids who do well in school and avoid risky behaviors is eating meals with the family. As author Miriam Weinstein explains, "Sitting down to a meal together draws a line around us for a brief time and strengthens family bonds by shutting out the rest of the world as a powerful ritual against the many forces pulling us apart." Family meals give us…

• A place to belong: Healthy children receive their sense of identity from church and home. At church, the communion table is the central activity uniting believers in Christ. At home, mealtime is the central event reminding each person that he or she has a place in a specific family. Both rituals yank us out of solitude and isolation and reconnect us to those with whom we have an intimate, God-ordained bond.

• A moment of sanity: Gathering from the alienation of separate activities provides a much needed moment of sanity because every time we eat together we corporately acknowledge our dependence upon the provider of all life-sustaining gifts. Hunger pangs draw us together and to God.

• A rhythm for health: Studies show that when families eat together they are more likely to eat balanced meals. We become vulnerable to destructive patterns when we disconnect ourselves from God-ordained rhythms. Eating alone or on-the-fly increases the likelihood of overindulgence and junk food. Conversation during family meals, by contrast, helps us plan and pace our eating while creating a regular occasion for connection.

Overcoming Obstacles

Patterns of modern life can make family meals the exception rather than the norm. Some of us can't imagine a Meals@Home routine due to dual income schedules, extensive business travel or children involved in a variety of extracurricular activities. Establishing and protecting the family table will require making difficult, counter-culture choices. We can't passively adopt unhealthy cultural norms and "hope for the best". If a daily routine is impossible, take baby steps by establishing a pattern of at least three family meals per week.

GOING FURTHER

FREE AUDIO: The Meals@Home audio presentation features a variety of parents sharing ideas on how to establish and enhance the family meal routine.

- FREE CD copies at the HomePointe Center (while supplies last)
- FREE podcast for download at HomePointe.org or the Lake Pointe Church mobile App

MEALTIME MOMENTS: Pick up a variety of FREE mealtime discussion "recipe cards" at the HomePointe Center or download at HomePointe.org

RECOMMENDED BOOKS:
Available for purchase from HomePointe (while supplies last) or for church library checkout.

- 150 QUICK QUESTIONS TO GET YOUR KIDS TALKING
  by Mary DeMuth helps prompt fun, meaningful conversation.

- THE SURPRISING POWER OF FAMILY MEALS
  by Miriam Weinstein is filled with insights and practical ideas for making mealtime special.

- DINNER TABLE DEVOTIONS
  by Nancy Guthrie provides short faith reflections designed for use around the dinner table.

- THE HOUR THAT MATTERS MOST
  by Les and Leslie Parrott with Stephanie Allen and Tina Kuna examines the surprising power of the family meal.

WEB RESOURCES TO GET THE FAMILY TALKING!
aroundthetablegames.com
familydinnergames.com

MEALS @HOME

REVITALIZE YOUR FAMILY TABLE