

## // Parent Ministry

### *Come to the Family Table*

*Slowing down to enjoy food, each other, and Jesus*

Authors: Ted & Amy Cunningham

#### REVIEW:

*Come to the Family Table* is more than another parenting book. It is also a recipe book, game book, discussion guide, and even a family devotional. The Cunningham's, with a mix of personal perspective, family stories, and sharing of family recipes, write a book that is both helpful and inspiring. This book challenges parents and families to slow down, sit down, and dig in to a big helping of food, family and faith.

#### SNAPSHOT

##### The Family Table is for Us

##### *Space Around the Table*

The family table creates a much needed break in the midst of the grind of life. A family meal together creates margin. Margin means breathing room and finding a gap between a family's load and its limit. The family table and meal gives a family a place of relational safety where people can slow down, make eye contact, face to face, in order to communicate love in verbal and non-verbal ways. It is a space to find humor and to be able to laugh together.

##### *A Place for Memories*

The family table creates memories worth repeating for generations. Food is connected to memories. The taste, smells, and feelings of the past and present come alive around a meal shared by a family. It is a place where we make room for others, play games, and even share secrets. These family meals are where elders are honored, we indulge from time to time, and even take culinary adventures. The family table inspires us to share the best of food and faith.

##### *Food, Wine, and God's Favor*

The family table is where we receive good gifts from our Lord. Food and fellowship are connected. Receiving our daily provision and blessing is Godly and Biblical. God approves of us enjoying what He provides, as long as we do not abuse the blessings. Gluttony and drunkenness are sins that we must be careful of as we celebrate and praise the one who is our great provider.

##### *Together, Wherever*

The family table is anywhere a family is together. A meal can provide a daily delay in the oasis and fortress provided by a home. It is an intentional time every day, allowing a family an escape from the distractions. Families also must work to plan a weekly withdrawal, intended to get out while still focusing on each other. The family table while out together is a time to practice courtesy, hospitality, and good manners. Parents also should find a time for a weekly withdrawal of their own, having a weekly date. Finally, as a family travels it is also an opportunity to take and make time to have a family table adventure by trying new routes, new things, not eating all the courses at one place, and even creating a family food journal.



BOOK LOOK  
SNAPSHOTS  
GREAT READS  
QUICK REVIEWS

## ***The Family Constitution***

The family table is where a family comes together to discuss belief, God and life. It is important as a family comes together they discuss what they believe as a family. Consider much like a church has a belief statement, a family should make a family constitution, a statement of what they believe, value, and know about faith. A family constitution can do a few things: 1.) Prioritize truth over emotions. 2.) Keep anger low and reduce arguments. 3.) Reduce stress and create safety.

## **The Family Table Is for Others**

### ***Hospitality at the Table***

The family table welcomes families, friends and strangers to come to join. Hospitality is an open door for others to come and partake of family, food, and faith. Enjoy hospitality and don't be overwhelmed by: 1.) Being prepared. 2.) Decluttering. 3.) Being aware. 4.) Avoiding trying to one-up your guests. 5.) Being spontaneous. 6.) Including everyone. 7.) Being willing to share Christ.

### ***A Simple Table***

The simple fact of the family table is it prioritizes relationships over food. Simplicity and contentment are connected. When added to appreciation, it is easier to look at each day as a gift. Keeping it simple sets up our heart and life to be at peace. What does a family really need? How much do you really need? Consider as a family what you have and what you can share.

### ***A Lavish Table***

The family table wows family and friends, not just through food, but also through lavish love. There are five things that are defined by Joseph Michelli's "Ritz principle" when entertaining guests: 1.) Define and refine. 2.) Empower through trust. 3.) Realize it's not about you. 4.) Deliver wow. 5.) Leave a lasting footprint. Unexpected acts of services and love will wow your family guest and make them excited to come back to your family table.

### ***Honoring Marriage at the Table***

The family table pours into the marriage and families around it. Husbands and wives can become "back-up singers" that can advocate for other couples, especially those who are in hurting marriages. A meal can serve not only food but a place to work through emotions. First course is advocate and validate. Advocate for both spouses, by focusing on feelings not on issues. Second course is served up by asking questions and answering questions. Focus on what is true and avoid rewriting history. The third course is the sweet dessert of hope in Jesus. No matter the hurt, there is still hope found in Jesus and the love and forgiveness only He can offer.

### ***The Love Jug***

Finally, the family table points us to the True and Only Source of Life. We are plugged into the source of life. When a family or marriage tries to find the source of life in a spouse or child, it will end up in a place of blame, problems and pride. The formula for a healthy family love jug is parents and children 100% responsible for their own love jug and children that are 0% responsible for the parent's love jug. Pouring into each other around the family table is fun when there are no expectations and it is done freely. Pouring into each other means that everyone is present in the moments and conversations and that Jesus is at the center.

