

Shared Meal Guidelines

“...they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart,” (Acts 2:46)

WHY DO WE HAVE A SHARED MEAL?

Our Sunday afternoon monthly Shared Meal is an important time for getting to know one another well enough to begin sharing our lives with one another during the week. Church leaders and established members need regular time together to maintain contact with one another. Visitors and new members described in the New Testament seem to have used a Shared Meal for these very purposes. It was a regular time of mutual hospitality that functioned as a family reunion.

Our Shared Meal is an opportunity to honor God by serving one another in love! We begin serving one another by preparing our food well. We strive for excellence while still keeping things simple. We continue serving one another by agreeing to serve together as a family in the set up and clean up on our monthly meal. We continue serving one another by enjoying one another’s company during and after our meal in age-integrated family-to-family, table-talk conversations. Finally, we serve one another by clearing the tables for one another after the meal. Our meal as a church can be a training ground for the way meals should be in our homes.

But just as family meals can drift into selfish behaviors, so our Shared Meal as a church can drift (see 1 Cor. 11:17-22). If we are not diligent, it will lose its godly focus. We must continually pull it back on track and raise its standard high over and over again. Our goal each week must be to share a joyful and refreshing meal during which we truly get to know one another better in Christ.

WHAT TO BRING

A MAIN DISH, SIDE DISH (A SALAD, BREAD, ETC.) AND A DESSERT.

Bring enough food to serve your own family members, plus extra portions for a few guests. In that way we can serve any visitors who might agree to stay and eat with us.

SERVING UTENSILS

Please bring whatever items are needed to cut and serve the dishes you are bringing (serving spoons, knives, spatulas, pot holders, towels, etc.) Make sure your family name is on your items.

NOTE: You are responsible for baking, cutting and getting ready your items that are brought to the meal. This way no one is tied down and all can enjoy the meal and time of fellowship together.

USE CREATIVITY TO KEEP IT SIMPLE

Casseroles, salads and desserts can be simple without sacrificing quality. A baked chicken, beef stew, potato casserole. A big bowl of washed and shined apples. A vegetable tray. Cookies. Brownies. Style and flair can still be simple and easy.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

The only item in the kitchen we are able to use at the high school facility is the sink. Please remember you must bring whatever you need to keep your hot food hot (crock pots, Nesco, chafing dishes etc.) and cold foods cold (cooler) until the end of the service. All dinner plates, eating utensils, napkins and cups are provided.

TEENS CAN COOK TOO!

Our Shared Meal is a wonderful opportunity for our young adults to share their growing culinary expertise. It also gives Mom and Dad some valuable help in the kitchen. Work as a family team. Singles are encouraged to join with families to help cook whenever possible.

WHEN YOU ARRIVE AT CHURCH, you are responsible to make sure your food gets put where it needs to go. There will be a designated area where all coolers can be set and appliances can be plugged in. It may be helpful to bring an extension cord if you need electricity.

AFTER THE MORNING SERVICE we will work together as families with everyone helping to place food and set up the tables. Sit together as a family. You will be dismissed to dish up so you can go through together as families.

After the prayer, each family or table should assist mother with toddlers through the lines first. Stay together as a family so that little ones have help with their plates.

COMMUNION will be taken immediately following our meal together. (Please see the article – “**Children and the Lord’s Supper**” on our articles page on the church website). (www.worshipatsgbc.org)

HELPFUL TIPS

Label your Serving Dishes and utensils. We are not able to use any items in the school kitchen so please bring everything you would need to serve and keep your dish hot or cold.

USE TIME WISELY! When planning, keep in mind there are potentially two hours for your dish to be in a crock pot or cooler.

FOOD HANDLING GUIDELINES

The three basic rules of professional food handling are:

1. **HOT THINGS MUST STAY HOT!**
2. **COLD THINGS MUST STAY COLD!**
3. **AVOID CROSS CONTAMINATION!**

We recommend using a crock pot whenever possible.

All foods with eggs, meats or dairy products must be kept either hot or cold. The dishes cannot be left on the counter for 2 ½ hours.

Desserts with dairy in them must be kept cold.

Be careful to avoid cross contamination of different kinds of foods. It is very important to clean utensils and work surfaces during preparation, especially between raw meats and vegetables both at home and at church. A germicidal cleaner or very mild solution of bleach works fine.

Any food to be eaten raw should be washed thoroughly before slicing. Raw fruits and vegetables, particularly melons, are susceptible to salmonella poisons.

After the meal, meats especially should be placed in a cooler. If you take home leftovers that have set out throughout the afternoon, please don’t take any chances—dispose of them. Contaminated food isn’t safe, even for pets!

WHEN OUR SHARED MEAL IS OVER

WHEN YOU ARE FINISHED EATING, please make sure that your table is cleared and cleaned off before you leave. Gather together all your serving dishes and utensils so tables can be cleaned up and put away. We will work together as families to clean up the school before we leave. EVERYONE is able to help the clean go smoother. "Many hands make light work." Men can help put away the tables and chairs. Ladies can put away the empty serving dishes and wipe down the tables. Young adults can sweep and mop up where necessary. If we all share in the work, we can truly "take our meals together with gladness."

If your children want to play outside, please move your socializing along with them. Stay close. You are responsible for their safety at all times.

SHARED MEAL ETIQUETTE

FIRST TIME VISITORS: PLEASE BE OUR GUESTS!

REGULAR ATTENDERS: PLEASE BRING SUFFICIENT QUANTITIES TO SHARE OF YOUR MAIN DISH, SALAD AND DESSERT.

SIT TOGETHER AS FAMILIES AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE OR PRACTICAL (PLEASED BE SEATED PRIOR TO THE START OF THE MEAL).

AFTER PRAYER, THOSE WITH CHILDREN 3 & UNDER MAY DISH UP.

ENJOY YOUR FELLOWSHIP AS YOU WAIT FOR YOUR TABLE'S TURN

PLEASE ATTEND CHILDREN WHO MAY WISH TO TAKE MORE THAN THEY CAN FINISH.

ALL OF US SHOULD MODERATE OUR PORTIONS SO AS NOT TO BE OVERFILLED WHILE OTHERS ARE LEFT HUNGRY.

AFTER YOU HAVE EATEN, DO NOT ALLOW CHILDREN TO RUN OFF UNATTENDED. WE WILL DISMISS EVERYONE AT THE SAME TIME.

EACH FAMILY SHOULD CLEAN UP THEIR ITEMS AFTER THE MEAL IS FINISHED

EACH TABLE GROUP SHOULD CLEAR OFF THEIR TABLE, WASH IT, FOLD IT UP AND PUT IT AWAY.

TEMPERATURE RULES

Use a Food Thermometer – temperatures listed below in degrees Fahrenheit

Ground Meat & Meat Mixtures

Beef, Pork, Veal, Lamb 160

Turkey, Chicken 165

Fresh Beef, Veal, Lamb

Medium Rare 145

Medium 160

Well Done 170

Poultry

Chicken & Turkey, whole 180

Poultry breasts, roast 170

Poultry thighs, wings 180

Duck & Goose 180

Stuffing

(Cooked alone or in a bird) 165

Fresh Pork

Medium 160

Well Done 170

Ham

Fresh (raw) 160

Pre-cooked (to reheat) 140

Eggs & Egg Dishes

Eggs—Cook until yolk & white are firm

Egg dishes 160

Leftovers & Casseroles 165

Additional information on safe food handling practices can be found online at the USDA website, Food Safety and Inspection Service division, www.fsis.usda.gov.

Article by Household of Faith Community Church – revised by Sovereign Grace Bible Church for use at Ozaukee High School Sunday Morning Shared Meal Services.