

WHY TABLE TIME?

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 Table Time 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

Mealtime Moments: Pick up a variety of free Table Time discussion talking points at the Home Point Center or download at stlukesokc.org/homepoint.



ONE CHURCH WITH MULTIPLE CAMPUSES

Downtown Campus
222 NW 15th Street
Oklahoma City, OK 73103
(405) 232-1371
stlukesokc.org

Edmond Campus
900 N. Sooner Road
Edmond, OK 73034
(405) 285-2002
stlukesedmond.org