

# FEAST: TRAINING GUIDE

## *Abiding Practices for Missional Communities*

*Feast: Intentionally eating a lavish meal together as family to celebrate how God abundantly meets every need we have, from our daily hunger to our eternal salvation in Christ.*

### WHY WE FEAST

One of the most prominent themes in the Scriptures is food. It runs from the initial chapters of Genesis to the last chapters of Revelation. One of the first things God does in the garden is invite his children to eat from what he has created and provided for them. The fall in Genesis 3 has food front and center in Adam and Eve's rebellion. One day we will all feast at the marriage supper of the Lamb of Revelation 19, celebrating the final undoing of what was broken by their rebellion.

There are seven feasts appointed by God in Leviticus 23, which are the Sabbath, the Passover/Feast of Unleavened Bread, Feast of Firstfruits, Feast of Weeks/Pentecost, Feast of Trumpets, Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Booths. The Jewish calendar was filled with these feasts throughout the year in order for them to regularly stop, rest, and celebrate God's provision in their lives.

For us today, these Old Testament feasts ultimately serve as pictures pointing to the redemption and rest of Jesus as the promised Messiah. Jesus introduces the New Covenant of his body and blood as the fulfillment of the Passover feast. He was the perfect Passover lamb who was sacrificed as the firstborn Son of God. We eat his body as the unleavened bread of life broken for us. We drink his blood as a reminder that he drank the full cup of God's wrath on our behalf. He is God's greatest provision for his people by bringing salvation to all who trust in him, and if he meets this, our greatest need, won't he also provide everything else we need in himself?

Feasting demonstrates our utter dependence on God. We cannot live unless God provides us food and water. We need it, and we need him. Eating is a beautiful reminder of the gospel in that just as we cannot sustain our own bodies apart from food, our souls are dependent upon him as well. We are dead without the work of Jesus on the cross and his empty tomb. When we eat, we remember that we need God to live. When we feast, we celebrate not only our neediness, but God's great delight in abundantly meeting all our needs in Christ. He doesn't just supply our basic necessities, he sets a lavish table before us and sees to it that our cup overflows with his blessing and grace.

### FEASTING IN COMMUNITY

As compared to other Abiding Practices, eating meals is already built into our daily schedule. We eat multiple times each day, and our culture readily makes a habit of eating in community. Now we get to engage in a feast of the gospel with our neighbors in the everyday stuff of life.

Tim Chester, in his book [\*A Meal with Jesus\*](#), writes:

"Many people love the idea of the church as a community. But when we eat together, we encounter not some theoretical community, but real people with all their problems and quirks. The meal table is an opportunity to give up our proud ideals by which we judge others and accept in their place the real community created by the cross of Christ, with all its brokenness."

Christians get to throw the best parties in town because we have the greatest of all reasons to celebrate. Followers of Christ host the most hospitable meals because we have been blessed to be a blessing. As we seek to practice feasting in the rhythms of Family Gatherings, DNA Groups, and Neighborhoods to Nations, it is imperative that we practice radically ordinary hospitality. "Radically ordinary hospitality lived out in the family of God gathers daily, prays constantly, and needs no invitation to do so. And those who don't yet know the Lord are summoned for food and fellowship" (Rosaria Butterfield, [\*The Gospel Comes With a House Key\*](#)).

## Family Gatherings

Family Gatherings give you an easy and regular opportunity to feast. There are so many things to celebrate, and so many reasons to throw a feast. This is truly low-hanging fruit to live out an Abiding Practice in your everyday life. Whenever you gather as a family to feast, acknowledge the reason for the feast and how eating points to the gospel and our dependence on God. Make it a central point to do this every time you sit around the table. Functionally speaking, the practice of eating together at a Family Gathering looks different in each Missional Community and on each week. At a minimum, a Missional Community should eat together once a month, but we encourage you to share a meal as often as possible. What that actually looks like is up to you. Take a look at our *Missional Community Handbook* for more meal ideas.

## DNA Groups

Because of the smaller size and greater intensity of a DNA Group, it might seem like feasting doesn't really fit into this rhythm. Actually, the spiritual intimacy allows you to see God powerfully at work in your brothers or sisters, giving you all the more reason to feast. In fact, it might be most convenient for your DNA Group to gather around a meal as you meet. At a minimum, even if you don't feast together during a DNA Group meeting time, you can hold one another accountable to regularly reflect on the provision of God in all of life.

## Neighborhoods To Nations

This rhythm is all about how we see those who are outside the family of God being adopted as our brothers and sisters in Christ. Then shouldn't we strive to engage people with the gospel the way Jesus did? In Luke's account of the life of Jesus, he is essentially either going to a meal, eating a meal, or coming from a meal. Let's invite our neighbors and the nations among us to our table, because when people open their mouths to eat, they open their hearts and lives to us as well. Though our tables might be located in Huntsville, AL, the reality is that the nations are moving to our city. The highest honor you could give an international family, as well as the best way to connect the gospel message, is around the table.

## FEASTING RESOURCES

We would encourage you to engage with one of the following resources as you discuss how to implement the habit of grace found in feasting.

### Recommended Sermons

[Fast/Feast - Life in the Vine: Practices for Abiding in Jesus](#) - Paul Whaley

### Recommended Books

[A Meal with Jesus](#) - Tim Chester (quoted above)

[The Gospel Comes With a House Key](#) - Rosaria Butterfield (quoted above)

### Recommended Articles

[The Gospel Coalition Series: Food and Feasting](#) - Rory Shiner

[Eating Together: Welcome to the Gospel Feast](#) - Brad Watson

[7 Feasts That Point to Christ](#) - Wycliffe Bible Translators

[Ingredients for a Theology of Feasting](#) - John Piper

## **SAMPLE COMMITMENT**

Below is a sample commitment that you may find useful as you seek to feast in community. Please feel the freedom to use these ideas or come up with your own and be amazed by how the Holy Spirit uses the simple gift of conversation and good food to redeem broken people.

## **FEASTING COMMITMENT**

Missional Community Leaders: The Jordans and The Jameses

Date of Commitment: November 14th

Date to Reevaluate Commitment: January 9th

### **Commitment**

Our Missional Community is committed to feasting together over the holiday season and using our meals as an avenue for reaching our neighbors and the nations.

### **Family Gatherings**

We will feast together at our Family Gatherings for Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's.

- Thanksgiving - Friendsgiving Dinner (November 21st)
- MC Christmas Party - (December 12th)
- New Year's Day (Sunday, January 1st) - Brunch together after the Sunday Gathering

### **DNA Groups**

We will encourage and hold one another accountable for using our mealtimes to the glory of God. We commit to:

- Praying for opportunities to invite neighbors, friends, coworkers, and internationals to dinner
- Coming up with ideas on how to best be hospitable to those around us
- Encouraging one another when we face rejection or feel a meal did not go well

### **Neighborhoods To Nations**

We will work diligently to meet internationals and invite them to dinner. We commit to:

- Financially, prayerfully, and presently supporting the international student dinner at UAH
- Developing relationships with international students and inviting them to dinner personally
- Reaching out to international coworkers and inviting them/their family to dinner
- Developing relationships with internationals through local ESL classes

### **Conclusion**

Remember, there is not a specific prescription for how you feast together. We do believe, however, the story of the gospel compels us to regularly invite the world to our table. Go before the Lord and watch how he leads you in generosity and blessing. Watch how he draws others to his family through your feasts. We have plenty of resources that we would love to provide if you have any questions about how to practically do some of these things. Simply email us at [mc@summitcrossing.org](mailto:mc@summitcrossing.org).

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Family Gatherings:

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