

giving thanks for those people and find out a little more about Fair Trade.



- Plan a day in which you eat or drink a little less than usual (do not do this if it is not medically advisable). Find out about agencies which try to provide clean water and food to people suffering from famine. Could you support one of those agencies or spend more time praying for the work they do?
- Say the Lord's Prayer quietly, concentrating on letting go of anxieties and ambitions. What might God be saying to you?

PRAYER AND REFLECTION

1 Peter 2.1-3

Rid yourselves, therefore, of all malice, and all guile, insincerity, envy, and all slander. Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation — if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

Blessed are you Lord, God of all Creation
through your goodness we have this bread to offer
which earth has given and human hands have made
it will become for us the bread of life.

Blessed are you Lord, God of all Creation
through your goodness we have this wine to offer
fruit of the vine and work of human hands
it will become our spiritual drink

*Come and partake the gospel feast,
Be saved from sin, in Jesus rest;
O taste the goodness of our God,
and eat his flesh and drink his blood*

Charles Wesley

Dunbarney and Forgandenny Parish Church

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LENT 2009: Sense Making Faith Week 5 - Journey into Taste



Without nourishment our bodies cannot survive. We must eat and drink or we cannot function properly. We need to put good things into our bodies to help them grow and flourish.

Eating food and being fed is powerfully related in scripture to the idea of God's loving care of us. Because God is the creator of all, God wants us to grow and flourish, both physically, mentally and spiritually. So in the book of Genesis, when God creates human beings, he makes sure that there are plenty of things for them to eat. When Adam and Eve eat the fruit of the forbidden tree, it was not because they were hungry. They did not need to eat it at all. God had met all their needs, but still they wanted more. When the Israelites are starving in the desert, they are provided with manna by God.

It is not surprising then, that scripture makes an analogy in several places between sweet tasting food and the word of God. We need to be fed spiritually too, because we also have to grow spiritually. God's word is sweet like honey; we can 'taste' God in worship. And Jesus comes to us in the Lord's Supper when we eat and drink bread and wine. It is not surprising then that Jesus made the connection for his disciples between his physical body and a spiritual form of eating and drinking, when he said in the desert that human beings do not live by bread alone but by the Word of God.

ACTIVITY

Make a list of all your favourite foods, or your favourite meal. What do you most enjoy eating and what do you most enjoy about eating? Think about what makes it your favourite.



Make a list of any spiritual 'foods' you enjoy. It might be a particular church service, prayer time, or time of the year, favourite parts of scripture, music, being with others in a fellowship group, or going on a long walk by yourself. How do these activities 'feed' you?

Next time you eat your favourite foods or enjoy your spiritual nourishment, reflect on all those who make it possible for you to have it and give thanks for that provision.

FOOD HEALTH AND WELLBEING

We all know what it is like to lose our appetites when we are feeling unwell, and sometimes, when we are ill, even the sight or smell of food can make us feel worse. If our pets start to refuse food, even if they are outwardly fine, we know there is something wrong and should call the vet.



So food is intimately connected with health and wellbeing, with life itself. The gift of taste tells us that we are alive and going about the business of living.

Perhaps we should not let the familiarity of eating and drinking make us complacent and perhaps we should not forget what a gift being able to taste really is.

Some questions to think about:

- What kinds of food are typically offered to sick people who have lost their appetites?

- How would you tempt a sick person to eat?
- How would you feel if a person said they could not eat food you had prepared for them?
- What do you think a God's eye view of Samuel's situation might be?

READ Mark 14:12-28 (The Last Supper)

FASTING

The accounts of Jesus' time in the desert in the gospels of Matthew and Luke agree that Jesus performed a fast while he was there. 'He fasted forty days and forty nights; and afterwards he was famished' (Matthew 4.2); 'He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over he was famished' (Luke 4.2).

Jesus would have known very well a passage in Isaiah 58 where the prophet asks whether the people of Israel actually think about why they fast. There is absolutely no point in fasting, says Isaiah, if it doesn't challenge you mentally and spiritually as well as physically. The outcome of fasting should be to understand more clearly what God wants of us.

ACTIVITY

Fasting in Christian tradition is about more than just going without chocolate or giving up something we enjoy. It can be about focussing attention on the food and drink we normally take for granted and thinking about where it comes from and who makes it possible for us to have it. For other Christians, fasting means a more holistic spiritual discipline, so as to become more open to the Father's will.

Choose one of these activities:

- When you next prepare a meal, find out where the ingredients came from and about the people who most likely prepared it. What are their lives like? Are the foods fairly traded? Spend some time