



TIME OUT

for Dinner

By Amya Jensen

Generally the things we pursue in life are the things we think will bring us the greatest happiness. We are familiar with the thirteenth article of faith, which teaches, "If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things." One of the errors of our generation is the pursuit of so many virtuous and lovely things at once, that in our rush we give up one of the most virtuous things: Christlike family relationships.

As my siblings and I started high school, my dad could see the busy schedules of our teenage lives begin to crowd out precious family time. So he required my sisters and me to be home between five and

seven o'clock for dinner every night. At first this was hard, but as we honored his wishes, something beautiful happened.

Every evening we came home to each other from school, work, and activities. We learned how to prepare dinner. We ate and talked together every night and

then read the scriptures together. I still remember the spirit I felt as my mother and father testified of true gospel principles. There was a spirit of love and acceptance there that allowed us to

express ourselves and discuss difficult topics. And when our parents needed to teach us something, it came naturally during scripture discussions, with love and testimony. We argued less among each other and became best friends.

Although I was involved in many things during my high school years, this memory stands out most in my mind: my family time together around the dinner table. All the other rewarding experiences I had during those years were silver, and this was gold.

I learned that we need to be cautious about over-scheduling ourselves. Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has mentioned studies saying that “‘eating meals at home [is] the strongest predictor of children’s academic achievement and psychological adjustment.’ Family mealtimes have also been shown to be a strong bulwark against children’s smoking, drinking, or using drugs.”¹

Those dinner hours we spent together had a huge impact on the way I dealt with challenges and how I felt about life and myself. I knew that no matter what happened outside our home, I had a family who cared about me.

Elder Oaks also said, “We have to forego some good things in order to choose others that are better or best because they develop faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.”² Eating dinner together as a family did that for me as I was growing up.

So, when life speeds up so fast that the dews of heaven don’t have time to distill upon our souls (see D&C 121:45), taking time for dinner and scriptures together can be one of the best ways to fill both the body and soul. **NE**

Amya Jensen lives in Texas, USA.

NOTES

1. Dallin H. Oaks, “Good, Better, Best,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 106.
2. “Good, Better, Best,” 107.

My father insisted that we come home for dinner every night; I'm glad he did.