

Fat-Free Feasting

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Is there a sweeter sight than mothers and daughters seated by each other? As I look across the lake of faces here in the Tabernacle and imagine the immense ocean of young women gathered in chapels around the world, I truly stand all amazed. For a farm girl from Herriman, Utah, this is a humbling sight.

Sisters, I want to tell you a secret. I love to eat. Don't you? When food has the perfect herbs, when it's cooked just right, when it's served like a work of sculpture, I'm in heaven. I can gain weight just reading a menu.

And did you know that the Lord doesn't expect us to diet? Trust me! Turn to 2 Nephi 9:51 [2 Ne. 9:51]. Now look at the very last line. It says, "Let your soul delight in fatness." But feast on what? Chocolate?

Look closely: Feast on his *word*. When was the last time you feasted on the word? Did you know that feasting could be so guilt-free?

One of the joyous parts of my new calling is feasting with our presidency. We begin our meeting by studying the scriptures. President Hales starts us out by saying, "Does anyone have a scripture?" Someone always does. We look up cross-references, scour the Topical Guide, apply ideas to our own lives, and we think about you.

This savoring the scriptures invites the Spirit. It's a bonding time, when, in addition to a red pencil, we share our hearts, our understanding, our desires. We become more united, more able to serve you. Are you doing this kind of feasting in your Beehive, Mia Maid, Laurel, or Young Women presidency meetings? Try beginning those meetings with a thought from the scriptures. I think you'll be surprised at the spirit scripture sharing will bring.

I wasn't very good at studying the scriptures as a young woman. I wish I would have! Not until I was living in Seattle, Washington, did a friend and I realize we were hungering to know what spiritual women in our ward knew. We wanted righteous children, "taught by their mothers" to be believing (Alma 56:47). And like a good dinner, the gospel becomes more exciting sharing it with a friend. I had Louise Nelson. We feasted together.

I remember sitting on an old worn couch reading scripture stories to my sons. As we studied, a power began to permeate our lives. I learned that Ruth left her family to join the believers, that Sariah reared children in the wilderness, that Esther risked her life to save others, and that, most important, Mary bore a son in a straw-filled stable and laid him in a manger. I learned that God worked miracles in the lives of others, and he could work wonders in mine too.

I discovered the scriptures later than some. But I discovered them.

And now, like reading a good menu, I still *hunger* for their wise words. Why not gain some spiritual weight?

It's not always easy, and there are things I still don't understand. But when I look past all that, craving the Lord's companionship, the scriptures infuse my spirit with *the* Spirit. They will do the same for you. They will enlighten you, lift you, comfort you, strengthen you. They will envelop you in a warm blanket of heavenly love. How do I know? Because they do that for me. It is Heavenly Father's promise to us. It is eating at the Lord's table.

Beloved sisters, I invite you to experiment upon the word, to feast. As Jesus said: “Search the scriptures; ... they are they which testify of me” (John 5:39).

I know that he lives, and that he loves us, and that his hand is outstretched still. May I serve you and him, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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