

# Fast Food or Faithful Fellowship?

The fast food lifestyle is upon us. Food is at our fingertips 24/7. Everything is about convenience. We can literally choose how much we want, what we want, when we want it. But have we thought about the consequences of a fast food lifestyle? The fast food mindset affects more than your waistline.

## Fast Food Meals

In 1953, just a year before the first Golden Arches went up, Swanson created the TV dinner. This was at a time when meals took two hours on average to prepare. TV dinners hit the shelves with the promise of providing relief to mothers "burdened with baby-boom offspring." What once took two hours now has been "nuked" to 15 minutes or less.

\$376.23. This is the amount Americans spend each year on fast food--per person! In 1970, Americans spent about \$6 billion on fast food. Last year they spent more than \$100 billion on fast food. Americans now spend more money on fast food than they do on movies, books, magazines, newspapers, videos, and recorded music--combined. (Eric Schlosser, "Fast Food Nation," *Rolling Stone*, Sept. 3, 1998)

Martin Spurlock documented his odyssey of eating nothing but fast food for 30 days in the movie *Super Size Me*. He gained over 20 lbs, his cholesterol went up, his health went down. It took 14 months for him to lose the weight he had put on in 30 days.

Although it offers many choices, styles and efficiency, a diet of fast food alone can be very unhealthy.

## Fast Food Religion

This fast food approach can even spill over into our time with God. Five-minute devotional books fill the bookshelves, instead of an hour of prayer and study. Church services are under pressure to shorten, to serve fast food: a 15-minute service, a five-minute sermon, a hymn, a prayer, and you're on your way.

Our approach to church can be much the same as our approach to our quick fix meals. We're not all that concerned about the health of the meal we get from the restaurant, we want something that looks good and tastes good just as long as it fits into our current need. In much the same way, we are tempted to want church to be as much as we want, exactly what we want, when we want it. We're tempted to not be as concerned about sitting down and listening to what God has said to us as long as we get something that passes for God's Word. This watered down doctrine may seem good in the moment, but in the long run it is no healthier for our souls than a diet of fast food is to our body.

## Finding the Healthy Balance

The psalmist wrote, "Your words . . . [are] sweeter than honey to my mouth" (119:103) The Word of God is more like fine dining with many courses than fast food. Some of the courses are eaten quickly, others take more time to savor and enjoy. Some courses we enjoy, others may be new and different to us, like a delicacy we have never tried before. The same is true for the doctrines of God. Some doctrines we are very familiar with. We love and understand them. Others we may have never heard, or they are not clear to us. In fact there might be some doctrine that we don't like to hear. Yet, we realize that never hearing these doctrines, not having a clear understanding of them, or not liking the way they sound doesn't make them any less God's Word than not liking Filet Mignon, Beef Wellington, or another pricy dish makes them any less of a delicacy.

All parts of God's Word are important for us to hear, learn and digest. "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16,17).

There are times that God wants us to hear his Law, he wants us to feel the sting of our sin that we will repent. There are times he wants us to struggle with something in his Word and seek out the advice of a pastor, in order that we can grow in his Word and really listen to what he has to say. How else can we grow in our understanding of God's Word than to seek out what he says when we don't understand.

A healthy faith life begins and ends in Scripture. It begins with a church that stands on God's Word even when that Word is not as convenient as other parts of our life. It continues with worshipping our God in a way that praises and thanks him for all the great things he has done for us that we don't deserve, it ends with digging into the Word in Bible Study and daily devotions.

The only healthy balance we can have in this life is hearing and studying the Word of God in order that when the temptations come, we have the opportunity to stand on that Word of God and not be shaken. Take time with your Lord--unrushed and unhurried. "Chew" on the word. Meditate on it, and you'll find out how much more nourishing a good meal with God is, compared to fast food.

**Lord, in this rushed world, help me take the time to learn your Word. Let me see the opportunities I have to worship and dig into your Word in Bible Study and devotion are not just menu items that I can choose from. You want me to take advantage of all of those opportunities I have to draw close to you and to others who believe as I do. Help me to be encouraged by those who believe as I do, and help me to grow in my faith and knowledge of you. Let me never fall into the trap of looking for the fast food option of religion when I have the truth of your Word right in front of me. In Jesus name I pray. Amen.**