

And there's this: how much a family eats dinner together is a good indicator of whether teens are likely to smoke, drink, or use drugs, and also how well teens will perform academically (from The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse, Columbia University).

Seems pretty compelling to me.

We live in the real world—and it's not always possible to eat together every night. So pick a night or two a week—non-negotiable family dinner night.

Then don your apron and prepare something fabulous and four star, or drive through and pick up dinner on your way home. But sit down together around the table, turn off the television, and focus on each other.

“These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home...” Deuteronomy 6:6-7

E: Eat dinner as a family

“There’s more to mealtime than what’s on the plate.”

—from “A Simple Meal,” *Living Simply*, page 129

Sitting down to eat dinner together as a family may seem like a small thing, but it has a big effect on our families. Simply put, mealtime is important.

But I hate to cook! you think. Fortunately, mealtime is about much more than what’s on your plate.

Mealtime is an opportunity to gather as a family, to ask “What was the best part of your day?” and to listen to the answers. It’s an opportunity to teach our children about all kinds of things—nutrition, manners, prayer, conversation, listening, hospitality. Mealtime is an opportunity each day to be together, to be a family.