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Good News for Newlyweds

June 2019

Office for Parish Life

Diocese of Scranton



Eat, Drink, and Be Married!

by Steve and Kathy Beirne

Most couples start their life as a family of two. Sometimes it's hard to think of yourselves as a family when there are just the two of you, but you are indeed a family. And from the beginning, it's a great idea to establish family meals. The evidence is overwhelming that the family meal is a huge benefit to children.

What used to be the norm is now something families have to learn to do again. Many studies have been conducted that identify kids who eat with their families as doing better in school, staying away from drugs, alcohol and tobacco, having healthier food habits and better social skills. But even with an adults-only family, there's a lot to be said for the family meal.

Eating together is a way to engage with each other in a way that encourages sharing and companionship. We know that meetings always go better when there's food involved. The same is true when you're wanting to get to know more about one another's day. Especially if you put away the phones and turn off the TV, you will find that you can talk, joke and laugh, while you share the ups and downs of the day.

Of course, this presumes that it's the meal at the end of the day that you're sharing. But you may have a job that goes through the dinner hour, so you and your spouse can't eat together then. Many people who work in the restaurant business work night shifts most of the time. The same is true of law

enforcement and health care people. So how about breakfast together? A bagel and coffee, juice and a muffin before your day begins still counts as a family meal! Instead of going through the day from the back end, you get to talk about what your day will be like – what you're looking forward to and what you may be anxious about.

Starting the habit now will make it easier to have it be part of your lifestyle if you later become a family of three or four or more. And believe me, you will be so glad to have a shared meal with children. Family meals were the most fun part of raising children for us. We had a rule that there was to be no unpleasantness at the table, and we had to follow that rule too. No complaining about undone chores or bad grades at the table! That could be addressed at another time.

Once our daughter, Lucy, was working on a project with some friends. She asked if they could stay for dinner, so I said sure. The next day she told us they couldn't stop talking about it. "Well, they came on a good night," I replied. We'd had homemade applesauce and oatmeal bread. "Oh it wasn't the food," she told me. "It was that we all sat down and ate together. In their houses everyone gets their own food and eats by themselves."

When we ate together, we usually had candles on the table. Someone had told us when we were young parents that it was a disciplinary tool, that children behaved better when there were candles on the table. And it did work! They are an inexpensive way to turn mac and cheese into a classy meal.

Finally, you can think of your family meal as the eucharist of your home. It is easier to understand the sacredness of the mass at church when you break bread together in your home every day. A simple grace, (thanks for this food, Lord, and for the people who grew it) turns your daily caloric intake into something special. It will be a place you'll find comfort, a sense of belonging, and the closeness that you got married to have in the first place.

Steve and Kathy Beirne have extensive experience in marriage and family education, catechetics, and marriage ministry. They have been the editors and publishers of Foundations Newsletter, FACET premarital resource, and Catholic and Newly Married, an award winning book published by ACTA publications. They live in Portland, Maine, and are the parents of 7 children, and grandparents to multiple grandchildren. You can learn more from them here: familyministry.org.

Are you looking to connect with other young adults (ages 18-40) in the Diocese of Scranton? Join our Young Adult Ministry for a Pilgrimage to Philadelphia on June 29! Contact [Shannon Kowalski](#) (570-207-2213 x 1155) for details and to learn more about young adult activities in our Diocese. You can also text

"@dosyam1" to 81010 to get text message updates about other young adult opportunities in our Diocese



July 21 - 27, 2019 is Natural Family Planning Awareness Week!

To learn more, visit the [United States Conference of Catholic Bishops website](#). For more information about NFP in the Diocese of Scranton, [click here](#).

Have you celebrated your first anniversary? **Do you think you may be called to minister to those preparing for marriage?** If you would like to begin the discernment process, to determine if you are called to PreCana ministry, please contact [Jen Housel](#), 570-207-2213 x 1104.





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