

The Right Food

Our front cover image is very familiar, certainly to British households at this time of year. Autumn is turning to winter, the leaves are golden or brown, and animals are preparing for the long cold season ahead. Some, of course, will hibernate from now until spring.

This means that our gardens and parks are regularly frequented by squirrels foraging for nuts and other food with high fat content, which will see them through winter. In fact, the internet is well stocked with videos of these agile creatures performing all sorts of acrobatics to get food, especially that which is intended for the birds.

To some people, this is a cause of great annoyance; to others it is the source of much amusement. Yet to the animals themselves it is a matter of life and death. They need the nutrition to fuel their autumnal preparations, as well as a store for their winter sleep. Perhaps we can learn some life lessons from these animal antics.

God Feeds His People

The people of Israel experienced firsthand how God provides for those who are His. During their desert exodus from Egypt to the Promised Land, He literally fed them in a number of miraculous ways.

He provided 'manna', described as 'bread from heaven', which appeared in the morning. They went out to collect it and could cook it in a number of ways.

When the layer of dew lifted, there, on the surface of the wilderness, was a small round substance, as fine as frost

on the ground... And Moses said to them, "This is the bread which the LORD has given you to eat" (Exodus 16:14-15).

To provide meat, on occasion God sent great quantities of quails, again showing His care.

So it was that quails came up at evening and covered the camp (Exodus 16:13).

Not only this, but God also provided water for them in a number of ways, including straight from a rock, by making bitter waters sweet, and leading them to wells or oases.

Spiritual Food

Apart from physical food, we need spiritual sustenance to help us go about our daily lives in the right way. Also the Bible tells us that, if we are faithful to God, when we die our unconscious state is like a 'hibernation' until Jesus returns to set up God's kingdom. Then he will raise the dead from their 'sleep', something else we need to be prepared for.

The right spiritual food is the word of God, the Bible. We are told that it provides all we need to prepare us to live well before God and to be pleasing to Him:

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

The great King David, writing in the Psalms, describes the word of God in terms which make us think of food:

How sweet are Your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! (Psalm 119:103).



We would not expect to be healthy if we eat badly or infrequently. The same applies to our spiritual food. We should be taking in the word of God regularly, and spending time ‘digesting’ what it has to say. This will build up our spiritual health and prepare us in the ways mentioned above. The Bible Reading tables in the centre pages of this magazine are a good tool to help us do this: three readings per day which enable us to read the Old Testament once and the New Testament twice in a year. Now would be a good time to commit to daily Bible reading, whether we follow this plan or another.

The Bread of Life

Jesus identifies himself as the bread of life, given by God to provide spiritual sustenance to those who accept him. Just as bread is life-giving, so association with Jesus gives us hope of eternal life in the Kingdom of God.

I am the bread of life. He who comes to me shall never hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst... No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day... Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in me has everlasting life (John 6:35, 44, 47).

In this chapter, Jesus continues to talk about his followers needing to eat his flesh and drink his blood. Of course this is not literal – God has never asked for this sort of worship – but is talking about understanding the work of Jesus, accepting his sacrifice as a means to be reconciled to God, and then sharing bread and wine as baptised believers, in remembrance of this. So we are presented with another opportunity to get the right spiritual nutrition – to be associated with Jesus: his life, his sacrifice and his future kingdom.

Food for Action

My food is to do the will of Him who sent me, to finish His work (John 4:34).

To Jesus, doing his Father’s will is a driving force, the energy in his life: it was his ‘meat and drink’ as we might still say today. This should be the same for his followers. Living a life sustained by spiritual fuel will energise us and make us dynamic in serving God. That’s exciting!

So let’s consider ourselves. Are we getting the right food, properly fuelling ourselves for a positive life today and the prospect of life after death? God has provided the food; it is up to us to take hold of it. No acrobatics required!

Editor