



Helping, Encouraging, And Refreshing, Together

Coming alongside the Pastor, his family, and the local church to assist in areas of encouragement, evangelism and education.

Meal Planning and Housekeeping (Time-Saving Hints)



Including: 13 Quick, Tasty Recipes



*“Study to shew thyself approved unto God,
a workman that needeth not to be ashamed,
rightly dividing the word of truth.”*

II Timothy 2:15

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~ MEAL PLANNING ~

Many, many American families today rely on processed foods in the home, and fast foods on the run. The health of our nation's children is declining rapidly, and childhood obesity is on the rise. Much of this is due to the fact that there is no one in the home whose priority it is to make good, nutritious snacks and meals available.

WITH JUST A LITTLE ADVANCE THOUGHT AND PLANNING, you can take steps to make healthier snacks and more nutritious meals available for your family.

- Would your family snack on fresh vegetables if they were readily available in the refrigerator? Keep baby carrots, celery sticks or cucumber slices available and within easy reach. When you return from the grocery store, take the time to prepare these items so that they will be easy for family members to grab when they are looking for a snack.
- How about fruit? Keep grapes washed and accessible. Apples can be cored and sliced, then submerged in pineapple-mango juice. They have a delicious flavor, will not turn brown (even when taken out of the juice and packed in a lunch bag), and can be instantly available.
- Read labels. Buy healthier versions of ready-made snacks that your family enjoys. Watch the fat and sodium levels.
- Set aside time in the kitchen each week to make a jello salad, a batch of cookies or brownies. If you have adult children living in the area, sometimes making a favorite dish of theirs is a great enticement to stop by for a visit. Food can be a great motivator to open doors in relationships.

MAINTAIN A WELL-STOCKED FREEZER AND PANTRY

- Buy 10# (or whatever quantity you choose) of boneless, skinless chicken breasts when the price is low. Cook it in a crock pot or on the stove in a large stock pot. For dinner that night, serve the chicken with BBQ sauce or your family's favorite dipping sauce. When the rest of the chicken is cool, remove it from the broth and freeze it. (1# fits nicely into an inexpensive fold-over type sandwich bag. Flatten the bags and place in good-quality freezer bags.) Reach for these packages the next time a recipe calls for cooked chicken (a casserole, soup, etc.) If you freeze eight packages from this one effort, you will save on the preparation time AND the clean-up time for your next eight chicken meals. (Like having a buy-one get-eight FREE coupon!)
- Do the same with ground beef. When it is on sale, purchase 10#. Brown the meat with onion, if desired. Drain. Use 2# to make your favorite ground beef casserole, or perhaps sloppy joes, for dinner. Freeze the remainder as explained above. (These flattened bags take up very little space in your freezer.) Again, if you freeze eight packages from this one effort, you will save on the cooking time AND the clean-up time for your next eight ground beef meals.
- Consider buying a pork loin when it is on sale, and ask the butcher to cut some or all of it into whatever thickness chops you prefer (I like ½-inch). A pork loin is delicious fixed in the crock pot. Freeze the chops in portions convenient for your family (2, 4, or 6 chops per bag).
- Cream soups.
- Ingredients for your family's favorite meals / snacks / deserts.
- Disposable aluminum foil pans (9x13, 9x9, loaf, mini loaf). Two loaf or one 9x9 pan fit perfectly into a gallon-size Ziploc bag for easy freezing or transporting.

PREPARE YOUR OWN "FAST-FOOD". Think ahead of time about the things your family enjoys eating, and do as much of the advance preparation as possible to save time (and work) later on. For instance:

- When preparing meals, consider making a double batch and freezing the extra for another day when you are short on time (meatloaf, casseroles, soup, chili).

- When baking muffins, quick breads, cookies or brownies, save time by using your largest bowl and mixing up two or three times what you need right now. (Consider baking quick breads in aluminum foil loaf pans. I can bake six loaf pans of bread in my oven at one time!) Freeze the extra for another day when you are short on time, to serve when someone stops by unexpectedly, or to take with you when you make a shut-in or hospital call.
- If you have taken the time to stock your freezer as suggested, you can very quickly make sloppy joes, spaghetti with meat sauce, or a casserole using your cooked chicken or browned ground meat.
- Some old family favorites can be prepared much more quickly as a casserole than in the traditional way, for instance Stuffed Peppers, or Cabbage Rolls. Chunk your peppers or cabbage, mix with remaining ingredients, then bake in an oven or crock pot for a fast, delicious meal.
- Consider recipes that do “double-duty” ~ Stuffed Pepper Soup is great for a first meal; drain liquid and serve over mashed potatoes for a second meal later in the week.

MAKE IT A HOBBY TO COLLECT VERY EASY, TASTY RECIPES. Talk to friends in the church and ask for good recipes. Get cookbooks from the library or bookstore that feature simple dishes ~ the fewer ingredients, the better. Part of the reason we rely on ready-made foods is that we think it is “hard” or “time-consuming” to cook from scratch. It really isn’t, if you:

- 1) have a well-stocked freezer / pantry, avoiding last-minute trips to the store;
- 2) have a good collection of recipes that are easy to prepare, and that your family enjoys; and
- 3) have done some of the preparation work ahead of time.

Older ladies (who were used to doing a lot of cooking when they raised their families) are great resources. Ask them at church, or while visiting, for their best quick recipes. They will be glad to share with you.

I have provided recipes for some of my personal favorites at the end of this lesson. Try them, then keep the ingredients for your favorites in your freezer or pantry. You’ll always have what you need to prepare a meal or desert on short notice. I have found each recipe to be quick-to-prepare, family-friendly, and tasty!

GREAT COOKBOOKS to consider getting at the library or purchasing.

- Gooseberry Patch has a number of wonderful recipe books, including: Five Ingredients or Less Cookbook, Speedy Suppers, Country Quick & Easy Cookbook, Meals in Minutes, and *many* more!
- Fix-it and Forget-it crock pot cookbook by Dawn J. Ranck – available at WalMart.
- Taste of Home magazines – Published every-other-month with lots of great recipes. Full color, no advertising. Has a regular “simple” feature. Other Taste of Home magazines: Quick Cooking, Simple & Delicious.
- Budget Suppers by Taste of Home (52 delicious, low-cost family pleasing meals).

WHEN MY TIME IS LIMITED, MY CROCK POT IS MY BEST FRIEND. Think ahead of what you will prepare for dinner and put it in the crock pot if you are going to have a busy day. I can put virtually any meat in my crock pot (even frozen), cover it with virtually any liquid (water, broth, cream soup, etc.), turn the crock pot on low for 8-10 hours or high for 4-5 and dinner will be almost done by dinner time. All that is left to do is quickly prepare a salad or vegetable, and dinner is ready. Or, I can REALLY save time and put the veggies in the crock pot, too!

~ HOUSEKEEPING ~

What is the biggest hindrance / obstacle you face in housecleaning? Clutter!

- **CLUTTER**, n: A heap or assemblage of things lying in confusion; a word of domestic application.
- My definition: Stacks and piles of STUFF.

FIRST STEP IN MAKING HOUSECLEANING EASIER: DE-CLUTTER

See the Sidetracked Home Executives book (Bibliography handout) for details on their method. This book was published years ago, but it is the one I personally have found most effective. In a nutshell, here is how it works: get three sturdy boxes or heavy trash bags, and label one “Throw Away”, another “Put Away”, and another “Give Away”. Start at one point in a room and begin working systematically around the room, going through every drawer, shelf, storage area and piece of furniture. Place all items in one of the three boxes or bags as appropriate. Leave displayed or stored in these areas only the things you have intentionally chosen to keep there.

Purpose to devote a certain amount of time, as you are able, to this project (30- or 60-minutes per day, or one day per week). When your time is up on a specific day, put the boxes away. Pull the boxes back out and begin where you left off the next time. Keep working at it until the entire room has been gone through, then move on to the next room or area to continue the de-cluttering process.

Don't get frustrated! Chances are it took a long time for things to get to where they are now; you most likely will not be able to de-clutter overnight. It is going to take awhile.

Begin this process with the room that people see first when coming into your home. If this area and your bathroom are presentable, you will feel better if someone stops by unexpectedly.

CHOOSE THE HOUSEKEEPING METHOD THAT WORKS BEST FOR YOU, regardless of what your mother used to do, or how your friends do *their* housework. Consider:

- When your energy level is the highest
- If weekends or weekdays are best for cleaning
- Whether attacking a project all at once or bit by bit works best for you
- If you can do everything yourself or if you need help (professional / teen)
- Whether certain rooms or areas need more work than others
- What you can do in the future to make all this housekeeping less time consuming

WHICH OF THESE WOULD BE BEST FOR YOU?

- “Top to Bottom and All the Way Around” – In each room, start at the door and inch your way around, beginning at the top and working your way down (remember, dust falls). First dust, then wash or polish, and finally do the floor. This method is exhausting, but if you can pull it off, go for it!
- “One Floor or Room at a Time” (The Rotation Plan) – Even small homes and apartments can be overwhelming. Try attacking one floor or room each week.
- “15- or 30- or 60- Minutes Daily” – With this method, you set aside a certain amount of time each day to devote to housework. Many chores can get done in 15 minutes or less when we set our minds to it. Fridges can be cleared and wiped down, laundry can be folded and put away, sheets can be changed, sinks and toilets can be scrubbed.

CONSIDER THE ROTATION PLAN FOR GENERAL HOUSECLEANING IF YOUR TIME FOR HOUSEWORK IS LIMITED. (This is my personal choice.) Don't feel you have to thoroughly clean the

entire house all at once. Once a week, clean the bathroom, then thoroughly clean one room and just “touch up” the rest of the rooms.

- Thoroughly = move and dust knick-knacks, scarves, doilies, small furniture, etc. and cleaning the floor wall to wall (either dust/wet mop or vacuum as appropriate). [approximately 1-2 hours]
- Touch Up = empty trash, spot clean and vacuum or dust mop traffic area of floor. Move on to the next room. [15-20 minutes]
- This is NOT Spring Cleaning = washing windows, walls, and cleaning out closets. That is a whole other topic for a whole other day.

For specific “how-to’s” or detailed instructions on the actual cleaning process, head to the library and check out the books I’ve listed for you in the bibliography handout.

SET A SCHEDULE FOR OVER-ALL HOME MAINTENANCE. Again, this is something you will need to personalize based upon your own preferences and the needs of your family.

- Daily: Tidy things in general; sweep the kitchen floor; wipe the bath and kitchen countertops; make the beds; load/unload the dishwasher.
- Weekly: Dust, vacuum/mop, clean the bathroom, change the sheets, change bath/kitchen towels.
- Monthly:
- Seasonally or Yearly:

MISCELLANEOUS TIPS / HELPS FOR HOUSECLEANING

- Do some “little” jobs every day ~ it only takes 21 days to develop a habit ~ cleaning day will be much easier.
- If you don’t already have a cordless phone, get one! There are lots of things you can do while you talk on the phone.
- Break down household duties into smaller pieces so they’re easier to digest.
- Develop a multi-task mindset wherever possible. Fold the laundry while making phone calls. Sort magazines or clean out a small drawer if you’re put on hold. Fix a hem during TV commercials while you watch the evening news. Empty the dishwasher while you wait for coffee to brew.
- Simplify cleaning methods by taking preventive action. It takes less time and effort to scrub a pot that’s soaked overnight. Sinks sparkle if they’re sponged off after every use. Drains stay clearer longer if hair is removed when it’s still in the sink, not down the drain.
- Delegate age-appropriate chores to family members. Be patient with them while they learn to do things well. Start young ones with simple jobs like picking up their own toys, and gradually give them others chores as they are able to accomplish them.
- Teach kids to hang up their clothes, clean spills immediately, and return things to their rightful place right away.
- Play the “15-minute Cleaning Game”. (Suggested by a busy mother of six.) Get everyone in the hallway outside the kids’ bedrooms. Set the timer for 15 minutes, say “start” and watch the workers fly. The kids have to do the following in just 15 minutes: Pick up dirty clothes and put them in the laundry hamper; pick up trash and put it in the wastebasket; make their beds; pick up any clean clothes, fold them, and put them away; and pick up toys and put them away. The winner of the “game” gets to pick the evening meal.
- The timer can work for adults, too. Set the timer for 10- or 15- minutes and work hard to accomplish as many “little” jobs as possible before the timer goes off. This is a good tip for just before you go to bed, or before leaving the house for the day. A general pick-up of the house, washing up a few dishes in the sink, or a quick cleaning of the bathroom will provide a better start for your next morning or for when you return back home.

WHAT IS TO BE OUR GOAL IN HOUSECLEANING?

Let's look at Titus 2:6 again, which says: "To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed."

Our first goal is that the Word of God be not blasphemed ~ that we not be a poor testimony to those around us.

But is there another goal to keep in mind? Romans 12:12 -13 says – "Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality."

I Peter 4:9 – "Use hospitality one to another without grudging."

As a Christian lady, I am to maintain my home properly "that the word of God be not blasphemed", and that I might be hospitable first to my own family, then to those about me.

If we fail in this area of homemaking, our homes will not be the restful haven for our loved ones they could be, nor will we be comfortable extending hospitality to others when unexpected opportunities arise.

Ask yourself: How much notice do you need to be comfortable in having someone over to your home? Must you have a full week's (or two week's or a month's) notice to prepare for guests? If someone stops by unexpectedly, can you invite them in without embarrassment?

~ CONCLUSION ~

REMEMBER ~ you are setting an example for the children who live in your home. They need to learn from you the skills they will need to care for their own families and homes in years to come.

Wouldn't you like to take better care of your family and home, save time, be more likely to extend hospitality to others, AND be more ministry-oriented? "Work smarter, not harder!"

~ QUICK, TASTY RECIPES ~

MOIST CHOCOLATE CAKE

1 c. flour 1 tsp. baking powder
1 c. sugar 1 tsp. baking soda
1 c. hot water 1 egg, beaten
½ c. cocoa ¼ c. margarine

Melt margarine in 8x8 pan while oven preheats to 350 degrees. Meanwhile, stir together remaining ingredients. Stir in melted margarine and mix well. Pour back into 8x8 pan and bake for 30-35 minutes. When cool, frost as desired. NOTE: Double for 9x13 pan. This is a delicious from-scratch, one-bowl cake!

BUTTERFINGER CAKE

12-16 oz. caramel ice cream topping
8 oz. tub Cool Whip
1 full size Butterfinger Bar, crushed into crumbs

Double the recipe for Moist Chocolate Cake (recipe above) and bake in a 9x13 pan. When the cake comes out of the oven, let it cool for ten minutes, then poke holes every 1 ½ to 2 inches or so through the cake using the handle of a wooden spoon. Pour caramel over cake and spread evenly with spatula over warm cake (topping will soak down into holes). Refrigerate cake once it is completely cool. Before serving, frost with Cool Whip, and sprinkle candy bar over top as a garnish.

DUMP CAKE

1 lg. can crushed pineapple
1 can cherry pie filling
1 yellow cake mix
1 stick margarine
nuts (optional)

“Dump” undrained can of crushed pineapple into 9x13 pan. Add pie filling. Stir gently to mix. Over top of fruit, spread dry yellow cake mix, then cut stick of margarine into pats and place evenly over top. Nuts may be added. Bake for 35-40 minutes, or until golden brown, at 350 degrees.

BUTTERSCOTCH SNACK CAKE

3-½ oz. package butterscotch pudding – cooked, not instant
2 c. milk
1 yellow cake mix
11 oz. package butterscotch chips
½ c. chopped nuts (optional)

Bring pudding and milk to a boil over medium heat. Stir in dry cake mix. Pour into greased 9x13 pan. Sprinkle with chips and nuts. Bake at 350 degrees for 35-40 minutes. NOTE: As a variation, you can make this chocolate by using chocolate pudding, chocolate cake mix, and chocolate chips. This recipe is very quick to make, and requires no frosting ~ makes a good snack or lunch box treat.

CHOCOLATE ÉCLAIR DESERT

2 sm. boxes instant vanilla pudding
2 cups cold milk
1 8 oz. tub Cool Whip
¾ pound graham crackers
1 container chocolate fudge icing

Prepare pudding according to package directions, but use only 2 cups milk. When thickened, fold in Cool Whip. Line bottom of 9x13 pan with whole graham crackers. Spread half the filling on graham crackers. Top with another layer of graham crackers. Place remaining filling on top. Add another layer of the crackers. Microwave frosting for 20 seconds. Stir and repeat until frosting is very spreadable. Gently frost top layer of graham crackers. Cover and refrigerate 12-24 hours before serving.

CHERRY JELLO SALAD

1 lg. box cherry jello
1 20 oz. can cherry pie filling
1 20 oz. can crushed pineapple

Mix dry jello with 3 cups boiling water and stir until completely dissolved. Stir in pie filling and undrained pineapple. Pour into 9x13 or other large serving dish. Chill until firm.

JACKIE'S CHICKEN

Layer in greased 2 quart casserole dish:

2 cups cooked, cubed chicken
16 oz. bag frozen broccoli, or other desired vegetable
Sliced cheese to cover entire 9x13 surface (American or cheddar is great)
1 can cream of mushroom soup, mixed with ¼ cup water, spread over all
Sprinkle with seasoned Stove Top Stuffing mix (dry)

Cover and bake at 350 degrees for 30-40 minutes, or until hot and bubbly.

SAUCY CHICKEN (OR PORK CHOPS)

5-6 chicken breast halves (I use boneless, skinless) OR 6-8 pork chops
1 can cream of mushroom soup
¼ cup catsup
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce

Mix soup, catsup and Worcestershire sauce in bowl. Place half of meat in greased crock pot. Pour half of sauce over meat. Place remaining meat in crock pot, top with remaining sauce. Cook on high for 4-6 hours, or low for 8-10. Delicious when sauce is served as a gravy over rice or noodles. If desired, sauce recipe can be doubled for extra gravy. NOTE: This is great to use when you are feeding a crowd. Multiply as needed, and cook in a large electric roaster. (Gordon's Food Service sells 40 oz. cans of cream soups.)

BUTTERMILK CHICKEN

Place your choice of chicken pieces in a Ziploc freezer bag. Pour 2-3 cups of buttermilk over chicken, and let marinate for 30 minutes or longer, according to your own schedule. (Can also be done overnight in refrigerator). Remove chicken, one piece at a time, from buttermilk and roll in dry bread crumbs until well covered. Place on greased cookie sheet. Bake at 400 degrees for 15-20 minutes for legs or tenders, a little longer for other pieces. Chicken should no longer be pink when cut.

CHEESY CHICKEN & RICE CASSEROLE

1 can cream of chicken soup
1 1/3 cups water
3/4 cup uncooked long-grain white rice
2 cups fresh or frozen vegetables
1/2 tsp. onion powder (OR 1/2 cup chopped onion)
4 skinless, boneless chicken breast halves
1/2 cup shredded cheddar cheese

Stir the soup, water, rice, vegetables and onion powder (OR onion) together and pour into a 8x12 shallow baking dish. Top with chicken. Cover. Bake at 375 degrees for 45 minutes or until done. Top with cheese. Place back in oven only until melted. Makes 4 servings. NOTE: This is a great meal to prepare to take to someone who is feeling "under the weather". Bag "To Go" by placing the first five ingredients in a gallon-size Ziploc bag, zip tightly, and mash until mixture is well mixed. Bag into two separate bags the chicken breasts and cheese. Place all in a 8x12 disposable pan, and deliver along with assembly and baking instructions. This requires little clean-up on your end, and little clean-up on the receiving end. Plus, no worries about getting your pan back!

STUFFED PEPPER SOUP

2 lb. ground meat, browned and drained (try part Italian sausage?)
2 - 28 oz. cans crushed tomatoes
28 oz. tomato sauce
1 onion, chopped
2 cups green pepper, chopped
1 1/2 cups rice, uncooked
3 cups water
2 beef boullion cubes
1/4 cup brown sugar
1 tsp. Lawrey's seasoned salt
1/2 tsp. pepper

Combine all ingredients, bring to a boil and simmer until rice is cooked ~ about 30 minutes. When serving, top individual bowls with shredded mozzarella cheese.

MARINATED KIELBASA

1 pound kielbasa (or turkey kielbasa)
½ cup catsup
½ cup chili sauce
2 tablespoons brown sugar
1 small onion, chopped

Slice kielbasa into “coins.” Place into casserole dish. Stir together remaining ingredients. Pour over kielbasa and stir to coat. This can be cooked a number of ways, depending on the time you have: heat in the microwave until heated through; heat in the oven, covered, at 350 degrees for 35-45 minutes, or until heated through; OR place in your crock pot and cook on low for 6-8 hours, OR high for 2-3. This dish is very versatile ~ serve with a baked potato for a quick, tasty meal, OR serve with toothpicks as an appetizer.

SUPER SIMPLE SCALLOPED POTATOES AND HAM

1 (24-oz.) pkg. frozen shredded hashbrown potatoes
1/2 cup chopped onions
2 cups cubed ham
1 can condensed cream of mushroom soup
1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese
1/2 cup shredded Swiss cheese

Heat oven to 350°F. Combine hashbrowns, ham, onions and soup in 2-quart casserole. Sprinkle top with cheese. Bake at 350°F. for 30 minutes or until heated through.

FREE Bible Study Courses, FREE Ministry Helps and FREE Practical Helps Available at www.kjvhearthehelps.com

~ RESOURCES ~

Aslett, Don. Is There Life After Housework? Writers Digest Books.

Barnes, Emilie. The Creative Home Organizer. Harvest House.

Barnes, Emilie. Survival For Busy Women. Harvest House.

Brace, Pam, and Jones, Peggy. Sidetracked Home Executives, From Pigpen to Paradise. Binford and Mort.

Campbell, Jeff. Speed Cleaning. Dell Publishing Company.

Christian, Vicki. How to Clean Your Home Fast. Meredith Publishing Group.

Cobb, Linda. The Queen of Clean Conquers Clutter.

Felton, Sandra. The Messies Manual - The Procrastinator's Guide To Good Housekeeping. Fleming H. Revell Company.

Winston, Stephanie. Getting Organized. Warner Books.

GREAT COOKBOOKS to consider getting at the library or purchasing:

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