

WHATEVER *happened* TO DINNER?

Recipes and Reflections for Family Mealtime

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Melodie M. Davis
with Jodi Nisly Hertzler and Carmen Wyse



Part of the Third Way Collection

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Herald Press

Scottsdale, Pennsylvania
Waterloo, Ontario

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Introduction: Whatever Happened to Dinner?

I felt like a visitor from another planet.

A few years back, I spoke in a high-school home-living class and asked the kids who did the cooking in their homes. The answers I got were: “It’s every man for himself.” “Everyone fixes what they want.” “I pick up a sandwich every night. Fast food or whatever.”

On one hand, I wanted to applaud their independence: these kids had seemingly achieved what I tried to teach my own kids—how to take care of themselves. On the other hand, I was aghast: Who is raising these kids? Whatever happened to dinner? At our Davis household, we usually had dinner together every night except Sunday, which we called “grab it and growl” night. What happens when the norm is “grab it and growl” and the family sits down together only for special occasions?

Whatever happened to the idea that even if you don’t sit down together, someone makes some food, keeps it warm on the stove, and people try to make some stab at connecting with each other? What happens (I hate to think) to *nutritious* eating in the everyone-fixes-for-themselves scenario? One boy claimed to have been more or less taking care of himself before and after school since he was five years old, with an older brother occasionally looking in.

To use a business and academic cliché, there has been a paradigm shift from my home life to the current reality for many

of today's kids. *Paradigm shift* is the hundred-dollar phrase we employ to simply say, "Things have changed."

I am of a generation when the family evening meal was a special time. I still operate from the ideal that even though Mom and Dad are working, families should have a gathered time at the end of the day with some kind of meal on the table. If Mom doesn't cook it, then Dad does or the children do. Sometimes it's pancakes and eggs for supper at our house. Other times it's a take-home pizza. On a good day it's fried chicken, mashed potatoes, gravy, and green beans. When our kids were teenagers learning to cook, they made spaghetti or tacos.

Many teens have jobs after school and extracurricular activities. According to the teacher who invited me to that high-school class, one of her students worked forty-five hours a week in addition to going to high school full time. When parents work a 3-11 shift or have to work overtime until 7 or 8 at night, a fifties-style meal with Dad at the head of the table carving roast beef isn't going to happen. With after-school sports and evening meetings, even a wild stab at having an actual supper together may be a stretch. But our family still tried. Why?

I think that eating together is one of the simple, basic structures of civilized life. Single people often hate having to eat alone. Unlike cats and dogs, who don't want you bothering them while they eat, most of us want companionship to be a part of our mealtimes. Sharing food, passing it, waiting on each other, talking about what happened at school or work helps us rise above the level of the dog or cat.

The answer is not to hearken back to the good old days that may have been more old than good. I do remember many fractured mealtimes as a family when I was growing up: Dad working late in the field; Mom growing frantic and pacing as she kept supper warm until 11:00 p.m. during long May planting days; staggered mealtimes because I or my sisters had basketball practice; Mom and Dad going away to a church or business banquet or meeting and we kids eating alone; meals when someone was sore at another member of the family and the only conversation was spoons and knives clinking angrily on plates.

But the norm, what we aimed for—the centering point for busy lives and schedules—was a meal together anytime between 4:45 and 7:00 p.m. And what I remember now about those mealtimes, even if they weren't all pleasant or perfect, was sitting around the kitchen table after a meal, telling stories and laughing. I remember making Chef Boyardee pizzas when Mom and Dad had to go to a banquet or dinner meeting. I recall the fun of packing a picnic supper of fried egg sandwiches to carry to Dad if he had to work really late in the field.

So even if you can't have a meal with your household every evening; even if it has to be eaten sometimes on the run; even if you have to pack an impromptu picnic and carry it to the office to eat with your accountant spouse during tax time—having some time gathered as a family is part of what family life is all about. If we raise our children without that glue, why bother to live in families at all? Why not each live in a doghouse or a pigpen?

I'm grateful for the work that the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University has done on the importance of providing a nurturing environment for children. A 2009 CASA study found that, compared to teens who have frequent family dinners (five or more times per week), those who have infrequent family dinners (fewer than three per week) are twice as likely to use tobacco or marijuana, and twice as likely to expect to try drugs in the future.¹

What are children getting when they sit down to a meal, besides the meat and potatoes—or salad and stir-fry? On a good day at a family meal, children of any age get attention that leads to parents and kids who are more involved with each other's lives. Children get useful practice in the art of dinner conversation (we hope). They get times of laughter and downright silliness; I remember especially how we three girls would collapse in laughter sometimes to the point of tears. It can be a precious family bonding time.

Dinner may also be the only time the family gathers to pray and ask a blessing. Somehow that simple daily act—especially if you've been arguing or grouchy right before—forces families to change gears and perhaps find peace amid the daily troubles.

These intangible gifts go a long way toward giving kids the glue they need to grow up with the ability to navigate the negative pressures they face in our society.

The loss of family dinnertime is one of the more unfortunate losses of our age—and we can probably blame it on good old Henry Ford and his invention: the automobile. It has helped all of us be more mobile and less likely to stay home. During the 1990s and the decade after that, U.S. workers were clocking more hours on the job than any other industrialized country. At that time, almost one-third of workers regularly clocked more than the standard forty-hour week. One-fifth worked more than fifty hours.²

In contrast to past times, when many worked out of or near their homes in cottage industries or farms, the car and mass transit have enabled most of us to work an average of 24.3 minutes away (driving). In the United States, if the average vacation from work is two weeks, Americans spend more time commuting than they do on vacation; the average commuting time is more than 100 hours a year—if you're lucky. Many commute an hour or more a *day*.³

As I have watched these numbers and written on this topic in my newspaper column during the last ten years, there has been a slight increase in the number of families eating together, especially during the last two years of the global recession (2008–2010). In 2009, 59 percent of youth in the CASA study reported having dinner with their families at least five times a week. Parents report a similar count, with 62 percent of parents saying they have frequent family dinners.⁴ These trends might be a sign of hope that families are getting the message regarding the importance of family mealtime. But it could also be an anomaly due to the recession: when one or both parents are out of work and at home, they may be able to cook more. Could we speculate, then, that our affluence is one of the factors that has contributed to long-term mealtime trends of the last forty years?

Longer working hours and commutes are only part of the problem. Overscheduled kids are another huge part. Between soccer practice, ballet lessons, swimming, and piano, family dinners get short shrift. And once kids turn fifteen or sixteen,

many also hold down part-time jobs, cutting further into family mealtime. Also, about two-thirds (64 percent) of all families with children between eight and eighteen have the television set on during meals.⁵ Studies also track distractions like texting and status updates on social media during mealtimes. These don't help family conversation either.

As we talk about the loss of family dinnertime, it is appropriate to ask, when did it ever become a tradition to begin with? And how can we recover such a valuable gathering time, given today's family schedules? We'll explore these questions more in the rest of this book.



Probably the most famous meal in the Bible was the one shared by Jesus with his disciples right before his arrest and crucifixion. We call it the Last Supper, and Christians reenact it as often as once a day in some traditions, once a week, once a month, or once or twice a year. Many famous paintings depict it.

Jesus' last meal with his friends was a ritual meal: the Jewish Passover commemorating the children of Israel's miraculous escape from Egypt in the time of Moses (see Exodus 12). If ever there was a meal on the run, it was that meal, with people fleeing not only for their own lives, but also for the freedom of their whole nation. Verse 11 describes the directions given them: "This is how you are to eat it: with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your [car keys] in your hand. Eat it in haste; it is the LORD's Passover."

The meal and food instructions in Exodus 12 make a fascinating study—especially the notes about the Israelites carrying out large kneading troughs of unleavened bread dough wrapped in cloth because "they did not have time to prepare food for themselves." That image reminds me of one of the *Shaping Families* radio speakers, Rebecca Thatcher Murcia, who told about a time she had neglected to make anything for the Easter potluck brunch at her church. She simply carried cinnamon roll dough



Even Cave Kids Knew What Dinner Was

I want to dig into history a little. If we think gathering as a family for mealtime is so important, where do we get this idea? From fifties television shows? Our memories of earlier eras? How far back does mealtime go? Did cave kids know what dinner was? What does history and archaeology show?

We'll look at just a few snippets of food history to get a sense of how mealtime has evolved: others have gone into much more detail, including Martha Visser in her delightfully titled work *Much Depends on Dinner: The Extraordinary History and Mythology, Allure and Obsessions, Perils and Taboos of an Ordinary Meal* (Grove Press, 1999).

The earliest peoples were “gatherers” of whatever they could find—and maybe ate on the run. At first they ate fruits, mushrooms, nuts, roots, and seeds, and eventually they learned to hunt for meat. Before humans learned how to make fire, they probably roasted some meats over fires that started in nature. But once they learned how to make pots for boiling and cooking stews,¹ their menus began to expand. As some of these early discoveries were made, gathering around a fire at the end of the day or at the conclusion of a hunt was standard practice, indicating that eating together has long been a foundational social experience among humans.

Moving forward in time, research of Pacific Northwest coastal peoples from about two thousand years ago reveals that they probably ate two meals a day.² Having access to bountiful catches from the ocean meant they had to do less hunting and gathering than those in other locations. The first meal was served around ten in the morning, after the morning work. The next meal was served around sundown. The men would sit down first, on a mat. Before coming to the low table, they had to wash their hands and face, twice. They dried themselves with softened cedar bark that acted as towels. They would also take a long drink from the drinking bucket. It was not considered good manners to drink at the table.

Courses were served on wooden platters. These platters were about a foot and half long and were ornately carved from cedar. Places were hollowed out to hold various foods. There was even a hollowed-out spot to hold fish oil, for food dunking. They used spoons to eat, carved from bone or shell.

Once the men were served, the women would join them on the mats. The family talked to each other during meals. It was a social time, a time to relax before returning to work. They often invited people from outside their family to meals.

The concept of family itself is interesting to look at through the ages. One place we can get information is the Bible. In Genesis, all members of a household were included in the designation of “family,” including concubines (live-in mistresses), servants, slaves, visitors, and prisoners of war if necessary. There was polygamy, and that made the family unit even more complicated.

Family could also refer to the entire clan or tribe. So a household could literally encompass an entire nation. In Ezra 8, some families returning from exile in Babylon had several hundred members. Members of a clan accepted communal responsibility for other members, including assistance in time of need, protection, sharing work, loyalty.

Sacrifices in the temple in the Old Testament were actually meals—carefully prescribed and ritualistic. The manna meals sent by God in the wilderness suggest that mealtime was morning and evening. In Exodus 16 we read that the children of Israel had quail to eat in the evening and manna in the morning.

Research shows that ordinary Romans in the time just prior to Christ dined simply. Meals were prepared by the mother or by female slaves under her direction. A table was set up in the atrium of the house. The father, mother, and children sat on stools around the table. Often the kids waited on their parents. Table knives and forks were unknown, but the Romans had spoons like ours today. Food was cut into finger food before serving, and eaten using fingers or a spoon. In the last two centuries of the Roman Empire, this simple style of living changed a bit. A separate dining room was designed. In place of benches or stools, there were dining couches.

Upper-class Romans had dinners that were quite elaborate. The men had the dinner parties; rules of decency required that women and children ate separately. They ate many different foods, drank lots of wine, and spent hours at dinner. Often the men's dinner parties had entertainment, such as dancing girls or a play, or both. Men reclined on couches arranged around the dinner table. In their separate dining quarters, women and children usually sat on chairs. As things loosened up in the later years of the empire, decent women could go to a dinner party.³

As families became smaller, as they certainly were by New Testament times, and as people began to define family as a mother, father, and children, there was less feeling of responsibility for others. That is why, perhaps, we see reminders in the New Testament concerning obligations toward widows and orphans. The upside was that feuds between families also diminished as this sense of communal responsibility lessened.

We can guess that meals were important for the family in Bible times. In the previous chapter we saw how Jesus drew his disciples together one last time for a meal together. The Passover meal functioned as a meal of remembrance with religious significance, but it was nevertheless an important "family" time together.

In the movie version of the Broadway musical *Fiddler on the Roof*, set in Russia prior to World War II, one of the most moving and vivid scenes is the family participating in a Passover meal. Family members scurry to make it to the table by sundown. Who says earlier generations really had more time or were less

stressed? The mother—plain, down-to-earth Golde—reigns like a bride with partial veil at the meal, even in that patriarchal system. Children ask the ritual questions. The mundane and even impoverished home takes on an atmosphere of a beautiful, earthy, still-life painting. The profane, ordinary food is transformed into sacred fare. The routine of eating is transformed into holy communion with God.

All cultures and societies have rituals or celebrations involving food or feast days: weddings, funerals, birthdays, coronations. We will indeed have lost something precious, ancient, and “civilized” if we lose the art of having a decent meal together. Food gives us life, and mealtime gives one form of community.

James Krabill, Mennonite Mission Network vice president for Global Ministries, points out that “in stark contrast to the North American pattern, most people living elsewhere in the world devote considerable time and energy to meal-making and taking. And they rarely do it alone, in isolation from others.” He quotes Kenyan priest and anthropologist John Mutiso-Mbinda, saying that in the African context “a meal is always a communal affair.” “Eating together is a sign of being accepted to share life and equality.”⁴

Someone has pointed out that meals prepared and served to a group of people or family take on a certain ritual quality: food is prepared, the table is set, people are called to the table, grace or prayers are said, the food is passed. Rituals like this bring people together in common, routine experiences that can be a calming balm after a busy day. Eating food together is a bonding experience that can ease tension, make conversation go easier, make strangers less self-conscious. Mealtime may be one of the oldest rituals known to humans.

In contrast, the automobile, which has been around only one hundred years and launched our mobile society, brought about the growth of restaurants and fast-food chains and prepared, packaged foods. The car has led to more and more people just grabbing dinner on the run.

Our modern industrial and information ages, as opposed to agricultural times when people stopped working at sun-

down, mean families have members working at all hours of the day and night. There is no time for dinner.

And who says cave kids were uncivilized? Maybe it is *our* kids who are uncivilized, eating from a box, with their hands, shoveling food into their mouths in front of the television. Or maybe we parents are too.



Bread is a staple from ancient times and from around the world, in all its different forms: from manna to pita to nan to tortilla to rye loaves to heavy German black bread. It is often the “staff of life” for fledgling eaters.

When I was a child, like many children I didn’t have wide-ranging tastes, so I focused on bread. I remember going to homes of people who had worked in overseas settings, and they frequently served exotic dishes that were definitely different from my Menonite mother’s plain meat-and-potatoes-and-beans-corn-or-peas cooking. So I would always look for the bread, whatever it was, and fill up on that after trying the requisite three bites. I never starved, and I later learned to fully enjoy foods from around the world. So don’t worry if you have young ones who fill up on bread, as long as they at least try new foods. It takes time for a tongue to learn to like certain foods.

Bread is a staple in the Bible, too, and allusions to yeast are frequent. As Jesus spoke in parables, which were stories that often contained hidden messages that his enemies would have trouble deciphering or using to condemn him, one of his simple parables was no more than a “tweet”: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough” (Matthew 13:33). That’s it. That’s the whole parable. The kingdom of heaven, or God’s reign, has good yeast spread throughout that affects every spore or aspect of our lives. Once unloosed, the yeast affects the whole mass of bread dough, raising it into something good and life giving and oh so tasty.

In the wrong environment, of course, yeast can lose its power. It is the same with followers of Jesus. Ideally, the yeast of the kingdom of heaven gets spread throughout our lives, and as our lives touch others, we spread that good and wholesome message.

My late father-in-law, Hershal Davis, would frequently begin a meal with us by saying after the blessing, "Take bread and eat." It was his way of saying "dig in." I still love that simple blessing, which emphasizes the universality of a basic piece of bread.

As you enjoy bread in its different forms, think about how it joins you with ancient peoples and across cultures. Remember also the yeast of God's kingdom, and help it spread to those around you.



Doreen's Oatmeal Bread

Melodie Davis

This comes "more or less" from More-with-Less Cookbook, the classic Mennonite cookbook that came out the year my husband and I were married. My copy is missing its cover and spattered with oil and flour. In our version, we use a little more flour than that recipe called for, and we always use two packages of yeast rather than one.

Combine in large bowl:

1 cup / 250 ml quick oats

½ cup / 125 ml whole wheat flour

½ cup / 125 ml brown sugar

1 tablespoon salt

2 tablespoons butter or margarine

Pour 2 cups / 500 ml boiling water over mixture in bowl.

Separately dissolve:

2 packages dry yeast in

½ cup / 125 ml warm water

When batter is cooled to lukewarm, add the yeast mixture. Stir in 5½ cups / 1.4 L white flour (you'll probably add another ½ cup / 125 ml in kneading).

When dough is stiff, turn onto a floured board and knead 5–10 minutes.

Place in greased bowl, cover, and let rise until doubled. Punch down and let rise again. Shape into 2 loaves and place in greased 9x5x3-inch pans. Bake at 350° F / 180° C for 25–30 minutes. Cool on rack. Brush loaves with butter or margarine for a soft crust.

Suggestions: For a little added nutrition, substitute some or all whole wheat flour for the white flour. If you substitute more than half, the bread will have a denser texture, and you may need less flour, but the result is still tasty.

Whole Wheat Rolls

Burton Buller

When Aunt Jean's turn came to host family feasts, we kids looked forward to the whole wheat buns she would always serve. They were so light, so soft, and so delicious. Only much later did I discover they were made with cottage cheese. Had I known that then, I likely would not have even tried them, and I would have denied myself a treat. Now they are fun to make and serve. And when I'm adding the cottage cheese, Aunt Jean always comes to mind, bringing memories of wonderful Thanksgivings around her large table.

2 cups / 500 ml whole wheat flour

1½ cup / 375 ml white flour

2 packages yeast

½ teaspoon soda

1½ cup / 375 ml cream-style (4% milk fat) cottage cheese

¼ cup / 50 ml brown sugar

½ cup / 125 ml margarine or butter

1 tablespoon salt

2 eggs

½ cup / 125 ml water

Stir together 2 cups / 500 ml whole wheat flour, yeast, and soda in the bowl of a heavy-duty mixer. Set aside.

Heat cottage cheese, water, sugar, margarine or butter, and salt until warm. Stir to melt the butter or margarine. Add to dry mixture, and mix until combined. Add eggs. Beat with a dough hook (a paddle attachment works too) at low-medium speed. Gradually add remaining wheat flour and all white flour to make a moderately stiff dough (you may need to let the mixer run for a while, until the dough is no longer sticky).

Turn dough onto a floured surface and knead a minute or two until

smooth and elastic. Place dough in a greased bowl, turning once. Cover and let rise until double in size. Shape into 24 balls (flatten to shape into buns). Let rise until double again.

Bake at 350° F / 180° C for 12–15 minutes, until golden brown.

Suggestions: These make excellent hamburger or sandwich buns, soft and light. Consider serving them with the Bean Burgers (recipe in chapter 6) or the Parmesan Chicken Burgers (chapter 3).

Morning Glory Muffins

Burton Buller

1 cup / 250 ml grated carrots

⅓ cup / 75 ml grated apple

¼ cup / 50 ml raisins

¼ cup / 50 ml walnuts

¼ cup / 50 ml coconut

1 teaspoon cinnamon

1 egg

⅓ cup / 75 ml canola oil

1 teaspoon vanilla

2 cups / 500 ml flour

½ cup / 125 ml sugar

1 teaspoon soda

¼ teaspoon salt

Preheat oven to 350° F / 180° C. Combine all ingredients, and mix. Spoon batter into muffin pans. Bake for 20 minutes. Makes 1 dozen.

Suggestions: For a healthier version, substitute unsweetened applesauce for the oil, and replace up to half the flour with whole wheat.

Tortillas

Carmen Wyse

On one camping trip, I tried making breakfast tacos out of store-bought tortillas. They were crumbly and weren't working well. A camping companion said she always makes her own tortillas. I figured if she could, I could too, and I have been making them ever since. I usually make a double batch and keep the leftovers for snacks throughout the week. I can always count on a big hug from my twelve-year-old son when he sees me starting to make these.

3 cups / 750 ml flour (I use up to 1 cup whole wheat)

1 teaspoon salt

½–1 teaspoon baking powder

⅓ cup / 75 ml vegetable oil

1 cup / 250 ml warm water

Mix the dry ingredients together. Add the vegetable oil, and mix with pastry cutter or forks until crumbly like cornmeal. Add 1 cup warm water. Knead a bit to bring it together, cover with plastic wrap, and let it sit for 30 minutes to several hours. Form into 12 balls.

Heat a cast-iron (or whatever you have) skillet to medium high. Roll each tortilla out as thin as you can, and plop it in the hot skillet. When it starts blistering, turn it over for about 30 seconds. Sometimes I hold the edges down some to keep the tortilla from puffing up. Put it in a tortilla warmer or under several kitchen towels.

Cornmeal Whole Wheat Waffles

Jodi Nisly Hertzler

These may be the tastiest waffles I've ever made, and I love the fact that they use whole grains. This is also an easy recipe that you mix the night before. In the morning, all you have to do is whip out the waffle iron, and in minutes, everyone in the family is happy. Freeze leftovers (but put a paper towel or napkin between them so they don't stick together), and pop them in the toaster for an easy school-day breakfast.

2 eggs, beaten

2 cups / 500 ml milk (or substitute half or all buttermilk)

$\frac{2}{3}$ cup / 150 ml yellow cornmeal

$1\frac{1}{3}$ cup / 325 ml whole wheat flour

$2\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoons yeast

1 teaspoon sugar

$1\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons salt

1 stick butter, melted and cooled a little

$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon baking soda

In a mixing bowl, whisk together the eggs and milk. Add the flour, cornmeal, yeast, sugar, and salt. Stir in the melted butter.

Cover the bowl and refrigerate overnight (or make them in the morning and serve them for supper).

When ready to serve, heat up the waffle iron. Add the baking soda, and whisk well. (The batter is runnier than most recipes I've used, and doesn't rise as much in the waffle iron, resulting in waffles that are less bready and more on the crispy side.) Cook according to your waffle iron's instructions.

Cranberry Orange Bread

Carmen Wyse

*I asked a coworker for this recipe after she brought it to a work potluck.
It is moist and tasty.*

½ package fresh cranberries, chopped

½ cup / 125 ml chopped nuts (optional)

1 tablespoon orange zest

1 cup / 250 ml flour

1 cup / 250 ml 100% bran cereal

1 cup / 250 ml sugar

1½ teaspoon baking powder

1 teaspoon salt

½ teaspoon soda

2 tablespoons butter

¾ cup / 175 ml orange juice

1 egg, beaten

Preheat oven to 350° F / 180° C. Grease and flour 1 loaf pan.

Mix cereal and orange juice, and let stand 5 minutes.

Mix flour, sugar, baking powder, salt, and soda. Make a well in the dry ingredients. Melt butter and add along with orange juice mixture, egg, and orange zest. Stir just to moisten. Fold in cranberries and nuts. Spoon into prepared loaf pan and bake 1 hour or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool 15 minutes and then remove from pan. Cool completely.

Quick Honey Wheat Bread

Jodi Nisly Hertzler

This is an excellent finishing touch to a soup meal. Five minutes of work, an hour in the oven while you get the rest of your meal together, and you have warm, fresh bread ready for the table.

2 cups / 500 ml wheat flour

1 cup / 250 ml white flour

1 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon baking soda

1 $\frac{2}{3}$ cup / 400 ml buttermilk or plain yogurt

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup / 125 ml honey

1 egg

Preheat oven to 325° F / 160° C. Grease an 8x4- or 9x5-inch loaf pan.

Mix the dry ingredients together. In a separate bowl, mix the wet ingredients. Stir the liquid into the dry ingredients, then pour into the loaf pan.

Bake about an hour, until the loaf is firm and a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean. Cool on a rack for 15 minutes before removing from the pan. Can be served warm or room temperature.

WHATEVER *happened* TO DINNER?

Whatever Happened to Dinner? invites families to eat together, even as it acknowledges the challenges of living in a culture that often pulls us apart. Author **Melodie M. Davis** examines the role food and mealtime play in the family and reminds readers of how God gave us the good gift of food, way back before Eve. In every chapter you will find illustrations and stories related to food and eating from the Bible.

Whatever Happened to Dinner? is part cookbook, part reflection on the changing role of dinner, part celebration of family and community connections, part realistic acceptance of how things are, and part practical handles for how to cope—if not a daily meal together at least as often as possible!

“As a man who loves food and loves his family, I will tell you that in this day and age, dinnertime is about the only time families can spend together to make their conversations meaningful.”

—**Dr. Kevin Leman**, author of *Have a New Kid by Friday*

“*Whatever Happened to Dinner?* will be a great help and comfort to parents who are looking to make their family mealtimes more satisfying, more regular, more meaningful, more tasty. Melodie Davis presents the case for family meals in a compelling and engaging way. Personal reflections, practical advice, tempting recipes, and biblical stories are blended together to make a delicious whole.”

—**Miriam Weinstein**, author of *The Surprising Power of Family Meals*

\$12.99 USD/\$14.99 CAD

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