

Our Kitchen is Closed Today

Long ago I lost count of the number of times we bumped into some friends in a restaurant and my lady chuckled while telling them, “Our kitchen is closed today.” But now, during this virus shutdown, it’s the café owners and not the customers who are saying that.

Until the virus restrictions forced them to lock their dining room doors, I didn’t realize how often we slipped off to some nearby eating establishment to get our daily nutrition. We ate out at least once a day every day. Now that we can’t get into any of them, I am finding out how much I enjoyed my frequent visits to McDonalds or Taco Villa or The Bagel Shop or IHOP.

Now that we’re forced to dine at home, I miss eating out. Maybe more than I miss their cuisine, I miss the people we often saw there—both fellow customers and regular staff. Several of the ladies at “my” McDonalds know me so well that they often handed me my breakfast order before I spoke a single word to them.

Not being able to join family and friends for breakfast or lunch or dinner, I suddenly realize how much of our regular socializing was done while were breaking bread at Dairy Queen or Hoffbrau or Cheddars. Because of the virus, I’m not hungry. I’m lonely.

Don’t get me wrong. My wife is a talented cook who constantly amazes me with her ability to plan our menus for multiple days ahead and to prepare tasty meals every few hours every day. She makes it look easy, and I never hear her complain about her kitchen workload. But her cooking tasks have quadrupled since the virus made it impossible for us to eat out. And our social life has been almost wiped out. Talking to a buddy on a cell phone is just not the same as chatting with each other while sharing coffee or french fries at the same table.

At the end of Acts 1, the first description of the early church tells us that those brand new believers met together every day not just to pray together but also to break bread. Current virus protocols are keeping us from doing that. When this crisis is over and the doors of our favorite restaurants are open again, we need to remember to thank the Lord every time we get to walk through them.