

About This Book

Healthy families are the bedrock of a thriving society. God knows that, and we would be wise to remember it. This devotional invites families back to the table of discipleship. Through mealtime conversations and gathering in the kitchen, you will embark on a journey of creating a foundation in God's Word with your family. Whether your children are still toddlers, or teens, or a mix of all ages, The Everyday Banquet will be a treasured guide as you navigate traditional church holidays, intermingled with an understanding of our Jewish Savior, Jesus. Once each week, you will use this devotional to gather some basic supplies and invite your entire family to dine and worship God together.

Family meals are a time investment, but The Everyday Banquet calls us out of our busyness, because children—and even adults—desperately need a space to step away from the hustle and bustle to focus on being anchored in God's Word.

The Everyday Banquet: A Seasonal Devotional for Creating Rhythms of Family Worship

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To Isabelle, Wendy, and Doris—the mothers who knew me, welcomed me, and taught me unmerited and embracing love. A love particularly found when we gather our families at the table of God's children and feast together.

Also to my sons, who have gathered around our table as a rowdy clan, bringing purpose and great joy to our ordinary days.

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The Everyday Banquet

Foreword

I n the hustle of our modern lives, where the time with our children is speeding away like a bullet train, it is easy to be inconsistent about the anchors that shape a family. Amid the chaos of technology and the demands of caring for our families, we overlook the simple joys that come from setting aside time to celebrate with our children. This book serves as a gentle guide, beckoning us to slow down and embrace the magic of seasonal celebrations, of pausing each week to celebrate God's Word as a family.

Within these pages, you will find a treasure trove of traditions, biblical wisdom, and recipes that have the power to nurture connection within the home. From the blossoming of spring to the golden days of summer, from the autumn harvests to the serene introspection of winter, each season presents us with an opportunity to delve into timeless and comforting rhythms, and SarahRuth Owens is a warm and welcoming guide to creating a table where our children can gather to "taste and see that the LORD is good" (Psalm 34:8).

Drawing from the wisdom of the Bible and from the time-tested family gatherings that devoted families have been keeping for millennia, these celebrations offer a roadmap to cultivating a sense of togetherness, fostering deeper understanding, and nurturing the bonds that make a family a sanctuary of love and belonging. God calls us to "[s]tand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls" (Jeremiah 6:16 ESV), and SarahRuth is a trustworthy guide to discovering some of these ancient paths as we gather around the table.

May these pages inspire you to create cherished memories with your children as you gather to savor biblical holidays and seasonal celebrations. In these seasonal Sabbath celebrations, we honor and delight in our beautiful Lord.

-Jennifer Pepito, Author of *Mothering By The Book: The Power* of *Reading Aloud to Overcome Fear and Recapture Joy* and Founder of The Peaceful Press The Everyday Banquet

A Note from the Author

Use three boys were born in less than four years. As our family grew, both my husband and I knew we wanted to be sure we did more to build their faith than simply going to church weekly. We recognized early on that church attendance is vital, but so is discipleship in our home. So I wrangled babies at the table and watched my toddler spill his drink directly onto his brother over and over again as we established mealtimes as a family.

I began to curate playlists and played them during our meals. They included worship music, fun ditties that helped our sons memorize Scripture, and instrumental, classical pieces that I desperately hoped would calm our rambunctious boy crew. For years, I felt as though I was barely treading water each mealtime, but I kept trekking through. I offered these moments to God and asked him to bless my frail attempts at bringing us into the long line of families that do life together for his glory.

Then we hit our stride. I can't tell you exactly when it was, but one evening I looked around the table and took a bite of food that wasn't cold! Everyone was actually in their own seat and I heard laughter and conversation. It only lasted a few minutes, but it was enough for me to realize we had arrived somewhere new. Our family table was becoming a place of important moments. While we still had our share of little boys bouncing up and down, chairs scraping the floor, and bodily functions I found nowhere near appropriate for company, we also were smiling at each other and talking about our Lord! This is the story of our everyday banquet. It's a story still being written. Some evenings I am worn out and tired, and my husband is too. However, we realize that these mealtimes are something sacred, and God is doing a work in all of us as we gather around our dining room table. In writing this devotional, I shared our own methods and rhythms with the hope that it is something that will bless other families too.

For years, I have been asked how. How do we get our children to sit and talk about God? How do we disciple them when life seemingly flies by at breakneck speed? The everyday banquet is our how. This is the space we have carved out that stills our own hearts and breathes life into our little family. The Everyday Banquet is an invitation for your family to begin doing the same! Come to the table, friend, and bring your family with you as you create rhythms of family worship together.

Sarah Ruch Owens

The Everyday Banquet

Introduction

I t smelled like home. Apples mingled in the air with the earthy scent of rosemary and roasted lamb. My grandmother busied herself at the stove, and as I walked in, my eight-year-old heart was wide open. I was ready to listen, to learn, and to laugh. See, this is the table I was welcomed at as a child: a table filled with family recipes that nourished my body, conversation and affection that nourished my soul, and our Jewish culture that nourished my spirit.

As I grew, that table came to my memory time and again. When I felt rejected and without a place to belong, it was the memory of that table that reminded me I did have a place of belonging. My grandmother had been dead for ten years as I slept in my car and recalled that table and her faith, a faith that sparkled in her eyes each Friday night as she sang over our Sabbath candles. In those memories, I found my bearings and was able to see God in my own story from my earliest days.

In Jewish families, there is an ancient tradition of spending Friday evenings at the table. For thousands of years, families around the world have set aside this evening and dedicated it to God, as well as spending time with one another. The mother prepares special bread and lights special candles; the father reads Proverbs 31 over the mother and lays his hands upon each of his children praying a blessing over them. Growing up, this was the invitation to me each week.

So here is your invitation to an everyday banquet: Come to the table, bring your children and your spouse. Here in the kitchen and at your dining room table you will build your home on his Word. You see, it was a Jewish table when I started, but it is the table of our Messiah where my husband and I bring our sons each week now. As children grow, as families change, these meals are a well-spent investment in the faith journey of each participant. Wherever each member of the table is on their spiritual journey, this can be a place of foundational truth and core memories. Despite the dysfunction of an alcoholic father, a missing mother, and a broken home, my family met together on these evenings, and it marked me for life. My husband was raised by a single mother who worked three jobs, but with the warmth of a mother's love, she always had room at her table for the simple southern foods that reminded her sons they were cared for. We both know the power of smells, flavors, and laughter all married together with Scripture, hymns, and conversation. We understand the "pleasant riches" God's Word assures us are ours when we build our homes with wisdom (Proverbs 24:3-4).

Sarah Clarkson said it like this: "When someone once asked me just what it was that my parents did that made me believe in God, without even thinking I said, 'I think it was French toast on Saturday mornings and coffee and Celtic music and discussions and candlelight in the evenings,' because in those moments I tasted and saw the goodness of God in a way I couldn't ignore."¹

Every day we step outside our homes and face the world. Parents and children alike are bombarded with cultural norms, work expectations, and the demands of peers and teachers. As we return home, it is easy to continue on separately, to decompress in front of a device, or read a book alone. However, the family was designed by God to establish his kingdom on earth. While not the only way to establish his kingdom on earth, we are created to model his love, kindness, and generosity first toward those in our homes. It is our daily opportunity to practice kingdom principles and be the hands and feet of Jesus to those around us. When we sit at our dining room tables and engage with one another intentionally, we have a kingdom opportunity to impart his truth in a unique way.

So, may it start today. Grab your oven mitt and your favorite Bible, tell your children to meet you in the kitchen, and come to the table for an everyday banquet.

How to Use This Devotional

The Everyday Banquet is a unique devotional that includes several components within each devotion. In this section, you will find explanations, helpful tips, and useful details about each section of your weekly family devotion.

Recipes & Hymns

Each season, we will provide a series of four hymns and four recipes for your family to rotate through during your banquets together. All of the recipes are designed to make five to six servings.

Singing hymns is a wonderful way to let God's Word settle deep into the hearts of our children. Music permeates beyond just our minds, it becomes part of who we are over time. As our children grow and encounter trials in life, hymns are a resource they will have with them anywhere they go. I once heard author Cindy Rollins describe how one of her sons was on a battlefield in war and couldn't sleep. Her son later told her how the hymns they used to sing in their home during his youth helped his soul settle down and rest in the midst of chaos and great physical discomfort. Our own lives will be filled with battlefields-some literal, others internal. Hymns are weapons we carry with us anywhere and everywhere; they are God's Word put to song, recounting his stories and the testimonies of saints who have gone before us. So make time to learn the words with your family. Savor the faith-imparting lyrics that will empower you and your children to remain faithful during difficult situations and that will remind you and your children of his faithfulness, always.

If someone in your family is musical, please encourage them to play the hymn. If your little ones want to dance, let them! We purchased a small set of wooden instruments (tambourines, maracas, shakers, etc.) when our children were small. They all went into one bag and were easy to pull out whenever we worshiped together as a family. Encouraging our children to enjoy this time and not just get through it will make it a better point of connection for them.

In the Kitchen

In this section, you will find both practical tips and simple conversation starters you can add to your time in the kitchen.

Each week, plan ahead and gather your ingredients beforehand. You may have children old enough to be involved—please include them. They can participate in making a shopping list, adding their own ideas or special ingredients, and in budgeting, paying, etc. When it comes to younger ones, they love to pour and stir. Please don't shoo them out of the kitchen and manage it alone. Involving and engaging them will make a world of difference in discipling their hearts. All of these things will be memories of a life lived well together.

Little helpers can learn to set the table (paper goods and disposable utensils welcome), clear the table, and carry items to the table. Older kids can handle more responsibility. They may even want to lead by making an entire meal or by reading the devotional content ahead of time and sharing from their heart. Be prayerful and let the Holy Spirit guide you as you cultivate the soil of their hearts.

As you cook, be mindful of the topic for that meal's devotion. See if you can gently guide the conversation appropriately. Ask open-ended questions and listen well. In these moments, get to know your children, their concerns, what they consider humorous, and what they enjoyed during their day. Furthermore, bare your own heart. Be open and transparent with them, describing moments when you prayed during the day, needed God's help, etc.

I suggest playing some music while you prepare. Music sets an atmosphere and provides a communal focal point for worship. This night is special. This time is set apart. This is your time to gather as a family and intentionally pursue a relationship with one another through God's Word.

Preparation

In this section, you can expect to find simple and helpful tips for preparing your own heart for that banquet's devotion, guiding questions, and any special materials you might want to have on hand.

Devotion

The devotions include Scripture, a poem or anecdotal story, and hymns. It is my family's prayer that the topics each week will be a springboard leading to more conversation and worship around the table. This devotional is designed to help you and your family find an oasis in the middle of life's frantic pace. It is meant to help you feed both yourself and your children physically and spiritually, with the aim to nourish you as you head out into a life that so often depletes our physical and spiritual energy.

The devotions will walk through the Scriptures seasonally, jointly considering ancient biblical feasts as well as the modern church calendar. The devotions are designed in a way that we hope invites you and your family to read God's Word together and understand how the whole counsel of his Word is active and living, good for the teaching and reproof of believers (2 Timothy 3:16).

Good hymno are an immenoe blessing to the church. They train people for heaven, where praise is one of the principal occupations

- J.C. RYLE

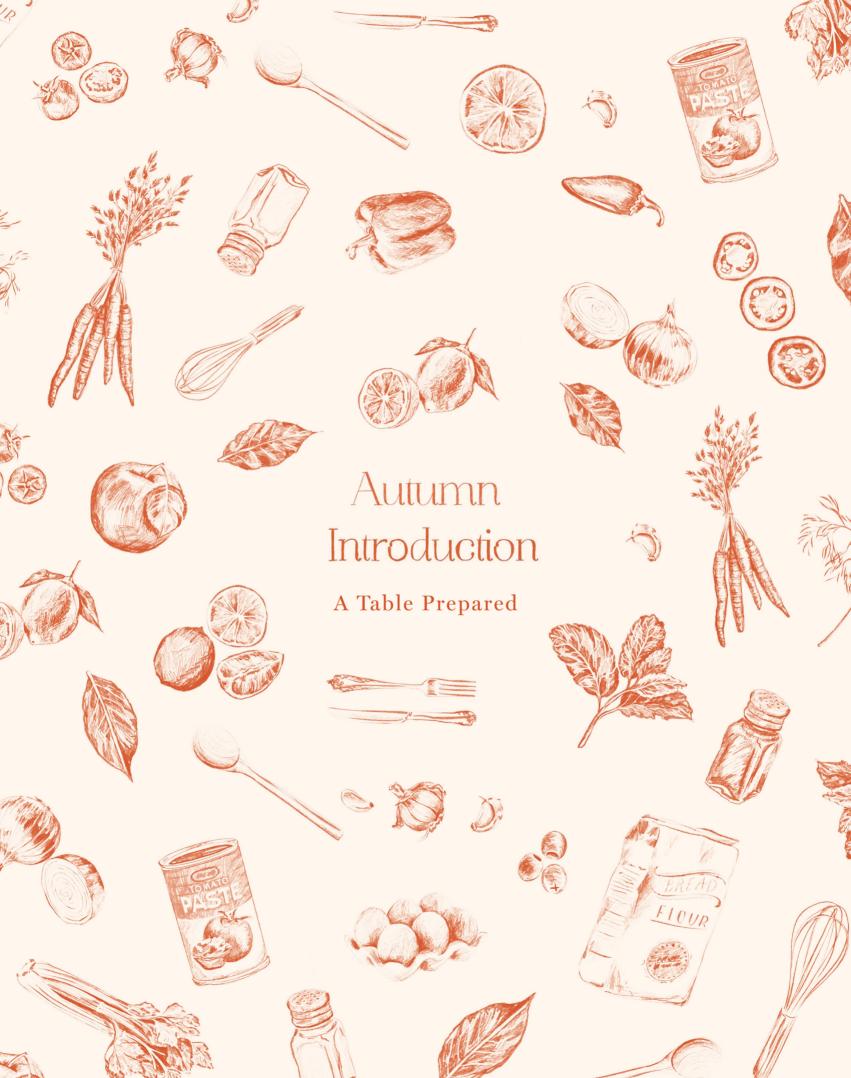
Reflection

After each devotion, action points and discussion questions will follow to help you and your children become doers of the Word and not hearers only (James 1:22). As we consider the Scripture reading and the provided story, we can find ways to apply the ideas to our own lives. Praying together as you seek God's wisdom to help you remain steadfast and faithful throughout your days is an important part of the reflection as well.

Tips on Dining

A well-set table is inviting and intimate. While it is not necessary, adding a few special touches for these meals will add an element of special intimacy, creating an atmosphere that compels everyone to hold these evenings in high esteem. A fabric tablecloth, a couple candles, and bringing out grandma's nice plates (yes, the heirlooms or other sentimental items) can communicate volumes to your family about how these evenings are intentional and set apart.

Jewish families do this each Friday evening! Even with babies in tow and toddlers climbing on the table, Jewish mothers prepare a nice meal, set a beautiful table, and teach and train their little ones how to enjoy a family meal. I encourage you to curate a space that is enjoyable for fellowship and worship while eating together. Kitchen (NOUN): Of gathering place Where memories are hardmade and Seasoned with love.



utumn is the season of bringing in and gathering together. It is often a time of year when we are gleefully enjoying orchards, discussing God's goodness, and find ourselves filled with gratitude. In Psalm 23:5, we find the psalmist encouraging us that God will prepare a table for us in the midst of our enemies. What enemies do we face in our lives? It is hard to think about our young children needing sustenance and strength as they face an enemy, but they will.

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled. -2 Corinthians 10:3-6

When children come to a place in their own faith journey that requires hardiness of soul and spirit, will they have what it takes to lean into Jesus and find themselves anchored steadfastly by his Word? The intention of this entire devotional is to guide our children in this manner. Autumn gives us a table prepared because it is a season of setting the table with an abundant supply of nourishment as we face the coming winter winds and cold. We don't know what "enemies" we will meet in our lifetime, but we can spend our days feasting on God's Word, so when the enemy comes, we are prepared with an arsenal of spiritual strength founded on God's sure foundation.



Autumn Recipes

Chili Soup

Chicken Pot Pie

Roasted Apples

Harvest Salad

Chili Soup

Ingredients

- I pound ground beef
- 3 gartic Noves, minud
- 1 onion, diced
- I bell pepper, dired
- 1 teappoon ball
- 2 tablespoons chili powder
- 1/4 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- (based on how spice you like it)
- 1 tablespoon cumin
- I teaspoon oregans
- I can green chiles
- I can garbanzo beans, drained and rinoed
- " I can light kidney beans, drained
- I can dark kidney, drained
- I can black beans, drained
- 1 (15-OUNCE) can tomato sance
- 1 (15-DUNCE) can diced tomatoca
- I cup beef broth
- '14 cup masa (corn from found in the merican section of grocery stores)
- I takleopoon peanut butter
- 1/2 tablespoon cocoa powder

Instructions

- **1.** Add the meat, garlic, onion, bell pepper, and spices to a large stock pot.
- **2.** Sauté on high for 2 minutes, then reduce to medium and brown the meat well.
- **3.** Drain off the fat.
- **4.** Put in all other ingredients except the masa.
- **5.** Bring to a boil, then reduce to a simmer and cover.
- **6.** Simmer for one hour.
- 7. Stir the masa with 1/2 cup water and add to the chili and stir well.
- 8. Cook on low for another 30 minutes.
- **9.** If too thick, add 1/4 cup water as needed.

Serve with homemade cornbread, on top of a salad, over chips, or with rice. Top with sharp cheddar cheese and fresh onions, jalapenos, etc.







Autumn Hymns

"We Gather Together" by Unknown "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" by Thomas O. Chisholm "All People That on Earth Do Dwell" by William Kethe "It Is Well with My Soul" by Horatio G. Spafford

We Gather Together

Unknown

D D A We gather together to ask the Lord's blessing; A Bm Е Α He chastens and hastens His will to make known; Α Em Α D D the wicked oppressing cease them from distressing. G D Em D Sing praises to His name, He forgets not His own.

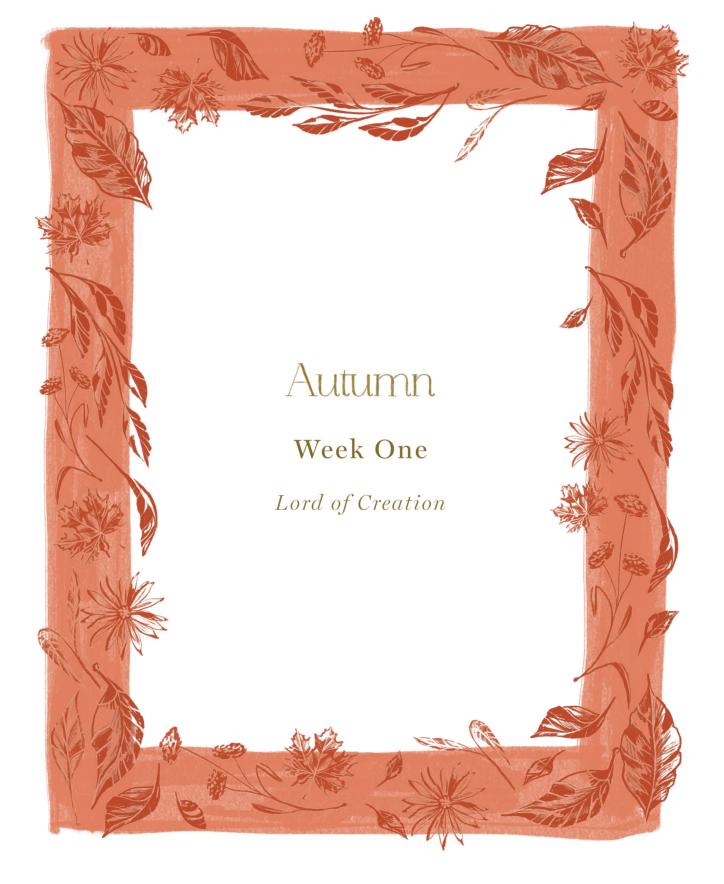
Beside us to guide us, our God with us joining, ordaining, maintaining His kingdom divine; so from the beginning the fight we were winning: thou Lord wast at our side—the glory be Thine!

We all do extol Thee, Thou leader in battle, and pray that Thou still our defender wilt be. Let Thy congregation escape tribulation; Thy name be ever praised! O Lord, make us free! Autumn | Hymns









In the Kitchen

This time of year, families may find themselves with wonderful apples in abundance. There are so many simple and delicious apple recipes, and many of them are easy to do with children (of all ages). In our home, we love making apple butter and applesauce. Both of these recipes include washing the apples and then coring and peeling them. Look up the "Johnny Apple Peeler" or see if you can find one at a thrift store or flea market. These cool contraptions suction to the countertop, and young kids can be taught how to put the apple on the corer and then rotate the handle to peel and core each apple. Our boys look forward to this activity year after year.

Preparation

This week we will discuss God as the Lord over all of creation. Understanding the creation account and the care with which God created our world is a great foundational premise for our faith. Knowing God's Word and each part of his story will help us to have a firm foundation in truth throughout our life. During this devotion, your family will spend some time together discussing God as the Lord of creation, as well as creation itself. You may want to read Genesis 1 and consider the choices laid out in the reflection section ahead of time.

At the end of this devotion, your family will "crown" the earth to provide a visual reminder that God is Lord over all of creation. You can simply use a toy crown you have at home, or you can craft a crown together as a family. Be sure and gather what supplies you'd like for creating a crown if you decide to go that route.

Devotion

The gray day was coming to a close, and I was trying to find my way back to my grandmother's little cottage by the pond. As I tore through the cornstalks, fear began to fill my heart—I was lost. Was I even going the right way? I stood still for a moment and watched my breath blast into the icy air. I heard crunching nearby. Someone was coming! I had nowhere to hide, and so I simply stood still, trembling. The farmer smiled a little and said, "Are you Isabelle's granddaughter?" I nodded timidly, and he waved his hand for me to follow him. Anxiously I asked, "Do you know the way back to my grandma's house?" He stopped and looked at me strangely, "I know every part of this land, little girl. I own it. I sowed this corn and designed this plot. I even know the deer that come and when they will be by." That settled it. He would see me home safely. I didn't have to be afraid (except for my grandmother's response to me running off).

As a little girl, I spent many afternoons running through the woods behind my grandmother's small woodland cottage in rural Pennsylvania. There was a pond, a large wooded area, and then a huge field of corn after the woods. I saw deer and marveled at how they enjoyed the salt lick. I watched the new fawns with their spots follow their mothers as I hid behind trees in silence. This particular evening was near Rosh Hashanah—the Jewish New Year. When I returned to my grandmother's home she chastened me for my disobedience (I wasn't allowed to go into the cornfield), and then she told me the story of the creation of the world. You see, Rosh Hashanah is a special time each year when Jewish families celebrate the earth being another year older. The Jewish year marks its years from the beginning of the creation account found in Genesis 1, so we are now in the 5700s and approaching the six thousandth year of the earth's creation. As I listened to my grandmother retell the creation account, I easily pictured the beauty of this creation story as one with dense forests and beautiful, golden fields of corn.

Reflection

The farmer knew his land. He wasn't lost or fearful where he had established a plan and tended the fields. Similarly, God is the Lord of all creation. He created our earth and he knows every part of it. Sometimes, we may feel lost or fearful while we journey here, but we can always trust that God is Lord over the earth he made and sovereign over all of creation. He rules and reigns over it, and it is a safe place for those of us who love and follow him.

For thus says the LORD, Who created the heavens, Who is God, Who formed the earth and made it, Who has established it, Who did not create it in vain, Who formed it to be inhabited: "I am the LORD, and there is no other." —Isaiah 45:18

One tradition among many Jewish families involves getting out a globe during Rosh Hashanah to "crown" the earth with a visual reminder that God is Lord over all creation. To do this, use or make the crown you have prepared. As you crown the earth, spend a few moments considering how you and your family would like to spend some time in creation. You can choose from one of the suggestions below, or come up with your own idea together.

- Go on a nature walk and try to find different representations for each day of the creation account. Example: God created light on the first day. Where do you see light in creation as you walk outside? Can you see reflections? What would we be missing without light?
- Go to a body of water (ocean, river, pond, creek, etc.) and consider Micha 7:19 together.
- Go on a nature walk together and invite your children to gather items from nature that are interesting to them. Once home, choose a Scripture verse from the creation account to paint on a canvas. Then affix your nature items to the canvas, creating a collage. Display this family artwork in your home to remind you of how he is Lord over all creation.

Jewish Calendar

This calendar includes some of the feasts and holidays commonly celebrated in Jewish homes around the world. The Jewish calendar doesn't line up with the Gregorian calendar well as it is lunisolar (based on the sun and the moon), and not solar (based on the sun) like the Gregorian calendar. Each year, the dates for the Jewish feasts and holidays remain the same on the Jewish calendar but change on the Gregorian calendar. In order to know the exact date of a feast or holiday on the Gregorian calendar, you can look up the Jewish calendar date and ask what the correlating Gregorian date is that year.

Unique to Jewish culture is how the "day" begins at sunset and ends at nightfall. For example, Passover is on Nisan 15. So Nisan 15 begins at sundown on Nisan 14 and ends at nightfall on Nisan 15. This is why Jewish families have their Shabbat dinner each week on Friday evening: the seventh day of the week begins on Fridays at sundown and not on Saturday morning as is more typical in Western homes.

This calendar is representative of the feasts and holidays discussed within this devotional, but it is not meant to be a comprehensive Jewish calendar. There are several feasts and holidays not included on this calendar that many Jewish families observe.

We hope you and your family find that by learning about the centuriesold feasts of God's people, you also understand his plan and purposes for all nations in a deeper and more meaningful way than ever before. Jewish Calendar



Rosh Hashanah/ Feast of Trumpets:

Tishrei 1-2, Sept/Oct (Autumn, Week 1)



Yom Kippur/ Day of Atonement:

Tishrei 10, Sept/Oct (Autumn, Week 2)



Sukkot/ Feast of Tabernacles:

Tishrei 15-21, Sept/Oct (Autumn, Week 3)



Chanukah/ Feast of Dedication:

KIslev 25-Tevet 2, Nov/ Dec (Autumn, Week 11)



Tu B'Shvat:

Shvat 15, Jan/Feb (Winter, Week 6)



Purim: Adar 14, Feb/Mar



Passover/Pesach: Nisan 15, Mar/April (Spring, Week 5)



Shavuot/ Feast of Weeks:

Sivan 6, May/June (Spring, Week 11)



Rosh Chodesh

Rosh Chodesh is the first day of each month. It begins at sundown the first night of the new moon.

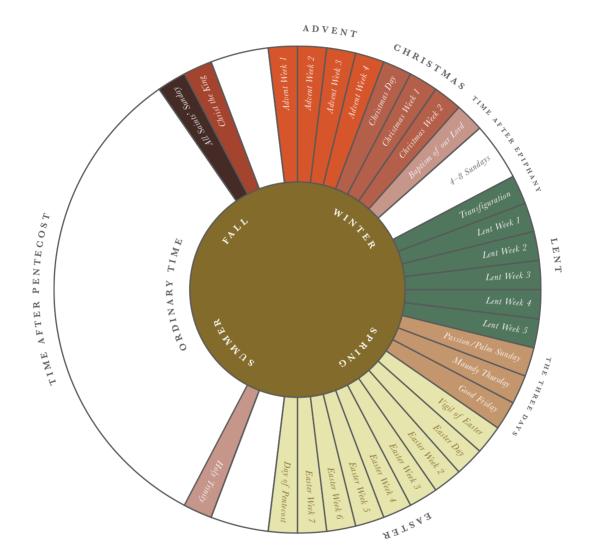


Shabbat/Sabbath

Begins Sundown every Friday evening. Ends nightfall every Saturday evening.

Liturgical Calendar

Included in *The Everyday Banquet* are family devotionals for many evangelical Christian holidays. The liturgical calendar you see on the following page is another invitation to find the beauty and breadth of God's invitation to us—an invitation to come to his table again and again. He offers us this invitation season by season, with these holidays as ebenezers: reminders that he has been, is, and always will be our help, our Redeemer, and the God we trust for all of our days. So embrace these holidays (whether new to you, or familiar), and enjoy the traditions that will unite you with other believers and anchor your family in his Word. Liturgical Calendar



Endnotes

Endnotes

1 Sally Clarkson, Sarah Clarkson, *The Life Giving Home: Creating A Place of Belonging and Becoming* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 2015), 19.

Acknowledgments

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the Hosanna Revival editors and publishing team for their kind consideration and coaching as I offered my humble stories and hopes in raw form. They took an unpublished, amateur writer and polished up her words so they would honor God and the reader. I am grateful.

Also, this devotion wouldn't exist without my husband, Jonah. We have been a team in new ways as this book developed. May we continue to encourage one another to use and not bury our talents as we live for his glory.



About the Author

SarahRuth is the wife of Jonah and mother of three boys she educates at home. SarahRuth grew up in inner cities but loves the family-centric culture she embraced through marriage. As a public school educator, she saw the breakdown in American families and the dire need for a restoration of family culture through God's Word. Both she and her husband left the workplace to pursue entrepreneurial endeavors to spend more time as a family and guide their children in the faith. Their passion is to encourage families to do life together as they believe that healthy, godly families are the bedrock of a thriving society. SarahRuth and her family reside at the base of the Appalachian Trail in a small Georgia town where they love to hike, chase waterfalls, and spend as much time together as possible.



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