

The "4 S" Strategy for Navigating Food-Affluent Fellowship Gatherings

We are all influenced by the culture of the society that we live in. But when it comes to leveraging good eating habits to support a successful and sustainable lifestyle of service, going with the flow in our food-affluent culture can be counterproductive.

As Christians, we are reminded that one thing that sets us apart from the world is how we love one another (*John 13:34-35*). And one way we often love each other is by the sharing of food. In fact, for many of us, an abundance of food has become an expected and important part of our fellowship gatherings in the church, at home, and in the workplace.

We can be thankful that God provides all things, including food, for our enjoyment (*1 Tim. 6:17*). But the Apostle Paul reminds us that, while we are free to enjoy God's many blessings, not everything available to us is beneficial (*1 Cor. 10:23*).

When we come face to face with a large table filled with a variety of wonderful foods, our first inclination is to take the "*just a little bit of everything*" approach which often ends up being a full plate of food containing more calories than we need. When enjoying the spread of food at fellowship gatherings, practice the "4 S" strategy:



STOP - Think about your goals for this event. We want to enjoy the food provided by God through the hands of loving people, but we also want to practice healthy eating habits. We want to enjoy good food and be satisfied without stuffing ourselves.

SURVEY - Before you sit down at the table or pick up a plate in the buffet line, take the time to do a visual scan of all the foods available to you. Taking the time to survey the food items (including desserts and beverages) available, helps us to set some priorities.

SELECT - Choose the food items that will go on your plate and the ones that you will leave behind. It is time to be choosy! Pick out a few items that are your absolute favorites or new items that you want to try. Leave behind foods that are not your favorites or that you have at home regularly.

SAVOR - Take the time to enjoy the food you have selected by eating slowly and enjoying the sensory experience. Identify what, specifically, you like about the foods you have chosen and mention it when you say "thank you" to the person who brought that food item.

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