

Food & Faith

Sacrificial Eating

Gift giving; What really happened on the Ark?

“Eating is the daily reminder of creaturely mortality. We eat to live, knowing that without food we will starve and die. But to eat we must also kill, realizing that without the deaths of others – microbes, insects, plants, and animals – we can have no food.”

Then God said, “Look! I have given you every seed-bearing plant throughout the earth and all the fruit trees for your food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

~ Genesis 1:29 - 31

Next God said to Noah, “Now board the ship, you and all your family—out of everyone in this generation, you’re the righteous one.

“Take on board with you seven pairs of every clean animal, a male and a female; one pair of every unclean animal, a male and a female; and seven pairs of every kind of bird, a male and a female, to insure their survival on Earth.

~Genesis 7:1-4

The Latin roots for the English word sacrifice come from *sacrum* and *facere* and mean “to make sacred”. In the sacrificial act the Israelites took from their means of livelihood (Domestic animals or the harvest of the fields) and offered it as a gift to God. Bringing these gifts into the presence of God, both the giver and the gift were rendered sacred.

The Hebrew word for Sacrifice comes from a verb meaning “to bring near”. In Hebrew Scripture we find that sacrifice is about entering into a nurturing relationship with God.

~paraphrased from Norman Wirzba, Food and Faith: A Theology of Eating page 119

Questions to ponder

What opportunities do we have to attend to the needs of others?

How do we experience compassion in the sharing of food?

What role does empathy and compassion play in our preparation of food?

How do you respond to the gift of food in your life?

How do we acknowledge the gift of food when we are not participating in the care and nurture of our plants and animals?

What does it look like to eat with a profound sense of gratefulness?