

Super Bowl weekend means snacks!

Here's some of the statistics I found about our snacking habits on Super Bowl Sunday:

Number one must-have item according to the National Restaurant Association is salsa, dips and spreads.

Coming in second is Chicken Wings, which according to the National Chicken Council could top out at 1.25 billion wings eaten on Super Sunday. That according to the article is enough wings to circle the earth twice!

Coming in third is pizza...most of which will be delivered. According to the pizza industry more pizzas are sold on Super Bowl Sunday than any other time.

Rounding out the top ten must-have items for the Super Bowl are desserts, subs/sandwiches, Nachos, healthful food items, salads, fried chicken and number 10, burgers. Americans will actually consume more food today than on Thanksgiving! But don't stop there...according to the National Retail Federation, Americans will spend a record 11 billion dollars on this year's Super Bowl bash.

The abundance of food that we have available to us as Americans is staggering. Depending on what you crave all you need to do is pick up the phone and it's delivered to your door; or you can hop in the car and find a restaurant that serves what you're hungry for; or you can walk down the aisle at most grocery stores and find what fills the need in your stomach.

If you are anything like me when you get hungry for something you will go out of your way to get it. My son did that one night in college. He and a few friends decided they were hungry for a real Philly cheesesteak. So they got in the car, headed down the turnpike and went to the world famous Pats in south Philly to quench their hunger for cheesesteak!

Hunger is one of the basic needs that we are born with. As infants we cry when we are hungry and we learn that someone feeds us. When we get older our hunger teaches us to explore the refrigerator or climb the kitchen counter in a desperate search to feed ourselves. We learn how to satisfy our hunger for food; but what about our hunger for God?

Have you ever thought about being hungry for God? Margaret Feinberg says in her book, *Hungry for God*,

"If physical hunger is a set of feelings that leads a person to search for food, then spiritual hunger is a set of experiences and longings that compel a person to search for God." (pg. 13 Kindle edition)

My guess is that most of us only think about hunger when it comes to food; not in terms of being hungry for God. Jesus ran into that very problem with those who had experienced the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000- they had full stomachs but were unaware of their real hunger, the hunger for God.

The day after they were fed with the miraculously-multiplied bread and fish their stomachs told them they were hungry again. So the people searched him out longing for more of the miraculous food that had fed their stomach. But they probably never expected Jesus to say what he did when they found him on the other side of the Sea of Galilee.

Jesus looked at this hungry crowd who had pursued him and said: "I tell you the truth; you want to be with me because I fed you, not because you understood the miraculous signs." John 6:26 NLT

Jesus made it so clear. We will go to great lengths to seek out and satisfy that growling in our stomach; but we often overlook the emptiness in our life that cries out in hunger for God. And even when we find a way to name that emptiness as a hunger for God many people simply do not know how to satisfy that spiritual hunger.

Let's go back and look for a moment at that definition of spiritual hunger from Margret Feinberg: spiritual hunger is a set of experiences and longings that compel a person to search for God.

The most important thing I want you to understand this morning about your spiritual hunger which compels you to search for God is that God wants to be found! God wants to be found so that you can have a real, personal relationship with him!

God doesn't put this hunger in each of us and then not make it possible for us to ever find our hunger satisfied. On the contrary; that hunger, if we recognize it, is God's invitation into this relationship whereby we not only join God in what he is doing, but we learn to hear and know God's voice.

One thing I know from personal experience, God uses my daily experiences, the people that are around me, and the many opportunities that enter my day to day world as a way to say, "Here I am!" And God does the same thing in your life every day!

Now here is the key. Are you expecting to hear God? Are you expecting to meet God in the everyday moments of your life?

Unlike our physical hunger that we've cultivated to the point that we know when it is time to eat; many people don't cultivate their hunger for God. As a result we don't realize that God is speaking to us every day. And then we miss God in the everyday experiences of our life.

Think about it for a moment; where has God been speaking in your life already this morning?

So if God is speaking to you are you listening? Next week we're going to closely examine how we hear God speak; but I want to challenge you to cultivate a hunger for God this week. How? Very simply, it begins with learning to know and distinguish God's voice from all the other voices around you. And the best way to learn to know God's voice is to read your Bible. May I suggest you start in one of the Gospels or maybe in the Psalms. As you read, take your time to listen to each word, maybe you even want to read out loud, and realize that God is speaking to you.

One other thing I want you to do this week. When you wake up every morning pray a very simple prayer: "God help me see you and hear you in my daily experiences." Then be ready to look for ways that God is speaking to you.

Hunger is a good thing. Hunger motivates us to seek out and satisfy a natural desire in our lives. I hope that today while you are munching on your favorite snacks and watching the Giants beat the Patriots that you will take a few minutes to consider how you can feed the hunger for God in your life.