

Let This Be Nourishment for Our Bodies

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Sundays at our house was a routine. It began with church and ended with an amazing dinner, Sometimes Sunday began on Saturday. If my hair needed a fresh style it was washed on Saturday and straightened early Sunday morning. I hated the straightening comb but loved when I could wear my hair out. Cooking for Sunday would often start Saturday night too. I can remember my grandmother telling my cousin and I not to run through the kitchen, so her cake wouldn't fall while it was in the oven. It was usually a yellow cake, with chocolate icing. If we behaved, she'd let us lick the spoon!

My favorite Sundays were the ones when we went to Grandpa's. His house was on the same road as the church, in Louisa County VA. This was Grandma's father. She loved her Daddy! He was elderly and didn't always get to church. After service we'd sometimes gather there so Grandma, her sisters, and my aunts could cook for him. Grandpa's house always smelled like a combo of kerosene and cigarettes. HE always gave Grandma money to buy his cigarettes and few extra dollars to send to Jimmy Swaggart. This was the house Grandma grew up in, I remember when the bathroom was added to the house. I also remember the wood stove they cooked on. Whew, it made the house so hot! My cousins and I would run around playing outside while the meal was being prepared, trying our hardest not to run our tights or scuff our patent leather shoes.

→ I remember sitting on the porch snapping 'pole beans,' that's what Grandma called them, and shucking sweet corn. Occasionally on the ride to or from 'the country' we'd stop by the yellow house to get sweet potatoes from Mr. John Thurston, They would be sitting in the brown paper bags, marked \$2.00 at the end of the driveway. She'd grab her bag and leave his money. I think those potatoes were one of the secret ingredients in my grandma's sweet potato pies. Fried chicken was usually somewhere on the menu. The chicken was always fried in Crisco and always in a cast iron skillet. The best fried chicken I ever tasted to date! Grandma would always put our plates in window to cool before serving us, our sign that it was almost time to eat!

The love that went through the kitchen on those Sundays still brings my heart joy! My grandma taught me so many things, but preparing a healthy meal for family always sticks out. Grandma never ate a meal first without blessing the food. In every prayer she'd say "let this be nourishment for our bodies," I never understood what that meant at the time, but today I do! My experience with family and food is one that some never had. I was blessed with love, care, togetherness, fun, and joy surrounding food. I will forever hold those memories in my heart.