

## Ministering Meals – a few miracles

**Note: Most of these stories illustrate the power of a simple invitation in “normal and natural ways,” especially the power of having non-members in the homes of our members, where our non-member friends feel something different—they see the pictures of temples and Church artwork on the wall and they feel the Spirit (even if they don’t know exactly what they’re feeling). To members who are surrounded by the Spirit constantly, they don’t always know or appreciate how different that feeling is. But so often the non-member friends do.**

An elderly couple in John Day invited a non-member friend over for dinner last month. They knew he’d taken the discussions years ago, but hadn’t had contact with him for a long time. During the dinner, and before even sharing a gospel message, he told the couple and the missionaries, “You know, I’ve been a dry Mormon for a long time. It’s time for me to be a wet Mormon!” (His comment was quite unexpected, but definitely made everyone’s night!)

A member family in Nampa noticed that a new family (a husband and wife with two small children) just moved into their neighborhood. They visited them with some cookies and invited them to dinner later that week with the missionaries. During the dinner (and also before any gospel message was shared!), they asked “Where do you worship? Since we just moved in, we’re looking for a church.” Needless to say, the member family and missionaries were able to help with that question! The new family has since come to church and they LOVE it! They’re now taking the lessons with the missionaries.

A member family in Meridian invited a part-member family over for dinner with the missionaries. The two elders said they’d been trying to meet with that part-member family for months, but without success. However, the member family was good friends with the part-member family, and that connection made all the difference. At the dinner, the part-member family got to know the missionaries and made a great connection with them, and now the elders are meeting with the part-member family on a regular basis.

Our family invited one of our daughter’s friends, Gabe, to our home for General Conference and lunch last October. We’ve had him over for dinner many times since, along with a *Come, Follow Me* lesson each week. Then we started inviting the missionaries to dinner as well and he started taking the missionary lessons. However, his mother (Carli) was strongly against the Church and told him it was a cult and she wouldn’t allow him to be baptized. So my wife reached out to Carli (Kari started the friendship by sitting with her at one of Gabe’s basketball games, then stopped by her house with some brownies, then invited her to dinner at our home along with Gabe). Carli has now joined us for dinner multiple times and her heart has completely changed. She’s seen a great change in Gabe and is seeing how much the gospel has blessed his life. Long story short, Carli now has consented to his baptism (Gabe is getting baptized on May 20!), and she even went with Kari to Deseret Book to buy Gabe a set of LDS scriptures with his name engraved on the scriptures as a baptismal gift. Gabe wants to serve a mission in one year and Carli is 100% supportive. It’s been an incredible change. Carli has joined

Gabe at Church a couple of times and has started taking the lessons herself (she says it's just to support Gabe, but we'll see!). 🐼

A couple of other anecdotes:

One missionary, who has struggled with diligence during his mission, said he's only had a few ministering meals since the new policy was put in place. But he left Sister Maxwell and I a voicemail that said, "President and Sister Maxwell, I wasn't too sure about the 'ministering meals with missionaries' at first, I was honestly pretty disappointed about it. But I've changed my mind. **I now feel like a missionary for the first time on my mission.** I'm working so hard every day and I love it. I realized that I was not using my time well at all before this change, which was my fault, but it was just so easy to fall into that trap. I was just waiting for the dinner, socializing with members and spending too long at the dinner, and then feeling like there wasn't a lot of time after the dinner to get very much work done. Now, it's different. We work so hard until 9pm every night, and I've never found and taught so many people as I have in the last month!"

One very diligent sister commented, "This has been the biggest blessing to my mission. Every night is so productive now! Either we have a ministering meal with a member—and those meals are the BEST because there's such a clear purpose and the members are so amazing inviting people into their homes—or we have the night open, which gives us way more flexibility to teach our friends when it works best for them. We're just getting more work done, either finding people or teaching, or even sharing more 20-minute messages with members, every night is going better."