

Singles- Enjoy a Family-Oriented Feast!

Are you single? Wondering how to make the most of the Feast in this "year of the family"? Read these tips.

By Richard Rice

Soon God's Church will be celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles, which pictures the Family of God rejoicing together in peace and unity in the world tomorrow.

Traditionally, the Church has emphasized that the Feast is a time for family togetherness and family activities, and has encouraged members to plan for the Festival with every family member in mind.

All too often single people feel left out or cut off from the family atmosphere of the Feast of Tabernacles. This is especially true if you are a single person with no physical family in the Church, or if you are not attending at the same Feast site as your relatives.

Family-oriented planning is vital for a profitable Feast. How do most families plan for the Feast? The emphasis is on giving. Each family member wants everyone else to have a really good Festival. To insure that everyone benefits most, families carefully plan their activities. Many give their children Feast gifts; husbands treat their wives to a special evening; the whole family plans activities in which everyone can participate.

You as a single person might ask, "What does that have to do with me?" The answer is, everything.

Planning for the Feast

Marriage and having a physical family are not requirements for

entering the Kingdom of God. However, knowing how to relate to other people within the spiritual Family of God is critically important! You as a single person have just as much responsibility in this regard as a married person. You, too, should have a family-oriented approach to the Feast of Tabernacles.

Just as physical families are busy organizing their Feast activities, you should plan to get involved with your spiritual Family. God has blessed you with many fathers, mothers, sisters and brothers (Mark 10:29-30). He expects all of us to do our part in helping and caring for each other.

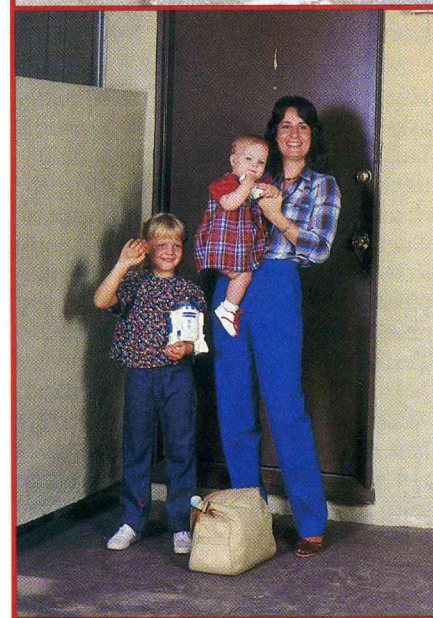
In the physical family, remember, each member is concerned about how he can make the Feast more enjoyable for the others. You have the same responsibility to your spiritual family. Resolve now to make this a *giving* Feast of Tabernacles.

A giving Feast

The most important aspect of your Festival planning, of course, is spiritual. Begin studying about the meaning of these approaching days.

Think about this Fall Festival season in terms of the Family of God and God's Kingdom. God wants to give us the greatest of all gifts — eternal life and a place in His Family. When you consider all who are in God's Church in this perspective, they will become special people.

Think of specific ways to serve your brethren. Don't limit yourself to



your congregation. Pray that God will allow you to meet people who could most use your help.

Every family sits down sometime before the Feast to evaluate its financial situation and determine how everyone can profit most from the festival tithe they have available. This should be one of your first steps as well.

Determine the amount of your festival tithe. Write down all of your fixed expenses for the Feast — motel, travel, food, miscellaneous.

Next, think of ways you can use what you have left to make the Feast more enjoyable for someone else. Plan and set goals just as a physical family would do.

Make a list of people for whom you would like to do something special, such as widows, orphans and needy families. Make another list of specific things you can do for them. Activities need not be expensive. Here are a few suggestions:

- Take someone to lunch or dinner.
- Offer to provide a ride back and forth to services for an elderly couple.
- Take a widow and her children on a picnic or sight-seeing.
- Take a group of teenagers bowling, horseback riding or to play miniature golf.
- Send a card to a person or family who transfer to another site. (You'll have to plan ahead and get their Feast address.)
- Call someone who isn't able to attend the Feast because of ill health or finances. Remember to take the phone number with you.
- Volunteer to babysit for a couple with small children, so the couple can enjoy a night out.
- Plan a small party or get-together. Include a family or two, widows or handicapped people. Be sure to invite some new people you meet at the Feast.

Service and fellowship

Much planning, organization and labor are necessary to make the Feast run smoothly.

Obviously, not everyone can be personally involved with running the Feast at your site. However, many times crews are left shorthanded because everyone assumes there is

already enough help. Check with your Festival adviser to see if there is something you can do to assist with your church area's assignment.

If you are a younger single, perhaps you could volunteer to work with the teenagers in YOU. Talk to your minister or the YOU coordinator to see if there is something you can do. If nothing more, you as a young adult can be a positive example to the teens at the Feast.

Are you musically inclined? Try out for the Festival choir. The choir performs a tremendous service to the Church every year during the Feast.

Some singles might feel they are too old, too sick or too handicapped to participate in any of the activities we have covered so far. But there is still something you can do — an activity in which everyone can participate.

If you are not already in the habit, come early to or stay late at services to meet and fellowship with the brethren. Just being warm and friendly to all with whom you come in contact will add a dimension of joy and goodwill to the atmosphere.

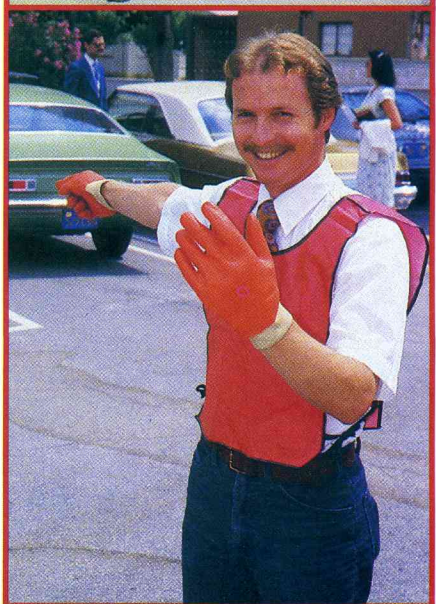
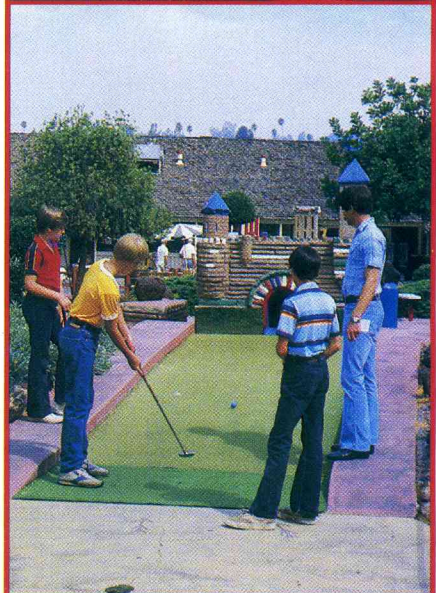
Don't let shyness or self-consciousness rob you of fellowship. Sure, it might be difficult to walk up to someone new and introduce yourself. If it will help, ask someone you already know to go with you. You will both meet new people and be a prod to each other.

Come to services early and pick out those who are sitting all alone. Walk up to them and say hello. You might ask where they are from and how long they have been coming to the Feast. Show a genuine interest in them.

Usually, Church people are easy to spot even in a restaurant. If you catch part of a conversation that tips you off that they are members, walk over and introduce yourself while you are waiting to be served your meal.

Keep a notebook of the names and addresses of the people you meet. After you go home, make it a point to drop them a card or a note to see how they are doing.

Really concentrate on making this a giving Feast. Leave your troubles and cares behind. Experience the joy and happiness that comes from truly sharing yourself with your spiritual family in a foretaste of the wonderful world to come. □



Photos by Roland Reis