

21-Apr-2011

Order Makers and Takers

M_____,

Regarding food servers who have “dirty” food preparation habits, you wrote and expressed the abusive practices committed by food handlers. Vinnette reminded me of an incident where I just refused to dine when the server replied to my query, “we are not required to wear gloves.” Instead of looking for hard and fast rules, all have the same option. Don’t get me wrong, wearing gloves — speaking to the point which you make— does not offer much protection as servers handle themselves, the garbage, and other contaminants while wearing the same gloves. Thus, instead of their skin being the source of defilement, the gloves which cover the skin become the purveying agent.

The issue is made more complicated when you consider that enforcement codes of conduct vary from location to location as well. I have noticed that the further south that I journey from home, the more haphazard and relaxed the standard. Brother Jose recently learned from a food preparation course that Allegheny County, the county in which Pittsburgh is located, ranks highest in the world in the standards and enforcement of standards for commercial food preparations. You can blog with him to get the full explanation of his findings. But I say again, this ranking makes more complicated the ability to create codes of conduct forcing every man to use his own inspiration and conscience. With so many variables, we, as disciples, must learn to personally walk with the Lord on this issue: We must not seek an enforceable manual to meet every situation.

I can point to my sons to shed light on this issue: As they go to work and/or school, they will pack their lunches rather than trust others to prepare their food. They are often more precautious than I. How squeamish should we become is an ever-refining, on-going educational process. Even in our own domestic, food-preparation situations, husbands, wives, and children can, if honest, also attest to witnessing some domesticated, substandard, food-handling practices and find reason for protest with home-cooked meals. To illustrate this point, when I personally prepare a dish I do not wear gloves —nor should I. Additionally, often I need to unwrap as well as cut vegetables or other grocery products. Vinnette taught me to more thoroughly wash the vegetables. And I guarantee you, before her admonition, I washed in a better way than the restaurants. When opening packages and cutting food, there is always a residual portion which must be tossed in the trash as I clean and as I prepare food. This requires handling or contacting a major bacteria center in the kitchen. Whenever I do so requiring that I open the trash with my hands, I always wash my hands before continuing my culinary task. There are other domestic abuses as well: Some people will put recently-cooked, hot dishes in the refrigerator —not realizing that this is a violation— Vinnette in the past and Bro Jose recently made me more sensitive to this bad habit giving you another topic to blog with him. What about people who cook with unrestrained animals in the kitchen? I have as well heard many horror stories on this count. Also, many do but I never eat or prepare food at home, when there is a fly in the house, and I certainly do not set out open dishes upon which they can land and feast. Remember, flies don’t wear gloves either, and they have filthier hands than do humans and are a major source of harmful bacteria! Finally, I lose my appetite if I find a strand of hair in my food, etc.

Many of these standards may supersede that established even by Allegheny County —I cannot say for sure— yet, they are personal to me and should not, at this time at least, be codified into law, excepting the ones which have been discussed in prior communications. All are free to guard themselves with the same or similar fervor deciding, each step along the way, how fastidious they should be. But in final analysis, we must temper our standards with the reality that Levi, the Lord’s elected man of sanitary, ecclesiastical protocol, is not yet in service. He has an inborn proclivity to

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purity. Until his emergence, we must inculcate at least two points, Christ and His accompanying angels ate flesh at the hand of Abraham and Sarah, and not even having soap, screens on windows, or refrigeration, their standards could not have been equal to those of Allegheny County. And the second point is that we live in a troublesome time and a strange land, the time and the land of the gentiles, a people not ordained with the gift of sanitary demeanor. This being the case, we must gauge our conduct in accordance to Paul's soon-to-be-expired counsel: We must know that "*Charity suffereth long...Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things...hopeth all things, endureth all things.*" —1Cor 13: 4-7.

We have all "suffered long"; yet we have a distinct, soon-to-be-realized hope in the soon-to-come *Kingdom of Power*. Upon its installation, the people who handle our meals can benefit from our careful gaze, instructive counsel, and discerning eye. In this way having suffered long under our past experiences with the violations and the contaminations, we can become—not the standard takers but—the standard makers. We can improve upon the high and exalted principles of governance enforced by the Assyrian as we learn from his pitfalls.

Sincerely,

Derek