



KNOWING & DOING

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Fully to Enjoy: *An Invitation to Our Abundant Table*

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Some may use the word *serendipity* to describe things coming together in an unexpectedly joyful way. But not me or my friends in the Fellows Program. We call it a “God thing.” That’s how we’ve described our group for almost ten years.

We were the C.S. Lewis Institute’s mid-career women’s Fellows class of 2005. There was very little that we had in common except for our desire to grow deeper in our faith. Some of us were from rural backgrounds and some urban. We hailed from all over the country and one from foreign climes. Our faith backgrounds were also variously unique, and we weren’t even sure how or why we had been lucky enough to be selected for the Fellows Program—or what to expect. But those nerves and doubts were quickly put to rest.

I think of our first time together. We all sensed we had encountered something special and full of grace. Each new Fellows class starts with a weekend retreat. Ours was in the Virginia mountains, where we discovered the magnificence of God’s love. With vulnerable honesty we shared our faith journeys. Some had come to Christ as girls, others as adults. We all had experienced difficult seasons; we all had needed God’s forgiveness and grace. We laughed, cried, and prayed together. The foundational love and trust that emerged from those first hours have characterized the spirit of our group now for ten years.


In the first year, we felt challenged by the Institute’s curriculum. In retrospect, it is amazing that we read so many books. I particularly remember *Beginning Well* by Gordon Smith. His call, to focus on spiritual transformation rather than conversion alone, set the course for our months (and now years) of faith-ful fellowship.

When the first year ended, we all “signed on” for Year Two. Even later, although all of us already juggled many other relationships and social commitments, we continued meeting monthly; we had seen the power of this “God thing” and were committed to continuing to pursue Him together. Taking our cues from the Fellows Program, we now create our own annual reading lists, discuss these provocative and inspiring books, and share meals together. How much richer, broader, deeper is our understanding because of this shared commitment to listen, learn, and grow!

Lest you think our fellowship is exclusively spiritual and academic, I’ll mention a few other memories of our time together, several of these being from our retreats to the Chesapeake Bay, a highpoint of our year. These weekends in the warm sun, with the rhythmic waves lapping along the rocks and good friends close by, are a refreshing balm. Away from the city, we walk, talk, laugh, and pray together, and of course we eat. One evening after blowing out the candles and savoring every rich, luscious, chocolaty bite of a cake, we quickly slipped from singing “Happy Birthday” into a lively group karaoke session. With Pandora at our fingertips, we let loose and belted out songs of the 70s.

As is natural, our group has evolved as we’ve sought God’s direction for our lives and grown in wisdom, contentment, and joy. We celebrated the marriage of one friend and her adoption of two children from Russia. For several years we supported another—packing many care packages and eagerly waiting for her latest news—as she served

the Lord in Papua New Guinea. And we have met these changes and many other challenges with prayer. Knowing that the others are interceding for us and our loved ones binds us humbly and thankfully together before God.

What a great gift we've been given. Wanting to symbolize and share our decade of abundant joy, we turned to the language of food and fellowship, putting together and publishing a cookbook titled *Fully to Enjoy: An Invitation to Our Abundant Table*. What better way to invite people along on our journey while nourishing them in both body and spirit? This book is also our humble attempt to thank the C.S. Lewis Institute for the many blessings it has given us. 



. . .the sun looks down on nothing half so good as a household laughing together over a meal.

C.S. Lewis



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RECOMMENDED READING

C.S. Lewis Institute Fellows, *Fully to Enjoy: An Invitation to Our Abundant Table* (C.S. Lewis Institute 2014)

Fully to Enjoy is a cookbook celebrating 10 years of faith, food, and fun. Authored by C.S. Lewis Institute Fellows, it features over 250 tried-and-true recipes, plus cooking and hospitality tips, personal vignettes and favorite passages to nourish both body and soul. All proceeds will benefit the C.S. Lewis Institute. You may also consider gifting the cookbook to a friend or family member!

What happens when you bring 11 women with a shared commitment to spiritual growth and a passion for good food around the table? The answer is much laughter, rich conversations and an abundance of goodness and grace. With recipes ranging from sophisticated to simple and traditional to trendy, this collection of favorites has something for every cook.



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In the legacy of C.S. Lewis, the Institute endeavors to develop disciples who can articulate, defend, and live faith in Christ through personal and public life.