

## **Ketchup for a Hot Dog**

How do we show our faith? Is it just between us and God? Or does it have a purpose? If we have faith we show it by our deeds. Sometimes, this is feeding the hungry at church, or a place where food can be served to those in need. I recall going to our local church, a very small church, to a church in Detroit where meals were provided. It was an eye-opening experience. The people who came in were all different types but obviously poor and hungry. I did not feel we were there to reform them or to shame them, just to feed God's children. They requested sugar for their coffee; I gave them sugar. People who are addicted will want sugar but so will people who are fed sugar coated cereal in the morning.

I was reminded of a six-year-old girl that was dying of Leukemia many years ago and she only had a short time left. I was doing my "kitchen rotation" at the time. We were required to do this to learn diets for different diseases and conditions and we were required to learn how to make a budget for a family of four and to do the shopping for the food on the budget. It was an interesting experience. The head "cook" was a rather unpleasant woman who did not like my sense of humor. The dying girl requested a hot dog, and this was allowed on her diet. She also wanted Ketchup, which was not on her diet. The cook refused to give the child Ketchup even though the doctor had verbally approved it but had not changed the diet in the chart. The child's request would have been so easily granted, and Ketchup certainly wasn't going to harm her at this stage. The cook continued to refuse and finally the parents went to the store and bought a bottle of Ketchup so the child could have her hot dog with Ketchup. The cook felt very superior that she had won and stuck to the child's diet, she bragged that diets had to be followed and not deviated from. I said nothing but turned my back on her. Three days later the child died. The cook upon hearing this regretted her actions and was crying and hysterical with regret. I could not feel sorry for her but mourned the death of a child whose last request was Ketchup for her hot dog. The cook was crying and seeking others to tell her she had done the right thing. As she came near me, I continued to work. She wrote some nasty things in my evaluation, and I was asked by the Nursing Supervisor why this woman would say such things about me when no one else had ever even whispered a negative report about my work. I just said that I had no idea why she would say negative things about me and the matter was dropped, but I knew. I later cried for that beautiful sweet little girl that only wanted Ketchup for her hot dog. Rules are great, but common sense is sometimes better.

Lord, we thank you for this day and for the gifts you have given us. May we use them in your service. Be with those who are sick and those who grieve, may they be comforted. Be with our church Lord, may it be your church. Be with our Pastor and his family, keep them safe and we thank you for their service. Be with our staff and leaders, bless them. Be with our country, Lord, may we remember this is your world and we need to honor that and all your children. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Grace Epperson