

Kitchen Hygiene – Peter’s Vision

Tammy: Joni woke up in the night. He had pains in his stomach...again. The house was quiet and he didn't know what to do so he just lay there hoping the pains would go away. But the pains kept coming and going and gradually they got worse. He started to feel that weak feeling and suddenly he knew that any minute now he would be sick. He called his mother...

Tammy: Welcome to *Women of Hope*, I'm Tammy and here's Carol.

Carol: Hi it's always good to be with you. I am concerned about Joni. I wonder what was wrong with him? So, Tammy, what happened next?...

Tammy: Joni's mother woke up when she heard him call. She came running, but it was too late. Before he could get to the bathroom he'd been sick all over the floor. And soon he had diarrhea too. This was not the first time; he'd been sick like this only a few weeks ago. He felt awful.

Carol: Something is wrong here. Being sick and having diarrhea that frequently is a sure sign.

Tammy: Joni and his mother lived in an old house. It had a small kitchen that was rather broken down. Joni's mother tried to keep the kitchen clean but it was very difficult. She began to wonder if she was doing something wrong when she prepared his meals. She always bought fresh food and she always used a good sharp knife to cut the meat, and the vegetables. She only had one workspace for preparing the food and she could not always be sure that the water was clean. It might have been the water that was making Joni sick.

Carol: Friend, I wonder where you prepare *your* food? Maybe you cook on a stove and have a bench where you prepare the food. Maybe you cook over a fire. But wherever we prepare our food we need to be very careful that the food is clean and the area where we prepare the food is clean. Let's talk a bit about how can we do that!

Tammy: Ros is here with us today. Her daughter-in-law, Sally, is a health inspector. Her job is to look at kitchens where people prepare food to sell. She checks that the food is safe to eat and the place is kept clean. Welcome Ros.

Ros: Thank you. It's really good to have a daughter-in-law who's a health inspector. So I asked her what we can *all* do to be sure we don't make ourselves or our families sick.

The first thing Sally talked about was washing our hands.

Carol: We've talked before on *Women of Hope* about washing our hands haven't we! And it *really is* the most important thing we can do to keep ourselves, and our family, healthy.

Ros: Sally said that we should always wash our hands carefully all over with soap before we begin to prepare *any* food. But if we don't have soap – then we can just run clean water over our hands. That will get rid of most of the germs. And while we're preparing the food, we must *always* wash our hands between handling raw food and cooked food. She said that's the best thing we can do to keep

ourselves and anyone else from getting sick! Of course we need to do the same with the utensils we use – the knives, cutting boards, bowls, plates.

Tammy: So if you've been cutting meat with a knife, *always* wash it thoroughly before slicing up any cooked food, or any food that you're going to eat raw – like salad food or fruit. In fact, always keep raw food and cooked food separate, is that right?

Ros: Definitely!

Carol: And *always* wash the surface you're using to cut on after you've been cutting meat... and before you use it for anything else.

Ros: That's right because we don't want anything like drops of blood from the meat to get into food that's ready to eat. We need to keep all these surfaces as germ-free as we can.

Tammy: How does someone do that if they don't have disinfectant or soap to clean those surfaces?

Ros: That's a good question Tammy. I was thinking the same thing so I asked Sally. She said you can put the cloth into a bowl and pour boiling water into the bowl. When it's cooled enough to handle, squeeze it out and wipe the surface clean. Something else we can use is vinegar or lemon juice – both of these are very good for cleaning surfaces too. And of course its important to keep the *cloth* clean – in fact have a few cloths - wash them out each day and hang them in the sun to dry. And keep a separate clean cloth for drying your hands.

Tammy: So at the beginning of each day take out a clean cloth for wiping things and a clean cloth for drying your hands. Then at the end of the day put them into the wash.

Ros: Yes, cloths that are used to wipe food off surfaces soon get full of germs if they're left lying about – and if they're in a warm place, the germs will spread on the cloth very quickly.

Carol: And these germs will spread onto other places that we wipe...so we're really making them dirty, not clean.

Ros: Exactly!

Carol: We're talking about kitchen hygiene – keeping the area where we prepare and cook food as clean and germ-free as we can.

We've talked about washing our hands before we prepare any food; washing our hands in between handling raw food and cooked food; and washing the surfaces and utensils, like spoons and knives, often – especially between cutting raw food and cooked food; and using clean cloths each day.

Tammy: Ros, did Sally say anything about what to do if we're not sure that our water is clean?

Ros: Yes she did Tammy. She said that we can boil the water in a pot for a few minutes to make sure it kills all the germs. Then keep the water in the clean pot that it's boiled in. Pour some into another clean container before we dip the cloth into it for wiping things clean...or for washing our hands...or washing raw food, like fruit, before we eat it.

And here's another way to make sure the water's clean. In a bucket of water, put about ¼ of a cup of bleach...that's all you need to be sure that the water is clean and germ free. Use this to wipe the surfaces...but remember to pour some into a clean smaller container before dipping the cloth into it.

Carol: This is a lot of good information Ros. Did Sally tell you anything else?

Ros: Mmmm – let me think... She told me a bit about keeping our *food* safe. She said that when a meal is cooked we should always eat it within about 2 hours. If it's not eaten after that we should throw it out – unless we have a good cold place like a refrigerator to store it in. And when we store food we should be careful to store cooked food and raw food separately. Meat should be eaten either hot or cold. If we leave meat warm for a long time, the germs in the meat will grow very fast and we might become sick like Joni. Dairy food – milk, cheese, butter – should be kept cold. And cooked rice is a 'high-risk' food. That means that if it's sitting about in the warm air for too long it can become full of germs too and make us sick. If you're buying cooked food – don't leave it lying around. Buy it and eat it...or throw out what's left.

Tammy: So – let's see if we can remember... Wash your hands before you start preparing food...wash your hands and all the utensils and surfaces between preparing raw food and cooked food – keep raw food and cooked food separate...make sure the water you use is clean...use a clean cloth every day for wiping surfaces and another clean one to wipe your hands.

Ros: And here are some last things to remember... Cover any food that's waiting to be cooked – or waiting to be eaten so that flies cannot get onto it. They carry a lot of germs. And if you're sick, don't prepare food for other people to eat...especially if you have vomiting or diarrhea. These germs will spread very quickly to others and make them sick too. Don't cough or sneeze near food, or wipe your nose then handle food. And always wash your hands after using the toilet.

Carol: Thanks for that Ros and please say thank you to Sally.

Ros: I will.

Carol: We've been hearing some stories on *Women of Hope* about the early followers of Jesus Christ, and the things that happened after Jesus died, came back to life, and returned to heaven. Do you remember some of them?

Tammy: We heard about how God sent his Holy Spirit to give these men and women the power to tell the good news about Jesus...and to heal sick people... And how they shared their lives and the things they owned with one another...

Carol: Yes, and how they were rejected, beaten and locked up by the authorities. They had to leave their homes to find safety, and they took the message of the Good News with them...

Fran: That's right. So, many of the *Jewish* people believed in Jesus. That was the nation that Jesus belonged to. They were proud to be the nation that God had chosen to receive his word and his law. So far, the message of Jesus was only heard by Jewish people. Let's hear what happened next. Here's the story from God's true word, the Bible. (Acts 10)

Fran: The country of the Jewish people was being ruled by the Romans. At Caesarea, a town on the coast, there was a Roman officer, Cornelius, in charge of the soldiers stationed there. Cornelius had learnt a lot about God from the Jewish people. He and his family prayed to God regularly and gave generously to poor people.

One afternoon at the time set for prayers, Cornelius had a vision of an angel of God, who came to him and called, 'Cornelius!' Cornelius stared at him, afraid. 'What is it, Lord?' he asked.

The angel answered, 'Your prayers and gifts to the poor were an offering to God and he has seen them. Now send some of your men to the city of Joppa to bring back a man named Simon Peter. He is staying with Simon the leather worker, who lives by the sea.'

When the angel had gone, Cornelius called two of his servants and a soldier who loved God, and sent them to Joppa to find this man Peter. The journey took them until after midday the next day.

Carol: Excuse me, Fran? That's unusual, isn't it? The Jewish people generally thought the Romans were bad, but here was a Roman officer who didn't use his power to hurt people. He had stopped worshipping the Roman gods when he learned about the one true and holy God, who made heaven and earth. And God was pleased with him. He saw that he was sincere. Cornelius really wanted to worship and obey God. Are you sincere and genuine about wanting to know God?

Tammy: So what did God do?... He sent an angel to tell him what to do next; and Cornelius obeyed. The angel told him to find Simon Peter. Now, we've heard about Peter before, haven't we? He was one of Jesus' closest followers, and a leader of the first Christians. What was he doing in Joppa? That's a long way from where he lived.

Fran: Peter was in Joppa to teach about Jesus, and to encourage the followers of Jesus. Well, Let's continue the story from God's word.

It was the time for the midday prayers, and Peter went up to the flat roof to pray. He hadn't eaten yet, and he was hungry. While he waited for the meal, Peter went into a trance and saw a vision from God. He saw something like a huge bed-sheet, being let down from heaven by its four corners. There were all kinds of animals in it, and reptiles and birds. Then a voice told him, 'Get up Peter, kill something and eat it'.

Peter was shocked. You see, when God's people were living as nomads in the desert, God had told them which animals were 'clean' - they were allowed to eat these ones. But other animals and reptiles were considered 'not clean' and no good Jew would eat them. So Peter didn't want to break that law and eat an animal that wasn't 'clean'. He said, 'Surely not, Lord! I've never eaten anything that's not clean.'

This happened three times, and then the sheet seemed to be taken back to heaven, leaving Peter wondering what it all meant.

Just then, the men sent by Cornelius arrived at the gate. They had found the right house and asked if Simon Peter was staying there. Peter felt God saying to him, 'Three men are looking for you. Go downstairs and go with them, for I have sent them'. So Peter went down and greeted them. They explained that Cornelius was a good man, respected by all, and he wanted to hear Peter's message. The next day they all set off back to Caesarea, with some of the believers from Joppa. Cornelius was ready when they arrived the following day, and he greeted Peter with great respect. Cornelius had called all his family and friends together to hear what Peter had to say.

Then Peter did something he had never done before...he entered the house of a Roman man – Cornelius. He said to Cornelius, 'I'm sure you know that it's against our law and custom for a Jew to have meetings with those who aren't Jewish, or to visit them. But God has shown me that I shouldn't call anyone 'unclean', so I came when you called me.'

Tammy: Can I interrupt again for a moment? Can you see how God got Peter ready to go and talk to these people who weren't Jews? Yes, it was by that vision of the sheet with the 'unclean' animals; Peter suddenly understood that he shouldn't judge people by their nationality or race. That was a big step for a good Jewish man, but Peter saw that God had a bigger plan than just caring for one nation. Let's hear what happened next.

Fran: Cornelius explained to Peter all about the angel, and said they wanted to hear Peter's message. Peter said, 'I see now that God does not have favorites, but he accepts people from every nation if they honor him and do what is right'.

Then Peter told them all about Jesus, saying, 'God gave Jesus the Holy Spirit and the power to do good and to heal many people, because God was with him. We saw all this, and how the authorities killed Jesus; but God raised him up from the dead and he was seen by many people. And now God has announced that Jesus is the one who will judge all people, and everyone who believes in Jesus will have their sins forgiven by God.'

The friends and family of Cornelius believed Peter's message, and right away they received God's Holy Spirit, praising God joyfully, just like the Jewish believers did at the beginning. Peter's friends from Joppa were amazed; they had never thought that the message about Jesus was for other nations too.

That's the end of this part of the story from God's word.

Carol: That's a really important story Fran told us today. How did *you* feel about it?

Tammy: I think it tells us something important about God. It shows us that God doesn't belong to just one tribe or nation. He is the God who *made* all the earth, all the people, and he *cares* for all the earth and all the nations. That means he cares for *you*.

Fran: And it tells us that God doesn't favor one group more than another. You won't be accepted or rejected by God because of your skin color, or where you were born, or what kind of work you do. What did Peter say?... 'God does not have favorites, but he accepts people from every nation if they honor him and do what is right'.

I think that's wonderful, because my family wasn't Jewish. My ancestors didn't know God, but the message came to my country, the message that God loves us all and forgives us when we trust in Jesus. That's good news for anyone!

Tammy: Did you notice that Cornelius was sincere in his search for God? God did, and he sent someone to tell Cornelius the whole story. Then Cornelius and his family really welcomed the message. Maybe you want to know more about God, and today you're hearing more of the message. I hope you're thinking hard about it, and that you'll welcome this message into your heart too.

Carol: If you want to know more, maybe you know someone who follows Jesus and you could talk to them. If you'd like to write to us with any questions, we'd love to hear from you . You can write to us in care of this station or at TWR Women of Hope.... The address: TWRWomenofHope.org
We do hope you will be with us again. Have a great week filled with God's blessings.

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