

# To Teach Keepers

October/November 2007

A Ministry of Titus 2 Christian Homekeeper  
Mentoring Women for Christ

www.t2chk.org

## Psalm 100

### A Psalm for Giving Thanks

*Make a joyful noise to the Lord,  
all the earth!*

*Serve the Lord with gladness!  
Come into his presence with singing!*

*Know that the Lord, he is God!  
It is he who made us, and we are his;  
We are his people,  
and the sheep of his pasture.*

*Enter his gates with thanksgiving,  
and his courts with praise!  
Give thanks to him; bless his name!*

*For the Lord is good;  
his steadfast love endures forever,  
and his faithfulness to all generations.*



## Giving Thanks

by Sylvia Britton

Psalm 100 was one of the first scripture passages I committed to memory as a child. I was 8 years old in Vacation Bible School when I first learned it by heart. A year later God forgave my sins and planted His love in my heart. I've remembered that psalm ever since those days, but in the hurry up world I live in, I have often forgotten what it means to be thankful. I've had to have many wake-ups and reminders over the years to be thankful to the Lord. Thanksgiving Day is always a huge reminder of what God has done for me.

Thanksgiving Day began as a distinctly Christian holiday in the United States. It was established on the basis of scripture commanding God's people to give thanks corporately and as individuals. These days though, many people call it Turkey Day and have no understanding or care for its real meaning. Good food, family and football seem to have taken over as the main focus of the day, and while none of those things are wrong, they fall very short of the deeper meaning of Giving Thanks and Thanksgiving Day.

God's people are to give thanks every day, not just on a certain specified day. Thanksgiving Day in the US is a good reminder though of the way we should thank God. Psalm 100 tells us how to thank Him.

**We are told to thank God:**

**With Shouts of Joy!** ~ We shout at ball games and

children's events and we shout with excitement at other events. This passage tells us that we are to let our joy and thankfulness out with a shout!

**With Glad Service** ~ Service to the Lord is one way of thanking Him, but we are admonished to serve with gladness, with a smile. How often do you find yourself serving your family or others with a grudge or with resignation instead of a smile and gladness? Serving others with this good spirit is as serving the Lord (Colossians 3:23).

**With Singing** ~ Open your mouth in song to the Lord. Don't neglect to sing in the worship service at church, and sing at home to praise Him. Keep a hymnal handy and when you are performing a task that requires you to stand or sit for a long while, use the hymnal to remind you of the words to songs that give Him glory!

**By Remembering Who He is** ~ He is God and you're not. Recognize His authority over your life and the world. Recognize that He allows sin and sinful people to thrive for now because He is long-suffering and wants them to turn to Him. Acknowledge that He is in control.

**By Recognizing That He Made You** ~ We didn't make ourselves, He made us. Therefore, He knows us and knows what is best for us. And as our good and benevolent Father, He will allow what is best for us into our lives, even when we don't understand His actions. He is God; we don't always understand Him.

**By Remembering That He Cares For You** ~ He made you and He cares about you. He is called the Good Shepherd. A good shepherd always cares for his sheep. In John chapter 10, we read about that special care (John 10:14-15). We have that assurance.

**We're told to praise Him:**

**In Public** ~ "Enter His gates...." This is the public part of praise and worship where we join our voices and hearts with others who love Him and praise the King.

**In Private** ~ "Enter His courts...." Do you praise Him when you are going about your day? Do you think to thank the Lord when He blesses you and shows you His care in your life?

**In Secret** ~ "be thankful and bless His Name...." We're called into the Holiest Place through Christ Jesus to thank the Lord. We are to kneel in adoration of the King, alone and in our hearts.

**We are told Who we are thanking and praising:**

**His Goodness** ~ "For the Lord is good...."

**His Mercifulness** ~ "His mercy is everlasting...."

**His Truthfulness** ~ "His truthfulness endures to all generations."

*Who would not praise and give thanks to this God? Determine that you will offer up thanks to the Lord this Thanksgiving and make this holiday a blessing to the Lord instead of an ordinary day off work. Determine that you will live out your praise and thanks daily.*



You can start right now to make the upcoming holidays a pleasant, unrushed blessing for you and your family.

## A Simple Little Plan for Holiday Cheer

by Sylvia Britton



Holidays are notoriously hectic and busy and we all have had those holidays that we just wish would be over. You can start right now to make the upcoming holidays a pleasant, unrushed blessing for you and your family.

First, begin by putting your holiday duties into these categories:

- 1) Decorating
- 2) Cards
- 3) Social Functions
- 4) Church Functions
- 5) Special Meals
- 6) Gift Buying/Making

Get yourself a calendar that you can write on. Write down all dates for social and church functions. Choose at least one date to work on card-sending. Gather your supplies: cards

and envelopes, a nice pen, stamps and a helper or two. If you send a holiday letter, print those off ahead of time.

Reserve one evening for just folding letters and stuffing envelopes.

Reserve another evening or two for addressing envelopes and applying postage.

When everything is addressed and ready, take them to the post office.

Next, get yourself a spiral notebook or use your household notebook. Make a note of meals and social gatherings you will host at your home. Make a separate page for each function that you will host. Make lists on that page of meal ideas, games, favors, activities and table decorations. As you work on each element check them off. As you get new ideas, list them on the appropriate page. Give yourself as much time as you need to prepare your home for guests.

Start your cleaning and organizing early so you will not be rushed.

Make a chart of gift giving ideas. List names and several ideas for each person. Take the list with you everywhere so when you have opportunity to purchase a gift you will have your list.

Make home decorating a family event. Have hot chocolate, cookies, caroling and decorate the main areas of the house. Delegate other rooms to family members and see what they come up with! Keep your decorating simple to keep the stress level down.

Check out the T2CHK web site ([www.t2chk.org](http://www.t2chk.org)) for the **Thanksgiving Preparation** link that can be used for planning and preparing all kinds of celebrations and parties.



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## Chocolate Mint Nut Balls

from Wardeh Harmon

- \* 2 cups raw nuts such as cashews, hazelnuts or almonds
- \* 1 cup sesame tahini or almond butter
- \* 1/2 cup agave syrup or honey
- \* 1/3 cup cocoa powder

- \* 1/2 teaspoon sea salt
- \* 1 teaspoon vanilla
- \* 1/2 teaspoon peppermint flavoring

Grind the nuts in a heavy duty blender or food processor until they resemble a coarse flour.

Empty the ground nuts into a bowl. Add all other ingredients. Mix together well. Lay a sheet of wax paper on a baking tray that will fit in your freezer. Grease hands to roll 2 tablespoon portions into round balls. Place on prepared tray. Freeze. Thaw a few minutes before serving.

## Autumn Tea

by Sylvia Britton

Tea time and homeschoolers just seem to go together. Those extra hours at home during the day lend themselves nicely to an hour or so of tea and conversation.

My children and I started having a tea time during the afternoon several years ago. Its such a lovely way to spend an hour in the afternoon. When my older children happen to drop by at tea time, they fall right into the ritual as if they've never left home. My grown sons enjoy tea as much as my littlest girl and we all enjoy the company of each other at tea time.

Here's how we have tea each afternoon these days when I have just two little ones at home:

I put on the kettle and warm the pot. My youngest son sets out the tea tray made by my oldest son. It stores all our cups and saucers, napkins, spoons, plates and tiny forks. My youngest daughter gets out our store of tea time treats that we have made and stored.

Sometimes we have tiny sandwiches and sliced fruit. Sometimes we have cookies or even pudding! One of our favorite treats is homemade graham crackers with our tea.

While the tea brews, we all busy ourselves with setting out the pretty china that I have collected through the years. Some of it matches and some doesn't, but its all very nice to look at. I slice a lemon and put it on a small cut glass plate.

Often we take our tea outside and enjoy it at a small table on the deck or even on a blanket under the trees. There is nothing as comforting as sipping a cup of warm tea all snug in a sweater outside amid the falling Autumn leaves.

Tea time is also time to lavish dainty and delicious treats on friends and family. But that doesn't mean that tea time treats have to be difficult or expensive to prepare. The best tea time foods are homemade or delicious bought baked goods that are served in small quantities.

### *Homemade Graham Crackers ~ makes 6 dozen*

- \* 1 cup shortening
- \* 4 cups wheat flour
- \* 1 cup brown sugar
- \* 1 teaspoon baking soda
- \* 1 cup white sugar
- \* 2 teaspoons baking powder
- \* 1 cup honey
- \* 1/2 teaspoon salt
- \* 2 cups white flour
- \* 1 cup sweet milk
- \* 1 teaspoon vanilla

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Cream shortening and sugar until fluffy. Add vanilla. Sift flour. Measure and add salt, soda, and baking powder. Sift again. Add sifted dry ingredients alternately with milk. Mix thoroughly after each addition. Chill dough overnight.

The next morning, turn out on a floured board and roll as thin as possible. Cut in squares. Place 1" apart on greased cookie sheet. Bake at 350 degrees until golden brown.



**Steam rises from a cup of tea and we are wrapped in history, comfort of ages in our hands.**

~Faith Greenbowl~

## How to Brew a Pot of Tea

1. Fill the kettle with fresh cold water. Put on the stove and allow to come to a full rolling boil.

2. Meanwhile, fill the teapot with very hot tap water, put the lid on and let it sit to warm.

3. Just before the water in the kettle reaches the full

rolling boil, pour out the water in the tea pot and add the tea to the pot; 1 teaspoon per tea cup of water the pot will hold. Or use one tea bag per teacup.

4. When the water boils, take the teapot to the kettle and pour the boiling water in the pot, over the tea.

5. Cover the pot with the lid. Let the tea brew for 3-5 minutes, depending on what kind of tea you are using. Usually, large leaf teas require longer brewing time than small leaf teas.

6. Before serving, stir the tea once. Pour through a strainer into cups.



**Before adding boiling water to the teapot, fill it with very hot tap water.**

***Tea time is also time to lavish dainty and delicious treats on friends and family.***



Tea time isn't *all* about etiquette and using the right fork to pick up the lemon.

***Don't ever serve milk and lemon in a teacup together. The milk will curdle and make a mess!***



If you are cold, tea will warm you; if you are depressed, it will cheer you; if you are excited, it will calm you.

~William Gladstone~

## Tea Tips

Tea time isn't *all* about etiquette and using the right fork to pick up the lemon. Having someone for tea is more about caring for people and lavishing your attention and interest on them while they are in your home.

Be gracious when offering or taking tea. Compliment

your hostess on anything that pleases you — the tea, the decor, the atmosphere. Avoid offense. Offer your help if you sense it is needed to serve tea or converse with guests.

Lemon for tea is to be sliced rather than quartered. Provide small forks to pick up the slices to add to

the tea cups before the tea is added.

Don't ever serve milk and lemon in a teacup together.

The milk will curdle and make a mess!



## Autumn Tea Recipes

### Chai

- \* 1 cup milk
- \* 1 cup water
- \* 1/3 cup sugar
- \* 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- \* 1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
- \* 1/8 teaspoon ground allspice
- \* 2 single serving tea bags

In medium saucepan, bring milk and water just to a boil.

Stir in sugar, ground cinnamon, ground ginger, ground allspice and tea bags.

Reduce heat to low and simmer 3 minutes.

Remove tea bags, strain into mugs and serve warm.

### Apple-Cider Tea

Makes 6 servings

- \* 6 cups apple cider
- \* 6 cloves
- \* 3 cinnamon sticks (2-inch pieces)
- \* 2 orange & spice tea bags
- \* 3 tablespoons sugar
- \* 6 lemon slices, thin

In a medium-sized, heavy pot, place cider, cloves, and cinnamon.

Cover and warm over medium heat. When hot, add tea bags and heat for 5 minutes.

Remove the tea bags, add sugar, and stir to dissolve.

Strain the liquid into mugs.

Float a lemon slice on the top of each mugful of tea.

### A Warming Tea

This is a recipe for a very delicious and warming tea. It's tasty, great for sick folks and well ones alike. It stimulates the appetite and warms up a cold tummy that's been playing or working outside.

- \* 4 cups water
- \* 2 ounces fresh ginger root, peeled and sliced
- \* 5 whole cloves
- \* Juice of one lemon

Bring all to a boil; simmer for 2 to 3 minutes.

Strain into cups and sweeten as desired with honey, sugar or agave nectar.

The longer this tea sits, the stronger the ginger becomes.

## Kashmiri Chai Tea

from Sean Paajanen

A chai tea recipe with powdered almonds.

- \* 1 teaspoon loose tea
- \* 4 cardamom pods, bruised
- \* 1 small cinnamon stick, broken up
- \* Saffron threads, a pinch
- \* 4 cups water
- \* 2 tablespoon finely powdered almonds
- \* Honey, to taste

Mix everything except honey and almonds in a

saucepan and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to a simmer and let tea steep for 5 minutes. Put a teaspoon of almonds in the bottom of each cup, and pour hot tea over. Sweeten with honey to taste.

## Let's Talk Attics, Porches and Decks

by Robin DePew

Fall is the perfect time to tackle some of those areas often overlooked; our attics, porches, and decks. Often we allow them to become "dumping grounds" and since we generally don't spend as much time outside as inside it's easy to overlook these spaces. So, let's take some time and focus on these neglected areas. Make a conscious effort to be flexible and work on each area a different day, allowing the weather to dictate the order you tackle them in. Begin with the porch and deck in the warmer weather and save the attic for when it's nice and cool.

Let's start with porches and decks. We all want a nice, welcoming area we can enjoy and share with friends and family. Is your porch able to provide that? If not, why? Is there a variety of clutter on and around your deck or porch? Do you have to wade through a sea of old flower pots, children's shoes and toys every time you want to enjoy your deck? Wouldn't it be nice to spend some family time on the porch? Or invite a friend over for a

cup of coffee? Remember, the golden rule applies here as with all other areas of the home, "A place for everything, and everything in its place." Take some time on a pretty day to tune into some classical music, get a nice glass of iced tea and launch an attack on your porch! As you de-clutter take the time to make necessary changes to avoid future problems. If shoes or toys are a constant issue you can request they always be brought inside, or create a new area for them to "live". And remember, no matter how glorious they were in the past, dead flowers are just that ... DEAD.

You'll know it's time to go on an expedition in your attic when the days are getting shorter and cooler. You have a couple of options. You can pull everything out at once or you can work on small sections of the attic at a time. The option you choose will depend upon the size of the attic and the surrounding work area as well as the time you have available. Your goal is to de-clutter, sort and organize! Go armed with labels or tape and a permanent marker so you

can label any storage containers clearly before replacing them in the attic.

You will find it helpful to label all sides, that way even if the container gets turned around you can still see a label. Pay attention when placing the containers back into the attic. A few minutes taken now to place like items together will make a big difference later. For instance, if all your seasonal and holiday décor are placed in themed groupings you will be able to pop up to the attic and get what you need quickly.

If you're lucky enough to have the space you can add storage solutions. Perhaps the eaves are high enough to allow you to hang baskets? Or maybe you can add some wire baskets or small shelves? And nails or hooks to hold cords and holiday lights? Make sure the additions don't block walkways or access to storage containers.

Attics, porches, and decks are just as much a part of the home as every other area. When well organized these areas can be enjoyable and easy to care for.



**Attics, porches, and decks are just as much a part of the home as every other area.**

***"A place for everything, and everything in its place."***

## Holly Candy

from Robin DePew

- \* 12 ounce jar marshmallow crème
- \* 1/2 stick margarine
- \* 5 cups corn flakes cereal
- \* Red Hots candy
- \* Green food coloring

Melt together the first two ingredients.

Add green food coloring. Pour in 5 cups cornflakes.

Shape and decorate with Red Hots to make holly wreaths.

Butter hands for easier shaping.



**Holly Candy**

## Beyond Sandwiches



**Photo 1: Everything you need to pack a healthy, warm lunch for your hard-working husband.**

*A healthy, warm packed lunch is a possibility for almost every working man.*

### Packing a Warm, Healthy Lunch for Your Husband (No Microwave Required)

by Wardeh Harmon

Sandwiches are great, don't get me wrong. But what man wants to eat a sandwich every day in his packed lunch? Or maybe he's already long past sick of that and has resorted to spending precious dollars on eating out during his lunch hour. I will show you how -- in less than 30 minutes each morning -- you can provide him a healthy, warm lunch. You'll either save him from the boredom of eating sandwiches every day, or from wasting precious dollars eating out.

A healthy, warm packed lunch is a possibility for almost every working man. And he doesn't need a microwave! Perhaps your husband is out in the field all day, without access to a microwave. Perhaps your family, like ours, chooses not to use a microwave. Perhaps your husband's office doesn't have a microwave or it is always busy during lunch hour. Perhaps your husband has only a limited amount of time for lunch and doesn't want to bother with reheating food -- he wants it ready to go.

Here's the solution for providing warm, healthy, varied, inexpensive lunches for your husband every day. He'll love you and he'll probably become the envy of the office!

Start with these things (Photo 1, left), which I will explain more fully:

- \* Cooler
- \* Square or rectangle plastic or glass travel containers, with lids
- \* Lexan water bottle (try [outback.com](http://outback.com) or your local outdoor supply store)
- \* Stainless steel insulated food jar(s) -- 16-ounce or 12-ounce
- \* Ice pack -- reusable, refreeze each night (not in picture)
- \* Main dish (from dinner before)
- \* Salad (from dinner before)
- \* Snacks -- fresh fruit, muffins, dried fruit, nuts, etc.
- \* Glass eating bowl (optional)
- \* Silverware
- \* Napkin -- preferably cloth
- \* Jar of toothpicks (optional)
- \* Travel container of mouthwash (optional)

**The Cooler:** Choose a hard cooler; they last longer and can take more beatings. Also, you won't risk broken zippers. The cooler we have dedicated for my husband is about an 11-quart size. The outer dimensions are about 13" wide (front) by 8" wide (side) by 14" tall. When selecting a cooler for purchase, I paid particular attention to the hinges. I didn't want those thin, separate hinges that are screwed to the outside of the lid and body, because those tend to split over time.

Instead, I chose a cooler where the lid fits into the

walls of the body of the cooler and there appear to be some internal pins allowing the back corners of the lid to rotate up and down.

**Plastic or Glass Food Containers:** Obviously I'd prefer glass containers -- they will last longer and I believe they're a healthier choice. But I can't find the right glass stackable containers to fit my husband's cooler. That's the key issue. You'll need to shop around to find rectangular or square containers that stack well and make good use of space in the cooler. Plastic containers should never be filled with hot food, or else the plastic may melt and share its particles with the eater via the food.

**The Main Dish:** Prepare plenty of dinner each night and those leftovers will become the main dish of your husband's lunch the next day. No extra cooking, just some planning ahead.

In the morning when packing the lunch, heat about two cups of the leftover main dish in a small saucepan on the stove, adding a little water if necessary. Adjust the amount based on the size of your insulated food jar; two cups is what my 16-ounce food jar will hold. While the main dish is heating, temper the food jar by filling it with boiling or very hot water. After about five minutes or when the leftovers are sufficiently heated (try to time the two events to coincide), pour the water out of the food jar and put the main dish in it. Screw the lid on right away. (continued on page 7)

## Beyond Sandwiches (continued)

I will share one word of caution which I learned through my husband's experience. He doesn't prefer the food in the jar to be boiling hot. He only has one-half hour for lunch and doesn't want to use up half of it waiting for the food to cool down -- nor does he like a burned tongue! So, don't heat the food too much. But on the other hand, make sure it is heated enough or it will be cold come lunch time. In addition, about once a week, I recommend you fill the jar and lid with a soapy vinegar water mixture and let it sit overnight, to keep it smelling fresh.

For main dishes including noodles, include those separately. They tend to get mushy sitting in moisture all day. In this case, make sure the main dish filling the food jar is added when it is quite hot because when your husband combines the noodles with it, the noodles will warm up a bit while the main dish cools off some. Don't forget to include a bowl out of which he can eat after combining the noodles with the hot dish.

You can use additional insulated food jars for other hot items, such as steamed veggies or a cooked vegetable dish. Use another of the 16-ounce size food jars or get a smaller one, such as a 12-ounce, which holds 1-1/2 cups of food.

There may be days that you're giving your husband a cold lunch, such as a cold grain salad and cold chicken, or sandwich fixings. On those days, don't use food jars, but use plastic or glass food

containers as described previously.

**The Salad:** When you make a salad for dinner, prepare extra of this also. Combine all the dry vegetable ingredients in one of the plastic or glass travel containers. Don't add the wet ingredients (such as tomato wedges or dressing) until the morning when packing the entire lunch in the cooler.

**Snacks:** Fresh fruit, dried fruit, nuts, seeds, and healthy muffins make excellent snacks. Pack enough so he'll have something to munch on in the morning and the afternoon. These healthy options will help keep his blood sugar stable and keep his energy up. When we're really hungry or stressed, we tend to binge on junk food. By providing healthy alternatives for snacking sensibly throughout the day, you'll be helping him stay balanced and healthy.

Cut up fruit (such as melon) can be put in another of the glass or plastic containers. Whole fruits can be left whole and stacked on top of everything else in the cooler. Little items like muffins and trail mixes can be packed in sandwich baggies or little paper bags.

**Put it All Together:** Take the main dish, salad, snacks, water bottle, silverware, bowl, napkin, toothpicks, and mouthwash and pack it all up. I will share pictures of how all this fits in my husband's cooler. The actual placement varies from day to day depending on the food I pack for him.

I do use the divider that came with this cooler because it creates compartments that make sense in how I pack his lunch. On the left side of the divider is all the food and related eating utensils. I stack (from the bottom up): ice pack, plastic containers with fruit and salad, and food jar. In front of those, I slip a spice jar filled with toothpicks (it has the green lid with white sticker) and a plastic bag holding a clean fork and spoon (which I reuse for many days before replacing it with another). He doesn't put dirty silverware back in this bag, and that is how I am able to keep it clean and reusable. (See Photo 2, right.)

On the right side of the divider, I put his water bottle. The space in front of the water bottle is where he packs his miscellaneous, non-lunch related items, like his digital camera, phone, and a little zip up pouch of other items he needs when out in the field with work.

Back on the left side of the divider, I pile up his snacks, which usually is just fruit, lots of fruit. (See Photo 3, right.) I will then wrap his cloth napkin around the fruit to protect it somewhat (not pictured).

I follow this process each week-day morning, while making porridge for our breakfast, in about half an hour. So, both breakfast and lunch for him in 30 minutes. And remember, no microwave required!

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Photo 2: Packing the ice pack, salad, main dish, water bottle, silverware and toothpicks.



Photo 3: Adding the snacks on top.

*When one door of happiness closes, another opens; but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one which has been opened for us.*

*~Helen Keller~*

## Creating a Home Filing System

by Robin DePew

Paper clutter is one of the most common complaints concerning housekeeping. It shows up in almost every room of the house and seems to multiply every time you take your eyes off it! We're going to look at a few ideas to help you achieve control of this clutter.

The key is to create a system for dealing with mail, school items, documents, and other paperwork. Once you have your system in place it's simply a matter of maintenance. In only a few moments a day, a few minutes a week, and perhaps an hour or so a few times a year you can easily keep on track.

Please keep one thing in mind; one system does not fit all. I'm going to give you some ideas to get you started, but I'm not the final word on the subject! No one is. Use this information and combine it with what you already do and create a customized system that works for your family. And, remember, the system that works well for you this year may not work as well next year! Be adaptable and willing to try new things.

Now, to start, sit down with pencil and paper and make a project list. At the bare minimum you should jot down ideas for dealing with mail and filing household paperwork. Make notes about the items you have on hand and can work with. The cost is entirely up to you. Spend as much or as little as you like on your filing system. You can start from scratch and buy all new supplies, or recycle what you already have on hand. Files and folders can be reused with the simple addition of new labels and cheaper plastic storage bin can be used as file totes. The one investment everyone should make is a cross-cut paper shredder. In today's world of identity theft it pays to be careful.

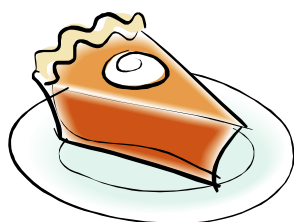
When organizing your system it's a good idea to keep two separate file boxes. Label them as "active" and "archive". The active file can be condensed into a small portable file box. A practical file to have in this one is "bills to be paid". You can keep all your bills together and organized. Your archive file will be the place to store the items you need long-term but don't regularly

need access to, and it will probably need to be larger. Decide ahead of time what items you want in each file container and make sure you label all folders.

Now you can get down to the nuts and bolts of organizing. Have a trash can handy and toss items you no longer need away as you sort. Have another container handy to place all papers to be shredded (these include anything with personal information on them). Everything else needs to be placed in the appropriate file. Have a few extra folders handy in case you need to create new files or folders as you go. Place all files in their file box and you are done! You need only keep up with the maintenance of your system. Diligence is the key word here. Make sure you deal with paperwork promptly. Procrastination is the enemy. For instance, you should only handle mail *once*. At that time you should make the decision to throw away, shred, or file.

Paper clutter doesn't have to be an ongoing problem in your home. With a little attention to detail you can create a system that works for you instead against you!

***The key is to create a system for dealing with mail, school items, documents, and other paperwork.***



### ***Pumpkin Pie Spice***

***Makes 1 teaspoon. Mix well:  
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon,  
1/4 teaspoon nutmeg,  
1/8 teaspoon ginger,  
and 1/8 teaspoon cloves.***

## Simple Peanut Butter Cookies

by Robin DePew

- \* 1 cup sugar
- \* 1 cup peanut butter
- \* 1 egg

Mix together. Shape into small balls.

Place on ungreased cookie sheet and gently flatten tops with a fork.

Bake at 350 degrees for 7 minutes or until lightly browned.

## Homemade Flax Seed Packs

by Wardeh Harmon

Some years I know exactly what I'm going to make for Christmas gifts and some years I don't figure it out until Thanksgiving.

I do always keep my eye out for ideas. This year, I found my idea -- herbal flax seed packs -- in the spring. I've had time to mull the idea over and practice it a bit. My practice flax seed packs are working well for me. I

haven't added herbs yet; that's an experiment for later -- or for YOU! I anticipate using mint & lemon-grass in my packs.

Flax seeds are best suited to these packs, because they don't develop the smell that rice packs do over time. Also, the individual seeds are softer than the rice grains; I find that the pack feels softer, smoother and more malleable next to my body.

Use the flax seed packs hot or cold. For hot use, put the pack in a covered glass baking dish (no metal). Heat it in the oven at 350 degrees for 20 to 30 minutes. For cold use, store the flax seed pack in the refrigerator or freezer until needed. If you're giving these packs as gifts, you'll want to include these instructions with each one. *Note: For the sensitive eye area, use only a chilled or room-temperature pack.*



12" x 12" channeled  
flax seed packs

## Flax Seed Pack Pattern

This pattern creates a 12" x 12" flax seed pack (see photo at right), with channels so the flax seeds stay in place. Vary it according to your desired size.

### Supplies:

- \* (1) 24-1/2" x 12-1/2" rectangle of sturdy, but soft lining fabric, such as a sheet
- \* (1) 24-1/2" x 12-1/2" rectangle of soft outer fabric, such as soft flannel or cotton
- \* Flax seeds, organic
- \* Herbs, organic (optional)
- \* Funnel & measuring cup(s)
- \* Fray Check

**Create the Pac:** Lay the lining fabric down on a flat surface, with either side facing up. Lay the outer fabric on top of it, right side facing up. Fold in half widthwise, so that the folded dimensions are now 12-1/2" x 12-1/4" (almost square).

Keeping the side opposite the fold open, sew the other 2 sides closed, using 1/4" seam allowance.

Turn to right side. Use a

wooden chopstick or pointed object to open out corners fully. Press all flat.

**Create the Channels:** Using a fabric pen or pencil and a ruler, mark seam lines 2 inches apart, parallel to the 2 sewn sides. At the open side, end the seam line marking 1/2" from the edge. Pin along these seam lines, through all layers.

Topstitch along seam lines. Backstitch at beginning and end of each seam line. Begin at the fold and finish 1/2" from the open side. Pull needle threads to the underside. Knot the needle and bobbin threads together. Don't clip threads yet.

**Fill the Channels:** If using herbs, fill one of the channels 3/4 full. A funnel and a measuring cup will help tremendously. Pour this amount out into a small bowl and then take a final measurement of how many flax seeds were needed to fill that one channel. Put the flax seeds back into the bowl. In each of 5 other bowls, put the same amount of flax seeds. Add

desired amount of herbs to each bowl and incorporate gently.

Using the funnel and measuring cup, fill each channel with flax seeds (and herbs, if using) about 3/4 full. The extra space will allow the flax seeds to spread out and curve around the body. Hold the pack up while filling it, so you don't lose seeds out of other channels -- this can be tricky!

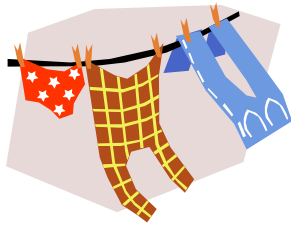
**Close up the Channels:** Still holding the pack upright, turn the open edges to the inside 1/4". Pin closed. Stitch across, 2 seams close together. One seam will be closer to the edge than the other. Pull the needle threads to the underside. Knot the needle and bobbin threads. Don't clip threads yet.

**Finishing Up:** Dot all the seam ends (where you knotted the threads together) with Fray Check. Allow to dry for 15 minutes. Clip threads.

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*A little child,  
a shining star,  
A stable rude,  
the door ajar.  
Yet in that place  
so crude, forlorn,  
The Hope of all  
the  
world was born.*

~Anonymous~



*Most fabric looks better and lasts longer if it is simply tossed in a cool air cycle and then hung up to finish drying.*

**Hot water must be at least 130° in order to kill germs and viruses.**



*Clothes dried on a line or outside are not as soft as clothes dried in the dryer.*

## A Laundry Primer

by Sylvia Britton

If you are just starting out keeping a home and doing laundry, or if you need a refresher course, here are some tips for making Mount Washmore disappear quickly.

Start by sorting through your laundry and putting it in piles according to color and washing instructions. Your piles should consist of:

**Darks:** like jeans and other dark colored fabric

**Brights:** like children's clothing and flowered or print fabric

**Lights:** like light blue oxford shirts, khaki pants

**Whites:** like underclothes and t-shirts

### Towels and wash cloths

Laundry that is especially soiled or stained needs special treatment. Treat stains with a commercial stain remover or use a paste made of laundry powder and water, or use a liquid detergent. I prefer to use a bar of Fels Naptha wetted and rubbed on stains before laundering. Read labels on commercial stain treatments carefully, some cannot be left on for more than 5 minutes without causing bleaching. Soaking is also a good way to get stains out. Rub a detergent or stain remover onto the stain, then immerse the clothing into a pan of tepid water. If the article is sturdy and will not fade, you may want to use warm or hot water. Allow the article to sit in the water

a while and then rub the stain gently with your fingers, if it has not been removed, allow it to sit longer. When the stain is gone, rinse the article well or add it to the regular wash.

Everything can be washed in cold water of course, but you may choose to use warm water for most loads. I like to use hot water for towels. Hot water must be at least 130° in order to kill germs and viruses, so if your water temperature isn't set that high, using hot water is ineffective. Another way to sanitize laundry is to use a germ-killing additive such as Lysol concentrate.

Before adding clothes to the wash, check and empty pockets. Check to see if repairs need to be made. Holes, tears or runs can become worse if left to go through the wash. make repairs first, then launder.

Start the water in the washer, add the detergent or soap and then add clothing. This will allow the water better access to the detergent and allow it to begin working faster.

If your washer has a gentle cycle, be sure to utilize it for light-weight fabrics or when indicated by laundering labels.

When adding clothes to the dryer, shake out each article to help remove wrinkles. Don't overload the dryer. Check the dryer's vent for lint frequently. Clothing doesn't have to be dried completely in the dryer, in fact, most fabric

looks better and lasts longer if it is simply tossed in a cool air cycle and then hung up to finish drying.

While one load of laundry is going, you can gather up hangers and clothes pins. Some clothing needs to be hung to dry. All clothing that is usually hung up should be hung immediately as it comes out of the dryer. Folding clothes as they come out of the dryer is preferred to allowing the clothing to sit and develop wrinkles. If you have children they can be a big help with folding clothes. My children have had a hard time learning how to fold clothes but we've persevered and they get better every year. Even if you cannot fold the clothes immediately when they come out of the dryer, you can prevent some wrinkles by shaking out each article and folding it over one time before laying it in a basket.

Clothes dried on a line or outside are not as soft as clothes dried in the dryer. Towels are usually rough and a little scratchy when dried outside. Some people really like this but if you had rather your towels be soft, use the dryer. To soften line-dried towels a little bit you can do this:

Add about 1 cup white vinegar or a commercial fabric softener to the rinse water.

Shake out the towel firmly before hanging.

Or, air-dry the towels a little in the dryer before hanging outside.

## Homemade Lavender Laundry Soap

This soap is great for laundry and smells wonderful. I use my homemade lye soap for the base. I guess you could also use ivory soap, but you must open up the ivory packages and allow the soap to dry out thoroughly before using it in this recipe. You can cut the ivory into chunks so it will dry faster, put it on a plate or tray and set somewhere where it won't be exposed to moisture. It will take from 1 week to 3 weeks depending on the

humidity.

You will need:

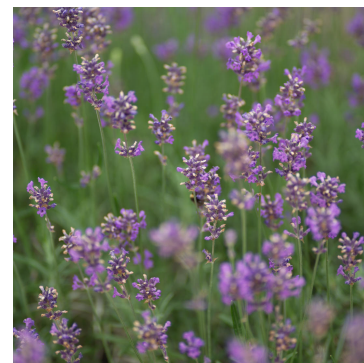
- \* 1 pound of dry, grated, cold process soap
- \* 8 ounces washing soda
- \* 8 ounces borax
- \* 1/2 ounce lavender oil

Use a large ceramic bowl to mix dry ingredients well. Wear plastic gloves if desired. Sprinkle the oil over the dry ingredients. Mix well.

Store in a box or jar, covered. Use 2 Tablespoons in each light load of

laundry. For heavily soiled laundry use 1/4 cup. When using this soap, remember that you must rinse well. I suggest using just 2 tablespoons of soap at first even on heavily soiled garments. Then add 1/2 cup white vinegar to the rinse water.

For more homemade, natural cleaner recipes, visit Sylvia's blog, Christian Homekeeper, which can be found at [www.t2chk.org/sylviasblog](http://www.t2chk.org/sylviasblog).



Lovely and useful lavender

## Homemade Lavender Water

Lavender water can be made from fresh or dried lavender flowers but I prefer the convenience of making it from pure lavender essential oil. Be sure you buy pure lavender oils not an oil that has other oils mixed in.

- \* 32 ounces pure water (I use distilled)
- \* 3 ounces isopropyl alcohol or vodka
- \* 1/8 teaspoon lavender oil
- \* 1 glass container

First sterilize your container with boiling water. Pour out the water and allow it to dry, turned upside down on a clean kitchen towel. When dry, you can funnel the above ingredients into the container. Stir. Cap.

The alcohol in the lavender water is not essential but it keeps the mixture from spoiling and it will not harm your clothes or your skin. This water can be used as a body spray or linen spray. It can be used to freshen up your hair too. If you know you are sensitive to any of the ingredients you should not use this spray.

## Homemade Lavender Fabric Softener

### Ingredient List 1

32 ounces white vinegar  
32 ounces baking soda  
64 ounces distilled or purified water

### Ingredient List 2

1/2 ounce essential oil

*All measures by volume (measuring cup).*

You will also need 1 large glass jar - I use a 2 quart mason jar.

Mix the baking soda into the vinegar over a sink, in a large glass jar. These two ingredients will "fizz". After the fizz dies down, add the water and essential oil and stir again.

*How to use:*

Use 1/4 cup per load. Add during rinse cycle.



***Lavender water can be made from fresh or dried lavender flowers but I prefer the convenience of making it from pure lavender essential oil.***

## Setting Up A Home Management Center

by Sylvia Britton

If you begin to think of your home as your job instead of simply where you spend your day, you will soon realize that you need a plan. There are so many things to do in a home every day to keep it running smoothly and so much to think about to keep your family provided for and your home tidy. As our lives become more complicated with technology and the general busyness of life, we can use our modern resources to make life more manageable and to free up time to spend with our families.

### A Household Management Center begins with a well made Household Notebook.

The real challenge in making a Household Management Center is putting together the **Household Notebook**. It can be as elaborate or as simple as you need.

### How to Make a Household Notebook:

I started using a household notebook in 1995 when my fourth child was born. It was simply born out of my habit of keeping lists. I had one list on the frig for groceries, one list by the phone for errands and phone calls, one list in my purse for things to buy or look for..... and it went on and on. I finally got the bright idea to keep all my lists together in one spiral notebook. And that is the basic way to keep a household notebook. It doesn't have to be fancy, complicated or exhaustive of every minute thing you do in a day or week. It simply has

to work for you.

I continued to work on refining and improving my household notebook and finally started using a three ring binder with page covers. I did this because there are some kinds of information that don't change much through the year. And, a spiral notebook can start to look rather shabby and hard to keep together after a while!

Phone numbers, emergency numbers, schedules and chore charts, all stay basically the same throughout the year. So I make a page for each of these and use the same pages all year. The page protectors keep the pages clean and free from tears.

Now that my daughters are older, they like to use the household notebook, too, and I want them to be interested, so I involved them in making the divider sheets this time.

They decorate the divider sheets with drawings and saying, Bible verses and stickers. Then they slip the completed dividers down into page protectors. They make dividers for each section of the notebook (see insert to the right, entitled **Household Notebook Sections**).

There was a time when I needed to have more information in my household notebooks. Things change, needs change. So if you are building your own household notebook, don't go fill it up with things you will never use or will feel guilty for not using. Just

take inventory of what you have to keep up with right now. Then keep all that information in your household notebook.

I have a separate notebook in which I keep things like bills, insurance information, budget information, etc. You may want to include all this information in your Household Notebook instead of a separate book.

Once you get your Household Notebook together, you can arrange your Management Center. It doesn't take much space, just an organized space for these items:

- \* *Your Household Notebook*
- \* *Ready access to a telephone*
- \* *A pad and pencil or blank pages in your Household Notebook*
- \* *Access to information such as phone book, household records, cookbooks.*
- \* *Adequate storage space for everything in your center.*

As you use and become acquainted with your Household Management Center, you may want to incorporate other helps such as a Bible study center with Bible, concordance and dictionary; a record keeping center with accordion file and labels or even a greeting card center using your Household Notebook's calendar and storage pockets.



## Household Notebook Sections

\* **Calendar**: A two page spread calendar for each month with space to make notes and write down information I want to keep.

\* **Emergency Numbers**, numbers for our older children when they stay with the younger ones.

\* **Daily Schedules** for each child and myself. I printed off what I wanted at [www.donnayoung.org](http://www.donnayoung.org).

\* **Shopping Lists** ~ including groceries and anything else I need to buy.

\* **Menu Plans and Menu Ideas** ~ I list menus for each week including what cookbook and page number some of the recipes are in.

\* **Chore Lists** ~ Who does what every day. This includes some reminders for myself. I used to use the Index Card System to get all my chores done every day, but as the years go on, I need that help less and less. There are some things though that I know I need to write down and schedule.

\* **Library Lists** ~ We use a curriculum that utilizes a LOT of books. So I note them down week to week and then take that paper to the library with me.

\* **Daily or Weekly Notes** ~ This is a list of things I think of that I need to do, need to talk to my husband about, phone call messages for others in the family, etc. I go through these every day, check off those that are taken care of and draw a line under the end of the day's Notes. Then I start again the next day. After a time, I can look back and tell you a lot about my days, answer family's questions about who called or when something happened. This has been a very helpful part of my notebook.

## Quick and Easy Chicken Pot Pie

by Robin DePew

- \* 2 cans (10 ¾ ounces each) cream of potato soup
- \* 1 can (16 ounces) mixed vegetables, drained
- \* 2 cups cooked, diced chicken
- \* ¼ to ½ cup milk
- \* ½ teaspoon thyme
- \* ½ teaspoon black pepper
- \* 2 9 inch pie crusts
- \* 1 egg, slightly beaten

Stir all ingredients together and spoon into bottom pie crust. Place top crust, trimming any excess dough. Crimp edges to seal. Place several slits in top crust and brush with egg. Bake at 375 degrees Fahrenheit for 40 minutes. Cool at least 10 minutes before serving.

## Quinoa and Butternut Pie

by Sylvia Britton

This is a good Thanksgiving recipe if you are trying to incorporate whole grains and veggies. This recipe will serve about 8 people.

- \* 1 - 1 1/2 pound butternut squash
- \* 16 fresh whole sage leaves
- \* 2 fresh sage leaves, chopped finely
- \* 1 tsp minced garlic
- \* 3/4 cup finely minced onion
- \* 1 Tbsp olive oil
- \* 1 cup quinoa
- \* 2 cups chicken or vegetable stock
- \* 1 1/2 cups finely grated parmesan cheese
- \* 1 tsp sea salt
- \* 1/8 tsp fresh ground black pepper
- \* Vegetable oil cooking spray
- \* 1 glass pie plate
- \* 2 baking sheets

Preheat the oven to 375° F  
Brush 2 baking sheets with olive oil.

Cut the squash into 6 1/4 inch thick rings.  
Peel and dice the rest of the squash.

## Hot Chocolate Mix

by Robin DePew

- \* 1 box instant non-fat dry milk (8 quarts are needed)
- \* 1 box powdered sugar
- \* 1 jar (6 ounces) Coffee Mate

Place the rings and the diced squash on the oiled baking sheets. Sprinkle the squash with 1 tsp olive oil and toss. Sprinkle with 10 of the whole sage leaves. Bake for 20 minutes. Let cool completely, but keep the oven on.

In a medium saucepan over medium heat: Place 1 tsp oil, onion, and garlic. Cook and stir til translucent. Add quinoa and stock. Bring to a boil lower heat and cover. Cook about 15 minutes or until all liquid has been absorbed. Remove from heat and let stand for about 3 minutes.

In a large mixing bowl: stir together the quinoa, diced squash, chopped sage, parmesan cheese, salt and pepper.

Coat a glass pie plate with cooking spray. Arrange 8 whole sage leaves on the pie plate in a circular pattern where each slice of a pie would be. On top of each sage leaf, place a half ring of squash.

Spoon the quinoa mixture over the squash rings and sage leaves, pressing the mixture down firmly.

- \* 1 box (16 ounce) instant chocolate powder

Mix and store in an airtight container.



## Pizza Casserole

by Robin DePew

- \* 1 pound ground beef
- \* 1/3 cup chopped onions
- \* ½ cup grated cheese
- \* 1 teaspoon oregano
- \* 1 can pizza sauce (about 2 cups)
- \* 2 cups wide noodles, cut to fit casserole dish (about 8 noodles)

Brown meat and add the onions and oregano. Drain off fat and add pizza sauce. Cook noodles and mix with meat mixture. Place in greased casserole dish. Sprinkle cheese on top. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes.

## Kay's Fruit Cake

by Robin DePew

- \* ½ cup shortening
- \* 1½ cups white sugar
- \* 2 eggs
- \* 1 cup applesauce
- \* 2 cups flour
- \* ¼ teaspoon salt
- \* 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- \* ½ teaspoon ground cloves
- \* 1 cup raisins (dusted with flour)
- \* 1 cup candied fruit (dusted with flour; save a few undusted pieces for decoration)
- \* 1 cup nuts (pieces, dusted with flour) ~ Black walnuts work well

Cream shortening and sugar together.

Add eggs and beat well.

Add applesauce, beat well.

Add dry ingredients and beat until smooth.

Stir in raisins and nuts, followed by the fruit mix.

Pour into a wax paper lined (sides and bottom) angel food pan.

Bake about 1-1/2 hours at 275 degrees.

Cool for 25 minutes.

*Joy is not in things;  
it is in us.*

*~Richard Wagner~*

## How to Cook Dry Beans

Cooking dried beans is probably one of the most asked for set of cooking instructions I get here at CHK and at the T2CHK ministry. Its right up there with frying chicken. So, I thought I'd set down all the methods for cooking and preserving beans that I am aware of, in hopes that you can use it.

Beans can be cooked in a pan over the stove, in the oven, on an open fire, in the microwave or in a pressure cooker.

All dried bean cooking consists of three components:

1. *Water*
2. *Fat*
3. *Salt and other flavors*

**WATER:** Beans will not cook and get soft if cooked in hard water. You can try adding 1/2 tsp baking soda to every big pot of beans to soften the water and help the beans get soft as they cook. I have lived in areas where the water was so hard that not even baking soda worked. You must cook beans in enough water to cover all the beans throughout the cooking process or some of the beans may dry out.

**FAT:** Any oil or fat will do. Some people like to cook beans with meat such as smoked pork or sausage. You can use olive oil though or even canola oil. The fats give the beans a richer flavor. There is another reason for using oils or fats in beans though; the fats keep the beans from foaming and boiling over.

**SALT and OTHER FLAVORS:** Salt should be added to the beans to bring out the flavor. I add salt at the

beginning of the cooking process and have found that it does not keep the beans from getting soft while cooking and it makes for a more flavorful bean. If you have hard water you may want to experiment with adding salt at the end of the cooking process so that the salt will not hinder the softening of the beans. Be careful of adding too much salt if you are going to be adding salted meats to the beans.

If you are going to be adding acidic ingredients like tomatoes, add them after the beans have cooked completely. The acid will keep the beans from cooking and getting soft.

A phenomenon that occurs sometimes and keeps the beans from getting soft is called Hard Bean Syndrome. This is a genetic abnormality that occurs in some beans and it doesn't affect people who eat them, just keeps the beans from getting soft. Old beans will also have a hard time cooking up soft.

These methods are for pintos, great northern and navy beans.

### **BASIC BOIL and COOK METHOD**

Wash beans well. They are an agricultural product and all manner of dirt and plant matter can hang around in them. Strain them through a colander after you've washed them and picked out all the dried up, hard, off color and damaged beans.

Place the beans in a heavy bottomed pot and cover them by about 2 inches with fresh water. Add 2 tbsp oil. Bring to a boil. Boil hard for 2 minutes. Remove pot from

heat. Cover the pot and allow to sit for 2 hours.

Drain the cooking water and discard. Cover the beans with fresh water, bring to a boil, lower heat, cover pot, and cook until tender.

### **BASIC SOAK and COOK METHOD**

Wash beans thoroughly. Cover with water. Place in refrigerator and soak for at least 8 hours or over night. Discard soaking water. Place beans in a large heavy bottomed pot, cover with water by 2 inches. Add 2 tbsp oil. Bring to a boil, lower heat, cover pot, cook til tender.

Most soaked beans, and black eyed peas, usually take from 1 hour to 1 1/2 hours to cook. Limas, however only take 45-60 minutes as do split green peas and lentils. Soybeans can take 3 hours or more.

Often, beans are baked in an oven. I have found this process to be laborious unless you have first cooked the beans a while in water. Don't over-cook them though or they will be mushy after baking.

Preheat your oven according to the recipe you are using for baked beans. Then combine the drained cooked beans, seasonings, liquids and other ingredients in a casserole dish. Cover the dish and bake for 1 to 1 1/2 hours. You can brown the tops of the beans by removing the lid and baking the beans 15 to 30 minutes longer.



All dried bean cooking consists of three components: water, fat & salt and other flavors.

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