



**We are
Called**

TO HEAL. TO UNITE. TO JUSTICE.

Team Reflection- Huddle

No. 17 – Food Insecurity and the Pandemic

The pandemic outbreak and its economic shockwaves thrust nearly a quarter of U.S. households into experiences of food insecurity. Millions more children experienced insecurity. Researchers found between 28 to 30% of households were food insecure. About 6% of the population live in a food desert, and 87% of U.S. counties with the highest rates of food insecurity are rural. [17.1] Food insecurity also impacts immigrant populations and persons with disabilities. Along with economic factors, food insecurity exemplifies one social factor that contributes as much as 40% to a person's overall health.

Many people with food insecurity also experience underlying health conditions with related medical expenses. Added medical expenses cut into funds that would otherwise be used for household needs, including food. This contributes to a cycle of food insecurity and chronic disease, lower disposable income and decreased employability. The interconnected realities of this dimension of individual health can be difficult to balance and overcome.

Food is so connected to human health – certainly physically but also spiritually. The world's major religions all have connections to food. The three Abrahamic faiths – Judaism, Islam, and Christianity – share stories about food in common, like that of the prophet Abraham. The scriptures recount his wife Sarah feeding hungry visitors with bread, curds, and beef (Gen. 18:6-8). God is often encountered in mealtime rituals, but the meaningfulness of the encounter is difficult to honor if you are struggling to have enough food to begin with. Perhaps this is why Jesus says, "whenever you gave food to the hungry or drink to the thirsty, you did this to me" (Mt 25:31-45).

Consider

What does your place of work do to identify food insecurity among those we serve or even staff?

Are those needs met, and how do those in need connect with resources in your local community?

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Let us pray together the words of Dorothy Day:

“We cannot love God unless we love each other, and to love we must know each other. We know Him in the breaking of bread, and we know each other in the breaking of bread, and we are not alone anymore. Heaven is a banquet and life is a banquet, too, even with a crust, where there is companionship.”

- Dorothy Day, *The Long Loneliness*

[17.1] <https://www.npr.org/2020/09/27/912486921/food-insecurity-in-the-u-s-by-the-numbers>