

A TIME TO REAP, A TIME TO RIP

In a couple of days we'll be celebrating Thanksgiving here in Canada. We've cleaned out the garden, harvested the squash, tomatoes and cucumbers. The freezer is crammed with sliced apples and pitted prune plums and as if to show the neighbours just how much we've reaped, there's a pile of vines and trimmings waiting to be taken to the community recycling depot.

Last summer I interviewed a young man, a master's degree candidate, who was delving into the intricacies of the relationship between community and food. In his research he had concluded that there is an innate call in each individual to return to a sense of community and place. It can be heard in something as common as bread, he says, and it speaks to our need to replace the nutritionally empty substitute for something that we've grown, milled, ground, baked and shared in unity with neighbours. His is a quiet voice, scarcely heard for decades as we Canadians tore through the spring and summer seasons of technological advances, rampant materialism, and frantic pressure to keep up with the Jones, whoever they are. I found his message refreshing, one that reaches far beyond a fresh baked loaf of bread.

Thanksgiving is about life...and death. It's about holding tightly to the practices that nourish our inner person and asking God to cleanse us from whatever separates us from enjoying fellowship with Him and with others. It's about voicing our praise while at the same time saying "no" to things that crowd out what's really important. Perhaps Thanksgiving should be as much about getting rid of the things that destroy relationships as it is about giving thanks for the blessings we enjoy.

"... a time to break down, and a time to build up...." Ecclesiastes 3:3

"Thanksgiving, after all, is a word of action." W.J. Cameron