

Living a Simple Life with a Back Porch View

Dear Listener:

Thank you for stopping by for a visit at Living a Simple Life with a Back Porch View podcast! To make it easy, you will find a transcript of each episode. I hope you enjoy the visit!

Episode 73 - Social Obligations of a Homemaker

As homemakers there is a bit of a misnomer that we do little more than cleaning house, preparing meals, and using all our free time in between to watch soap operas, read books, or just indulge in leisure time.

That is about as far from the truth as you can imagine. Being a homemaker is actually a full-time position, and frequently requires many, many hours of overtime. Any leisure time we may have is carefully scheduled into our calendars.

One thing folks don't often think about is the social obligations of a homemaker. These can range anywhere from activities with school-aged children to being active within your Village or Community.

If you aren't sure exactly what the social obligations of a homemaker are, let's take a look at some of them.

Most of us who have children have done our duty as a Room Mother. This, in and of itself, can often be a full-time job. A Room Mother is basically an Activities Coordinator and needs strong organizational skills. Some of the things they will do are:

- Organize Class Parties and Functions
- Chaperone Field Trips
- Collect money from children (parents) for Teacher Appreciation Days, Birthdays, Christmas
- Assist the teacher
- Schedule other parents to help

You may not be a Room Mother, but you will still be called to assist with fund raising, volunteering, and other school events, such as Field Day. In some cases, you may also be asked to help with – or be a board member – for the Parent Teacher Association or a sports group.

In addition, you may find yourself as a chauffeur to after-school activities, or as a participant in carpooling. When my children were young, our home was directly across from the school, so I also acted as a hostess for some days as many as 20+ kids.

That may sound daunting, but in reality? I loved it. I knew where my children were, the names (and parents) of their friends, and could supervise the activities. Our home became the 'favorite' place to go. And if a child wasn't in the carpool line, parents knew exactly where to find them.

Another obligation for a homemaker is often Faith-Based. If you attend church on a regular basis, you have more than likely been approached to lead a class. If trips for the youth group are involved, you may be recruited as a chaperone.

If your church offers a food bank, taking food baskets to the hungry, or has any other outreach program, you may find yourself helping to organize the program or assembling baskets, boxes, or even stuffing envelopes.

There may be other positions that you are asked to take on. This can range from secretarial duties, serving communion, counting the collections, leadership positions, or even cleaning the building once a week.

In some cases, these duties are assigned permanently – but in other cases there is a rotation schedule. Either way, you may have to step up to the plate and offer a helping hand.

Most homemakers can add social obligations within their Village to the list. As an active member, you may find yourself pitching in to help your neighbors. There are any number of ways to help out such as preparing a meal for a sick neighbor, assisting with a construction project, or even mowing lawns or offering to babysit for a young couple.

The same obligations which help you to be a productive member of your Village also apply to living within your community. A community, however, usually has a larger scope. If you are active within your community, you may be asked to help with larger projects such as Fund Raising, becoming a member of a group or club, sitting on the library board, or even with community clean up or helping in the initiative of the Adopt a Garden program.

In addition to the school, village, community, and faith arenas, the social obligations of a homemaker also extend closer to home. These can be even more time consuming, as you may have little help, but quite a bit of preparation – such as cleaning the house, getting a room ready for overnight visitors, holiday decorating (and subsequently putting the home back in order afterwards), baking, cooking, and more.

That can take a lot out of a homemaker, and make your schedule so tight, there isn't a single second left over. But whether you want to or not, you can't do it all.

One thing you need to do when determining which social obligations you can participate in is to keep it real. When combined with all of the other daily activities a homemaker needs to do, adding social obligations to the mix can seem daunting. However, there are a few ways to manage your time and keep your schedule under control. Here are a few ways to help with that:

When Baking for a Sick Neighbor – either double whatever you are making for dinner or use freezer meals or home-canned soup. That way, you have ready to go meals when you need them.

Learn to Say No – When you are asked to help, always tell them you have to 'consult your calendar', if it is something you truly want to do. This will allow you time to think it through. Otherwise, you may regret saying yes later on. If it's something you already know you don't want to do or don't have time for, just simply say 'No, thank you.' If they persist, stay strong, and let them know your plate is already full.

Bake Ahead – For most activities that require food, plan well in advance and start your baking. If you know there will be a Bake Sale for the school, cookies, cupcakes, and other items can be made and frozen ahead of time. This also stands true for business dinners you are hosting, your contribution to club and group gatherings, and any time or place where food will be served.

Keep a Calendar – Whether you prefer a daily, weekly, or monthly style planner, the best thing you can do is to maintain it. When you sit down in the evening for quiet time, take a moment to orient yourself to the next day's activities. If necessary, keep a small notebook for the times you are out and about to jot down requests, who requested it and their contact information. Then during that quiet time, compare the notes to your calendar to determine if it is something you can do. Then contact the one who asked and let them know what you decided.

Set Aside Time – Although we do feel obligated to help whenever possible, be sure that you don't overschedule yourself. There are still other things a homemaker needs and wants to do. And with all of this busyness, we still need to set aside time to just relax and enjoy doing the things we love, such as pursuing crafts and other passions.

Many of us choose to be a homemaker because we love the flexibility it allows us to maintain our home, spend time with our family, stay active in our Village and Community, and to pursue the things we love to do.

By being mindful of our time and keeping a journal or calendar, we can easily have the best of both worlds. Our homes and families can be well cared for, we can actively participate in the social side of life, and still have time to settle in, relax and enjoy a moment for a delicious and calming afternoon tea!

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If you have questions or just want to stop in for a visit, you can do that through email at thevirtualporch@gmail.com. And be sure to subscribe – you don't want to miss a single conversation. I'll be sitting on the porch every Monday morning waiting for your visit!

Thanks again for stopping in. I will see you next week on Living a Simple Life with a Back Porch View. And while you are waiting for the next episode, grab that glass of refreshment, pull up a rocker, and sit back for a while. It's time to relax and enjoy.

Relax & Enjoy!

julie