

(Style on a Dime) Three good excuses for having a summer party

Written by Marcia Humphrey
Thursday, 02 July 2009 16:14

My family will be hosting a summer party soon. Unlike every other party we have ever thrown, I have to confess that I am not looking forward to hosting this particular party --let me explain. In a couple of weeks, my husband's best friend since they were in fourth grade, John, and his family (five children, one wife) will be moving from Minneapolis to Germany. Although I have known for two years that this day would be coming at this time, somehow I am feeling unprepared for the loss of these wonderful friends.

Although it did not start out this way, John's wife, Rachel, and I have grown very close (she claims I was a slightly rude hostess the first time she visited me over 14 years ago. It was not intentional!). In fact, in my eyes she is a sister to me. So in some ways, this party has come to represent the reality that I will be losing the physical presence of my friend and sister. I realize that what the Bible says about how "there is a time place and season for everything" is true.

Since this season is quickly coming to a close, it's only right that we gather together and reflect on the ways in which our lives have touched and were made better because of it. Strengthening old relationships and building new ones through gathering together is always a worthwhile investment. Although you don't need a huge budget or a special occasion to have big fun, you do need a date and a guest list. Grab your ink pen and calendar and let's think of a few excuses to have a summer party.

1. Host A Party to Reconnect with Family and Friends.

Remember, simple is the name of the game. Instead of stressing over the perfect menu, keep it simple with baked beans, salad, meatballs, or chicken. Enjoy a game night--playing cards, Trivia Pursuit, or Monopoly. Set the tone with some of your favorite old-school music. Your family and friends will appreciate you taking the lead and getting the party started (They had been meaning to throw a party).

2. Host A Summer Party to Celebrate Your Progress or Mark the Beginning/End of a Season of Life.

We all like to feel supported and celebrated. After all, it helps to keep us encouraged and motivated. Are you doing well in your computer class? Did your spouse just get a new job or a promotion at work? Has your daughter been maintaining her spot on the honor roll? Bring everyone in on the celebration and help to cheer on your loved one (yourself included).

3. Host A Summer Party to Say Thank You.

On the road of life, there are times that we find ourselves in need. That's when good people step up, come along side of us, and lend a hand. This may be the perfect time to acknowledge those who helped you carry your burden when it was too heavy. Consider hosting a light brunch and serving a budget-friendly egg dish along with potatoes prepared your favorite way.

As a child, I can remember watching the "Carol Burnet Variety Show." At the end of each show, Carol would sing, "I'm so glad we had this time together, just to have a laugh or sing a song. Seems we just get started and before you know it, comes the time we have to say, 'So long.'" Whether we realize it or not, our opportunities to spend time with the ones we love is a limited-time-offer. Therefore, make the most of this summer season by hosting a low-key, low-cost gathering that serves to reconnect and renew relationships. Enjoy!

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