At the breaking of bread:
Church growth, relationship and social action.

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Drawing on research from the GRA:CE project, in partnership between Theos and Church Urban Fund.
GRA:CE Project

- Church growth, social action and discipleship in the Church of England.
- At present: 250+ interviews across 50 case study parishes in total.
- Exploring through qualitative interviews how congregations and church communities understand the connections between the three aspects.
Food as central to social action

86% of Church of England churches are involved in providing lunch clubs, coffee mornings or similar initiatives of hospitality for older people.

53% are involved in community cafés.
‘There’s a hunger beyond food that’s expressed in food. That’s why feeding is always a kind of miracle.’

(Sara Miles)
“Eating together solidifies relationships within the church, so it is that thing about being one body. The Eucharistic stuff isn’t just the Eucharist on a Sunday. It’s the whole ethos of the place, of coming together and breaking bread and sharing a meal and being fed spiritually as well.” (Lay minister)

“For me, the Eucharist only makes sense as part of a eucharistic community which enjoys eating together and feasting as a way of life.” (Congregation member)
• ‘Though we are many, we are one body, 
because we all share in one bread.’
  — Based on 1 Corinthians 10:17.

• Bread is instrumental in creating community.

• Companion:
  — com + pānis; ‘with bread’
Dinner church
Food as part of collective worship, not ‘afterwards’.

Lunchtime service – act of worship, focussed on a meal, drawing a new congregation together.

Messy Church as a similar example -