Life In Middle Ages: Commoners, Members Of The Church, Nobles And Kings

Life (which was short) in the Middle Ages was violent and hard, however in did include creativity in the arts, stability and peace. The upper part of the feudal system were able to afford fresh food such as eggs, meat, beans, bread, cheese and bacon, etc. All classes drank ale or beer and milk. The lower class people wore basic clothes (tunics, gowns) while the nobles wore finely-woven Flemish cloth with threads of gold and silver. The rich had tall houses built of stone to prevent fire. Less wealthy merchants built timbered houses made from wood and mud. The most common jobs were the blacksmith, tailor, carpenter, butcher, baker, and grocer. Due to poor hygiene and the lack of medical knowledge the people’s health during the Middle Ages was threatened.

Life for commoners was tiring, they started work at dawn and finished at dusk. Medieval serfs labored on the lands of a lord, while peasant women spun wool into threads which were woven into clothes. Merchants developed trade and sold cloth, corn, wool and metal work. During the day the commoners would also reap, sow, plough, bind, thatch, thresh and hege. Peasants made most of their own tools. Peasant women wore long gowns with sleeveless tunics and wimples which covered their hair, while men wore tunics. For winter commoners wore sheepskin cloaks, woolen hats, mittens and leather boots to keep themselves warm. For commoner families usually only two out of ten children would survive.

The members of the Church were rich as they weren’t required to pay taxes. They provided people with spiritual guidance and they were respected as they were the way to God. They were also very powerful, because they influenced every Christian’s life. A priest’s schedule was busy, they told tales of saints, listened to confessions, gave advices on how to live life. Monks and nuns were lived by the threefold rule of prayer, work and study. They attended church services six times a day and spent the rest of their time in the fields and reading the Bible. Monks payed most attention to cleanliness than most people as it made them purer in the face of God. However after the schism many people's faith were crushed.

Nobles and kings loved feasting, especially after the Black Death, when they decided to enjoy life while they could. Their feasts were extravagant, sometimes they ate 30 courses of meat, fish, pigs, crabs, calf… and the leftovers fed about 1000 servants. Their houses/castles (on top of hills for defence tactics) also had sweet smelling flowers scattered on the floor. They had beds with curtains for privacy and to keep out drafts. They also had fireplaces and chimneys which were a luxury to keep themselves warm. They also started to use glass in their windows. Their furniture however was very basic: they had stools or benches, tabe and chests. They also had tapestries for decor. In the castles a toilet was a chute built into the thickness of the wall and sometimes it emptied into the moat! Life for nobles and kings was heavenly, but during wars it become a bit more challenging.