

## The Bread and the Cup

Why do we take the bread and the cup? Communion, Eucharist, the Lord's Table- each of these names highlights a different part of the practice of eating bread and drinking some *fruit of the vine* as followers of Jesus Christ (Mark 14:25). Today, rather than have a sermon on communion, we will be celebrating Christ through some other Biblical practices. We're going to devote ourselves to the Apostles' teachings (the Scriptures), the Breaking of the Bread (Communion), and to prayer (Acts 2:42). To do this well, we're going to get into groups of 3-4, then in your groups, you'll walk around the yard to the different stations where there is a brief Scripture to discuss about the Lord's Table. When you get to the station, have one person read the card out loud, then everyone can answer, pray or listen as the card calls for and as each individual feels most comfortable. After your group finishes all the stations, quietly walk back to the living room, where we will all eat the bread and drink the cup together. *This is a time for sober reflection and praise to God, so lets be reasonably quiet as we go to each station.*

### **Station 1 - The Lord's Table is A Place for Love**

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### **Station 2 - Communion Is for Sanctification**

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**Station 3 - Communion is a Time to Remember Christ's Death**

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**Station 4 - The Lord's Supper Stirs Up Thanksgiving**

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**Station 5 - Communion Reminds Us that Jesus Is Coming Back**

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### **Station 5 - Communion Reminds Us that Jesus Is Coming Back**

**READ ALOUD:** 1 Corinthians 11:26 "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

There will come a day when we no longer proclaim the Lord's death. On that day, the living, risen One will step back onto earth and take his Bride, the Church, home. On that day, we will celebrate the life of Jesus, embrace the Lord himself and go on to glory with him. On that day, (says Mark 14:25) our communion feast will be celebrated with the Lord!

Communion is not only a time to remember what has passed. Communion is also a time to anticipate and long for that which is to come. Christ has died. Christ is risen! Christ will come again!

**SHARE:** What is one thing you most look forward to most about Christ's return?

**SHARE:** When you think about Communion, do you tend to think about Communion as a proclamation? What's the difference between experiencing something and proclaiming something?

**Pray:** Thank God that Jesus has not abandoned us to this world. Christ has plans and promises to come back for those who trust Him and long for him.

### **Station 4 - The Lord's Supper Stirs Up Thanksgiving**

In many churches, the Lord's Supper is also called Eucharist. Eucharist is from the Greek word: *ευχαριστο*, which means "thanksgiving." Usually, the bread and the cup we receive are not sufficient to satisfy a physical hunger or thirst. So, what do we thank God for when

we take communion? Let's consider a few things.

**READ ALOUD:** Luke 22:19 & 1 Corinthians 11:24 "And he [Jesus] took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." (Luke 22:19)

"And when he [Jesus] had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." (1 Corinthians 11:24)

**Note:** Romans 3:25 says that God sent Jesus as a substituting atonement for us AND "This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins." In other words, Jesus' death was not only our sacrifice for sin, but also served to declare God's righteousness.

**Point 1:** We thank God for Jesus' sacrifice. Without it, we would be hopeless. Not even our own death could atone for the sin debt we've incurred.

**Point 2:** We thank God that he is righteous. He didn't overlook sin like an irresponsible human judge. Instead, God poured out his wrath on Jesus so that all who trust in him can avoid the wrath of God that we deserve.

**Pray:** *Thank God together for the sacrifice of Jesus, who took our place in receiving the wrath of God. Thank God that he is perfectly righteous and holy; not overlooking sin but dealing with it decisively.*

### **Station 3 - Communion is a Time to Remember Christ's Death**

**READ ALOUD: 1 Corinthians 11:23-26** "For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, **24**and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." **25**In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." **26**For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

**Question:** Jesus told the disciples to celebrate with the bread and the cup. He said to "do this in remembrance of me [Jesus]" What do each part (the bread and juice/wine) remind us of?

**Question:** The bread is often many small pieces broken or torn from one larger piece. How does the tearing or breaking remind us of Christ?

**Question:** What is it about grape juice (or wine) that reminds us of Jesus' death?

**Pray:** *Thank God for Communion, a commanded reminder of the death of Jesus Christ. His body was broken for us. His blood was shed for us.*

### **Station 1 - The Lord's Table is A Place for Love**

**READ ALOUD:** 1 Corinthians 11:17-22 "But in the following instructions I do not commend you, because when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse. **18**For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you. And I believe it in part, **19**for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized. **20**When you come together, it is not the Lord's supper that you eat. **21**For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal. One goes hungry, another gets drunk. **22**What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not."

Sometimes, we learn about what God wants by seeing what others did wrong. When addressing the believers in Corinth, the Apostle, Paul, corrected their practices by saying the following.

**Question:** Some call this ritual *The Lord's Table*. Why does Paul refuse to call the Corinthian's behavior *The Lord's Supper*? What is the difference between what the Corinthians were doing and what Jesus instituted?

**Question:** Paul rebukes them because "each one goes ahead with his own meal [while] one goes hungry, another gets drunk." Why is this type of behavior unloving?

**Question:** The Lord's Supper is an opportunity to come together as Christians and celebrate Jesus together, not to just run ahead and do our own thing. How have you celebrated The Lord's Supper before in a way that built and strengthened the church body?

**Pray:** *Thank God for giving us a ritual that we can use as an opportunity to gather and lovingly consider one another as a church.*

### **Station 2 - Communion Is for Sanctification**

**READ ALOUD:** 1 Corinthians 11:27-34 "Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. **28**Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. **29**For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. **30**That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. **31**But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. **32**But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world. **33** So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another— **34**if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home—so that when you come together it will not be for judgment. About the

other things I will give directions when I come."

**Question:** Paul (by the Holy Spirit) warns Christians not to eat the bread and drink the cup of the Lord with a soiled (dirty) conscience from an unclean life. He even says that eating and drinking in an unworthy manner has led to sickness and death among the Body of Believers. Is it surprising to you that God takes our sin so seriously?

**Question:** Re-read verses 31 and 32. Why does God bring judgment (identifying sin and allowing some consequences [even physical] to be felt) on a person he has redeemed?

**CONSIDER:** Take a moment to personally (individually) consider your life right now. Are there areas of un-confessed sin or disobedience you are living in? Are there sins that other people ignore but you know that God sees - that you are allowing to linger in your life? Confess these sins and ask God to help you turn from them so that he can make you pure. Thank him for providing a way for us to be forgiven.

**Pray:** *Thank God for the forgiveness he brings us in Christ. Thank God for giving us Communion; an organized opportunity to be reminded of the seriousness of sin and the cost of our forgiveness: Jesus' broken body and shed blood.*