

## Communion - The Lord's Supper

This communion ordinance is known as: “the Lord’s supper” because Christ instituted it (Luke 22:19-20, Matthew 26:26-28, Mark 14:22-24) and the Apostle Paul also spoke of it this way (1 Corinthians 11:20).

It is known as the “communion” because of the common participation in it of the those that are saved.

“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?” ~ 1 Corinthians 10:16

And it is commonly known in non-Biblical terms as the “eucharist” which comes from a Greek word meaning the giving of thanks.

“And when he had given thanks, he break it, and said, take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.” ~ 1 Corinthians 11:24

Throughout history there have been four distinct doctrinal positions of this particular ordinance. But only one is supported by scripture.

1. Transubstantiation...the Catholic doctrine that the bread and wine mysteriously change into the actual body and blood of Jesus Christ.
2. Consubstantiation...Certain protestant bodies believe that while the bread and wine retain their natural elements, yet the body and blood of Christ are in and with the elements.
3. Mystical presence theory...This view denies the corporal presence of Christ in the elements, but holds that the communicant partakes of and benefits by the mystical presence of the human nature of Christ.
4. Symbolic...This is the true Biblical view. There is no physical nor mystical presence within the actual bread and wine. The reward for partaking in the Lord’s Supper (or communion) comes in obeying God’s Word and following the design and purpose of the ordinance, and in doing it in remembrance of what he has done for us.

So what is the scriptural design and purpose of the Lord’s Supper? Christ states its design when He instituted it – “This do in remembrance of me.”

The Lord’s Supper is a memorial whereby we demonstrate to the world and remember for ourselves, the atoning suffering and death of Christ for us.

“For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come.” ~ 1 Corinthians 11:26

The Passover feast looked forward to the vicarious, sacrificial sufferings of Christ. And the Lord’s Supper points backward to the Passover. This is because Jesus is the Lamb of God, who was sacrificed to take away the sins of the world.

“The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” ~ John 1:29

The Lord’s Supper also symbolizes the unity of God’s people. In commemorating it, we are drawn not only closer to God, but closer to one another. In properly remembering the sacrifice Christ gave, we remember the sacrifice he also wants us to give: a personal sacrifice for Christ and for one another.

“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.” ~ 1 Corinthians 10:16-17

“This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” ~ John 15:12-13

But we are also instructed that everyone is not qualified to receive the communion. We should be honest with our own souls and examine our own hearts according to the Word of God, to determine if we are worthy to partake of the communion.

“For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body.” ~ 1 Corinthians 11:26-29

So then, who are qualified to partake of the Lord’s Supper?

Those who have been washed in the blood of the Lamb. Those who have repented and forsaken all their sins. We are commanded to not partake of sin and the communion. We must be free from sin first to be a worthy child of God.

“Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.” ~ 1 John 3:7-10

Communion with God and with your brethren means there is no room for that which separates us from one another. Sin separates us from God, and a lack of true communion love will separate you from another brother in Christ.

The communion is also not a regular meal or feast.

“When ye come together therefore unto one place, this is not to eat the Lord’s supper. For in eating everyone taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. What? Have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? Or despise the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.” ~ 1 Corinthians 11:20-22

The notion of communion is a very particular thing with the Lord. There is not to be any mixture with the unbeliever or hypocrite. Neither in the Lord’s supper, nor in our worship.

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?” ~ 2 Corinthians 6:14-15

The Lord’s supper was a very special meal that the Lord had long desired to have with his apostles. It was his last meal with them before he was to suffer. And the communion actually represented what he was about to suffer. The communion represented his sacrificial love towards mankind, and his desire that mankind would want this same sacrificial love fulfilled within themselves.

“And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.” ~ Luke 22:14-16

Jesus was looking forward to the days after Pentecost. Because then his Holy Spirit filled people would also willingly suffer, to be a partaker in Christ's communion and sacrificial love.

“And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.” ~ Luke 22:19-20

Jesus wants us to be reminded to remember the great love sacrifice he gave for us! This is so that we would always be willing to do the same for him, and for others. This is the true “Lord's supper” he wants his true people to continue doing even today – in remembrance of him.