

What is the Lord's Supper?

The Lord's Supper is a communion of the blood and body of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 10:16). The term *communion* is translated from the Greek *koinonia* which means fellowship. When Christians observe the Lord's Supper they are in fellowship with Christ and His atoning death.

When to Observe the Lord's Supper

The early church observed the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week. On Pentecost of Acts two Luke tells us that those who obeyed the Gospel, "...continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship, in breaking of bread (or the Lord's Supper), and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). The Jewish feast of *Pentecost* fell on the first day of the week. The word *Pentecost* means fifty and was the next day, after the observance of seven Sabbaths following the Jewish Passover feast, which would be the first day of the week (Leviticus 23:15).

The apostle Paul observed the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week with the saints at Troas (Acts 20:7).

The Corinthian church met every first day of the week to "*Lay something aside*" (1 Corinthians 16:1-2). In an earlier reference to their assembly Paul stated, "*Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper*" (The Corinthians were abusing this great memorial feast by making a common meal out of it) (1 Corinthians 11:20-22). Thus the Corinthians came together on the first day of the week to lay by in store and to partake of the Lord's Supper.

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God's Plan of Salvation

- **Hear** the Gospel of Christ - Romans 10:14; Romans 10:17
- **Believe** that Jesus Christ is the Son of God - Mark 16:16; John 8:24
- **Repent** of our sins - Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38
- **Confess** Christ before men - Matthew 10:32, 33; Romans 10:10
- **Be Immersed** (Baptized) into Christ - Galatians 3:27; I Peter 3:21; Acts 22:16
- **Live Faithfully** for Christ - Revelation 2:10; 2 Peter 1:10; 2 Peter 3:18

**If you are not following God's plan,
please obey it today**

The Lord's Supper



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Jesus established the Lord's Supper on the night in which He was betrayed (1 Corinthians 11:23; Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:19-20).

The Elements Used

On the betrayal night, while Jesus observed the Jewish feast of *Passover* (this feast commemorated God's deliverance of Israel from Egyptian slavery, Exodus 12), with His disciples, he instituted the Lord's Supper. As they were eating Jesus took the bread, blessed it, brake it, and gave to His disciples with the instructions, "***Take, eat, this is my body.***" The bread that Jesus used would have been unleavened bread (bread which is baked without yeast or baking powder) because Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper during the days of unleavened bread which was observed for seven days before the *Passover* (Matthew 26:17). During the feast of unleavened bread no leaven was to be seen with the children of Israel or found in all of their borders (Exodus 13:6-7). When Jesus took the bread and said, "***This is my body,***" He was still in the flesh. Jesus often used a figure of speech known as a *metaphor* (a figure of speech in which a word or phrase literally denotes one kind of object or idea and is used in the place of another to suggest a likeness or analogy between them) to describe himself.

- I am the door – John 10:9
- I am the way - John 14:6
- I am the bread of life – John 6:35, 41, 51
- I am the light of the world – John 8:12, John 9:5
- I am the true vine – John 15:1,5

The bread is not the actual body (flesh) of Jesus Christ, but to the Christian it is representative or symbolic of the body of Jesus Christ which hung on the cross of Calvary for the sins of the world.

Jesus next took the cup and gave it to them, instructing all of them to drink of it. Jesus was *not* talking about the container because He told them to drink of the cup. (The cup is identified as the fruit of the vine in Matthew 26:29). Jesus said that the cup was His blood which was shed for many for remission of sins. Again we have a representative or symbolic use of the fruit of the vine. The cup did not contain the actual blood of Jesus because His blood was still flowing through His veins.

Reasons for Partaking of the Lord's Supper

The bread and fruit of the vine represent the body and blood of God's beloved Son and is to be observed for several reasons.

- In remembrance of the Christ (1 Corinthians 11:24-25). This "remembrance" can include His preincarnate state, birth, life, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, His work of high priest as He made sacrifice in Heaven for man's sins with His own blood, and His taking His place on the right hand of God.
- To proclaim the death of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 11:26).
- Looking forward to a time when Jesus will come again. (1 Corinthians 11:26).

Thus in the Lord's Supper we have proclaimed the Christ, His atoning death, and the fact that He will come again.

How to Partake of the Lord's Supper

- *In a worthy manner* (1 Corinthians 11:27). This describes how one partakes of the memorial feast. Reverence is an absolute must! Talking, note writing, chewing gum, playing with children, and all other outside activities places one in

the position of being guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord.

- *Each participant is to examine himself* to determine whether or not he/she is in a right relationship with God before communing with Christ (1 Corinthians 11:28).

Warnings About Abuse of the Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper can be abused. The Corinthian church was making a drunken feast out of it (1 Corinthians 11:27), to the point that Paul told them, "***it is not possible to eat the Lord's supper***" (1 Corinthians 11:20 ASV).

- 1 Corinthians 11:21 – This memorial feast must be taken in a worthy (reverent) manner. To do otherwise is to (in a spiritual sense) become a crucifier of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 1 Corinthians 11:28 – The participant must prove (test) himself to determine his relationship with God. If he/she is not faithful to God the Lord's Supper becomes a mockery of Him who died on the cross for man's salvation. Immediate steps should be taken to remove the sins which separate one from God (Isaiah 59:1-2) in order that one might be blessed in his fellowship with God.
- 1 Corinthians 11:29 – If the Christian does not discern the body, he is eating and drinking damnation to himself. To *discern* the body is to understand the meaning and purpose of this memorial feast.

The Christian looks forward to each first day of the week when he can enter into fellowship with Jesus in this great memorial feast. The Christian will never forsake this opportunity for the mundane activities of the world.