

The Lord's Supper

As the Lord Jesus prepared to go to the cross He was planning ahead for His disciples and for the Church after He would be gone.

On the night He was betrayed our Savior instituted a remembrance, symbols to remember Him and His death.

Luke 22:14-20, Mark 14:22-25, Matthew 26:26-29

Do this- command

A little over 50 days later we find the church in its infancy meeting around this remembrance.

Acts 2:42 the early Church was continually devoted to:

Apostles teaching—providing instruction from God's word. Matthew 28:19-20, The oral teaching of the Apostles was written down and became the New Testament scriptures. 1 Corinthians 2:13, Romans 16:26-26, Acts 6:4-7, The purpose of the teaching is to make disciples. 2 Timothy 2:2, Ephesians 4:11, 12

Fellowship – a sharing of Christ. Sharing something in common. 1 John 1:3 It is a sense of unity with other believers because of Christ Acts 2:43-47, Acts 4:32-37

Prayer – requests, supplication, thanksgiving, praise, all directed toward God. 1 Thessalonians 5:17, Ephesians 6:18, 1 Timothy 2:8, Philippians 4:6, Acts 13:3, 2 Corinthians 9:14

Breaking of Bread - Lord's Supper, Communion, Eucharist, Commanded -Luke 22:19, It was the practice of the early Church. 1 Corinthians 10:16-17

1) The Meaning of the Lord's Supper

a) The Lord's Supper is a remembrance- a reminder designed to bring Christ to mind.

Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 5:25

i) Bread – Christ's body – It was Christ's body that bore our sins on the cross 1 Peter 2:24, Isaiah 53:5

ii) The Cup or the contents of the cup – represents His blood, which was shed as a ransom price for our sins. Ephesians 1:7, 1 Peter 1:18-19

b) Lord's Supper is symbolic 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

i) The bread and the cup are symbols of the body and the blood of Christ. The symbols are meant to remind us of Christ. The symbols don't save us, don't make us better people. They don't have magical powers.

ii) Do this in remembrance of me - 1 Corinthians 11:24-25 – The symbols remind us of Christ. We are not to be occupied with our salvation but with Christ Himself. As we reflect on the person of Christ, the appropriate response is that of thanksgiving, praise and worship.

c) The Lord's Supper is a proclamation – Proclaim the Lord's death – 1 Corinthians 11:26 - the Lord's Supper announces the basic facts of the Gospel. The bread and the cup are a silent proclamation of the Lord's death.

d) The Lord's Supper looks forward to Christ's return – 1 Corinthians 11:26 – until He comes

e) The Lord's Supper symbolizes the unity of the body of Christ- 1 Corinthians 10:16-17
The fact that all the believers partake of one loaf indicates the oneness of the body and a fellowship with Christ.

f) The Lord's Supper is a thanksgiving Luke 22:19-20, 1 Corinthians 11:24, 25

- 2) The Importance of the Lord's Supper
 - a) The Lord's Supper is commanded by the crucified Head of the Church- Luke 22:19 "do this" 1 Corinthians 11:24-25 "do this as often"
 - b) The Lord's Supper was important to our Lord. Luke 22:15
 - c) The Lord's Supper was important to the early Church – Acts 2:42, Acts 20:7, 1Corinthians 11:17 ff
 - d) The Lord's Supper was important because of its spiritual impact on believers
1 Corinthians 10:16-17
- 3) Who can partake? Self examined believers. 1 Corinthians 11:27-32. The Lord's Supper doesn't bring us forgiveness but forgiveness is a prerequisite.
- 4) When and how often does the Church meet to celebrate the Lord's Supper – Luke 22:19 "do this" is present tense and indicates that this needs to be done repeatedly.
 - a) "As often" 1 Corinthians 11:24 indicates the Lord's Supper is to be celebrated repeatedly.
 - b) Acts 2:42 –"continually devoted' indicates repeated and frequent.
 - c) Acts 20:7 – On the first day of the week – The picture in the New Testament is of early church gathered on the first day of the week to celebrate the Lord's Supper.

- d) 1 Corinthians 11:18 ff – When you meet together... Paul's expectation was that when the church in Corinth met they would gather for the Lord's Supper. In fact Paul severely rebukes them for their failure to remember the Lord properly.

 - e) Acts 2:42 continually devoted, Acts 20:7 when they met – signifies a repeated or habitual action

 - f) There is no command that tells us how often to celebrate this remembrance however there is no precedence in the New Testament for monthly, quarterly, semi-annual or annual celebrations of the Lord's Supper. In scripture, every time the early church met they broke bread. If the Church met daily they broke bread, if they met weekly they broke bread.
- 5) The Lord's Supper in the early church was an open meeting. 1 Corinthians 14:26

Christ the Central Focus of the Lord's Supper

From His Dying Request by Dave Dunlap (used with permission)

Author A.H. Ironside

“Why is there no previously-arranged program as to the order of service, the hymns to be sung, prayers to be offered, and the words of heart-felt worship? Is not time wasted in silence which might be used in teaching the Scriptures?’ It is important, first of all, to understand that we do not come together to pray, or to preach, or to sing or listen to teaching, or to enjoy Christian fellowship. We come together to meet the Lord Himself, to be solely occupied with Him, to offer Him the worship of our hearts, and to remember what He passed through for us. Let me put it this way: Suppose that on a given Lord's Day morning it were known definitely that our Savior, in person, would be present in our church building, How do you think real Christians would act on such an occasion? Would we not enter the room with a deep sense of awe pervading our spirits? Surely there would be no lightness of behavior, no frivolity, no worldly jesting as we come together. Nor would we come to listen to one preaching or teaching the Word of God. Our one desire would be to see Him, to fix our adoring eyes upon His blessed Face; if we spoke at all, it would be to tell something of His sufferings for us, and the gratitude and worship that would fill our hearts as we recall the agony He endured on the cross. At such a time, one can well understand how all might join in a burst of melody, singing together some hymn of praise, in which His holy person, His past sufferings, and His present glory were celebrated: but surely anything like mere fleshly formalism would be altogether out of place. If one spoke audibly, it would be simply to praise His Name, or to bring to the mind of saints some portion of the Word that would give a better understanding and apprehension of His person or work, No one would dare to push Christ aside, and take His place as the teacher of others, unless requested by the Lord.

Surprised By His Presence

By Charles Stanley

From His Dying Request by David Dunlap (used with permission)

Charles Stanley (1821-1888) was a much-used servant of the Lord in the mid to late 1800's. The following is his account of how he was first introduced, as a young man, to the observance of the Lord's Supper in scriptural simplicity.

Let me tell you about an event that turned the whole current of my future course from that day to this. I had heard that Captain W. and a few other Christians met on the first day of the week to break bread, like the disciples in Acts 20:7. One Lord's Day morning, I went to see what this would mean. I found them gathered in an upper room in Wellington Street, Sheffield. I sat behind and naturally liked for the pulpit. There was no pulpit, but a table spread, or covered with a white cloth and on it the bread and wine, in commemoration of the death of the Lord Jesus. I then liked for the minister, or president, there was no such person. All the believers gathered where seated around the table. A deep, solemn impression fell upon me: "These people have come to meet the Lord Himself." I have no doubt it was the Spirit of God that thus spoke to me. It is impossible to describe the sense I had, for the first time, of being in the immediate presence of the Lord Jesus, according to the word, "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." I could scarcely notice what was done. I was so overwhelmed with the presence of the Lord. No one can have any idea what this is, unless he is really gathered to His name. What a contrast to everything I had seen before, and yet how simple! It was like going back to that which was in the beginning of Christianity—Before any priest was heard of to offer in the church a sacrifice for the living and the dead. I was much surprised to find, strange as this gathering together of Christians to break bread appeared to me, that it was exactly what we find in Scripture, Instead of even a minister at the Lord's Table, found the same simple liberty as described in 1 Corinthians 14:29-37. I was greatly struck with each believer worshipping the Lord, in dependence of the Holy Spirit. I felt that was my place, deeply unworthy as I was of it. Well do I remember the thought, "This is my place, if even it were to be a doormat, for these Christians to wipe their feet on me."

After some weeks, I was named as one who desired to obey the Lord, "Do this in remembrance of Me," and through grace, I took my place, as one redeemed to God, at the table. Shortly after this, I experienced one morning, while we sat in silent worship what I had never known before--- the leading of the Spirit of God. It came as a gentle whisper from the Lord, "Read 2 Corinthians, Chapter 1," and very precious thoughts came into my soul on verse 3 to 5. I felt agitated, so much so that perspiration ran down my face and body. We had sat some time in silence, I felt bidden to rise and read, but had not the courage to do so. At length, Captain W. who sat at the other side of the room, arose and said, 'Let us read 2 Corinthians 1.'" Then he ministered the very thoughts the Spirit had laid on my heart. This was how I first learned the leadings of the Spirit in the midst of Christians gathered of Christ. This has been a matter of frequent occurrence for many years.

What the Lord's Supper Means to Me

A Letter from a Young Woman

“For many years I did not understand what my role in the worship service ought to be. I believed that since I was not permitted to speak, my contribution to the Breaking of Bread consisted of listening attentively to the verbal contributions of the brothers and singing along with the hymns. I did not realize that I, too, was called on to take an active part in the worship being offered to the Lord. At last, however, I began to understand that my worship was no less pleasing or significant to God because it was silent. I had just as much responsibility to prepare myself in mind and heart for the Lord's Supper as any of the brothers. Like them, I needed to spend time in meditation on the Word before the service began. Like them; I was called to active worship rather than passive observation. The pauses in the meeting were opportunities for me to contribute to the meeting by my own silent adoration of the Lord. The fact that nobody but God would hear my prayers made no difference. The Holy Spirit could and would use that prayer to contribute to the meeting as a whole, and indeed my silence gave me freedom, ease and purity in prayer that vocal participation could never have. Furthermore, I discovered that if I had some precious thought which I could not audibly share, I could count on the Holy Spirit to stir up some able brother to express that very same thought. When this first occurred, it was a real confirmation in my heart of the Spirit's leading and power, and a further occasion for me to give thanks and praise to God. ---A Letter from a Young Woman

1 Corinthians 11:17-34

7 But in giving this instruction, I do not praise you, because you come together not for the better but for the worse.

18 For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that divisions exist among you; and in part I believe it.

19 For there must also be factions among you, so that those who are approved may become evident among you.

20 Therefore when you meet together, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper,

21 for in your eating each one takes his own supper first; and one is hungry and another is drunk.

22 What! Do you not have houses in which to eat and drink? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? In this I will not praise you.

23 For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which 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 *He took* the cup also 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.

27 Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord.

28 But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

29 For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly.

30 For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep.

31 But if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged.

32 But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world.

33 So then, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another.

34 If anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, so that you will not come together for judgment. The remaining matters I will arrange when I come.