

■ DIGGING IN...

## THE LORD'S SUPPER

**A**lthough formal churches observe more than seven sacraments, only two are mentioned in the Bible: Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Therefore, we limit ourselves to the observance of these two only.

The word "*sacrament*" never appears in the Bible. It is a Latin word, meaning an "obligation" or "sacred oath." It is applied primarily to baptism and the Lord's Supper, because their observance was commanded by Christ. (See Matthew 28:19 and 1 Corinthians 11:24,25). A sacrament is a sacred observance through which Christ confers grace upon those who observe it.

### Different Names!

There are two different names which are often used to identify the Lord's Supper. Formal churches call it the "*eucharist*" - which means "*to give thanks.*" This describes the first aspect of the Lord's Supper. We are "giving thanks" to God for sending His Son to pay the price for our sins.

Less formal churches usually call the Lord's Supper, "*communion*". This is our English translation of the New Testament Greek word, *koinonia* [pronounced *koy-nohn-ee'-ah*], which means, "fellowship, association, community, communion, joint participation." The New Testament writers used it to describe the sharing, intimacy, participation and fellowship which believers have with Christ and one another. Communion is the outward demonstration of our membership in the body of Christ, the church. We have gained membership in His church through the new covenant in Jesus blood (Luke 22:20).

### The Use of Symbols

The "elements", or ingredients used in communion, are simple: bread and wine. But Jesus gave them new meaning. He gave bread and wine to His disciples, and then declared, "*Take, eat: this is My body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me. After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, this cup is the new testament in My blood.*" (1 Corinthians 11:24, 25) Jesus never intended for the bread and wine to be more than symbolic. Yet, symbols are powerful tools for worship. They make spiritual truths more easily understood, through visible expression. They connect past events with the present. It's as if Jesus is saying, "Remember, your sins are forgiven, your life in this world is renewed, and you have eternal life, because My body was 'broken' for you; My life's blood was 'poured out' for you. Thus, crucifixion is connected with our lives today.

### Meaningless Rituals?

Some have come to view all rituals as being meaningless. In many cases that is true. But the sacraments are only meaningless to those who perform them out of tradition or habit. For those of us who truly believe in the Savior and His atoning work on the cross, communion is a divine moment of renewal, commitment and recommitment of faith.

That is why Jesus used the term "*remembrance*" (Luke 22:19) - "something that serves to keep a person or thing in mind"- in describing its observance.

### Refocus

"Remembrance" is one of the means which God uses to refocus the lens of our lives to bring the thoughts, desires and motives of our life back into agreement with our profession of faith. We all experience some degree of drifting away from God. Communion is one of the many ways which God has given us to keep our lives aligned with Him. How does communion do that?

- 1) It reminds us that "all" our sins have been forgiven and we have been cleansed because He perished and suffered in our place. This creates a thankfulness towards God, producing true, heartfelt worship.
- 2) We realize, once again, that the life we now live is a gift of God. Therefore, we should no longer live for ourselves but for Him who died for us (2 Corinthians 5:14-15).
- 3) It bridges the gap between His first and second coming. "For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes" (1 Corinthians 11:26). It reminds us to live each day in the imminence of His return. ■

## FOUNDATIONS OF FAITH: LESSON #3 – Fellowship, Communion and Baptism

*“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. Now all who were together, and had all things in common, sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.” Acts 2:42-47*

**A**s a Christian, the common bond we share with other believers is Jesus Christ. Your fellowship with other believers is a vital element in your growing process. To illustrate this, let’s take a barbeque with red glowing charcoal briquettes. If you were to reach in with tongs and take one of those little briquettes out and set it away from the others, what would happen to it? It would go out! It would grow cold! Now if you were to take that same briquette and place it back into the fire with the other briquettes, what would happen? It would once again take on the same characteristics of the other pieces of charcoal, not only absorbing but also distributing heat. And so it is with the Christian walk. If you surround yourself with other Christians and begin to share and pray with them and for them, you will be able to minister to them just as they minister to you, and your fire will continue to burn hot.

### BORN TO FELLOWSHIP

When you accepted Jesus Christ into your heart as Lord and Savior, you were ‘born’ into a new family – God’s family!

Read John 1:12-13. What did you become when you received Jesus and believed in His name? \_\_\_\_\_

Read Galatians 3:26-28. What makes you a child of God? (vs 26) \_\_\_\_\_

What is the relationship of everyone who is ‘in Christ Jesus’? (vs 28) \_\_\_\_\_

As believers we are not called to function all by ourselves, but as a member of God’s family - **the body of Christ** - we are to work together with all of the other members. This is **Fellowship**.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-27. How many members does it take to make up the body of Christ? (Vs12) \_\_\_\_\_

Who makes up the body of Christ? \_\_\_\_\_

### IS FELLOWSHIP AN OPTION FOR CHRISTIANS?

Read Hebrews 10:24-25. Why do you think fellowship is so important? \_\_\_\_\_

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Read Proverbs 27:17. What do you think this Proverb means? \_\_\_\_\_

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Read 1 Peter 3:8-9. What does Paul encourage all believers to be? (Vs 8)

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_ 4.

\_\_\_\_\_ 5. \_\_\_\_\_

Read John 17:20-23. What did Jesus desire of all His disciples? (vs 21) \_\_\_\_\_

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What example did Jesus use for unity and fellowship? (Vs 21) \_\_\_\_\_

*‘A new commandment I give to you that you that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.’ - John 13:34-35*

In the passage above, what is one evidence the world will see in your life that identifies you as a disciple? \_\_\_\_\_

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Read Matthew 18:20. Where is Jesus when Christians get together in fellowship? \_\_\_\_\_

Read Colossians 3:15-17. What will allowing the Word of Christ to dwell in you enable you to do for other believers?

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As we have seen, **Fellowship** is an important part of our relationship with the Lord. **Fellowship** with others who have the same desire to develop a deep and intimate **relationship** with the Lord helps us grow closer to God.

So we can see that the **ultimate goal is to fellowship with God**, and it is important to know that our fellowship with God comes through our Lord Jesus Christ's sacrifice on the cross. This is why we are able to fellowship with God in the act of **Communion**.

## **COMMUNION**

*And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." - Matthew 26:26-28*

In the above verse we see the first Communion that Jesus held with His disciples. Jesus was exemplifying our need to be a part of Christ, to participate in His blessings and sufferings. When we participate in communion we are also showing a unification with Christ, that we are a part of His body.

The early church practiced communion regularly. It was practiced from "house to house," meaning that communion was not limited to a church building or something that one of the disciples had to administer.

**\*However, it is very important that when we do communion we do it in a worthy manner. Read 1 Corinthians 11:27-32**

What does Paul say we should do before we partake of the communion elements? \_\_\_\_\_

What does it mean to take communion in an unworthy manner? \_\_\_\_\_

**The importance of practicing communion is to reflect a union between us as believers, and the sacrifice of the body and blood of Jesus Christ on the cross. Communion is a time to reflect on what Jesus Christ did for us and means to us. It is also a time to look at ourselves and see how our lives, both publicly and privately, reflect our appreciation of the work of Jesus Christ in our lives. It is important that before we partake in communion we confess our sins to the Lord and ask for His forgiveness. Communion is a time when we also seek the cleansing from our sins through the saving grace of Jesus Christ.**

## **BAPTISM**

*"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen." - Matthew 28:19-20*

**DEFINITION BAPTISM:** The immersion of a believer in water symbolizing the complete renewal and change in the believer's life and testifying to the death, burial, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ as the Way of salvation.

**Let's read Romans 6:3-14.** According to these verses, what do we share with Christ through Baptism? \_\_\_\_\_

Let us **always remember** that the act of Baptism is not what saves us, but it is an outward expression of an inward commitment that we have made to Jesus Christ. And now through **Baptism, Communion** and **Fellowship** with His people we can share our heart with God and others