

How to Lead Communion

Communion is a symbolic way to show we belong to Jesus and to remember what He did for us. We're forgetful people, so it's a regular remembrance and celebration of Jesus' sacrificial death. The breaking and eating of bread has to do with Christ's body being broken on the cross. The drinking from the cup has to do with the shedding of Christ's blood, whereby we are forgiven.

Matthew 26:26-28 ESV "Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." 27 And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, 28 for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."

1 Corinthians 11:23-24 ESV "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."

Communion was originally celebrated by God's people as the promise of his protection during the Passover. (Exodus 12) Then Jesus redefined the celebration of the Passover. As he and his disciples gathered to eat and remember the purpose of the Passover, Jesus made a new promise:

Luke 22:19-20 ESV "And he 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." 20 And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood."

Jesus promised to spare us eternal death and cover our sins by His own blood. Breaking his body and pouring himself out so that, if we believe, we can have a relationship with him forever. The promise offered as protection during the Passover was a dim reflection of the great promise Jesus made and fulfilled — a promise of life forever.

The early believers celebrated together on a regular basis.

Acts 2:42-47 ESV "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."

Communion is for those who have made the decision to accept Jesus as the forgiver of their sin and the leader of their life. This means it is possible that some may not want to participate.

How to lead communion

Prepare.

Get your communion elements and plan ready. There should be some type of bread element and some type of juice element. Think about what you are going to say or read to lead your group. Know how you'll pass these out to your group.

Prepare the atmosphere. Communion can be a reflective time, but it can also feel celebratory. Communion may need a little explanation - don't expect everyone to know what to do. Communion is meant to be personal, yet a shared experience. If it works for your group, you may want to sing a song together.

Pause.

A big part of communion is remembering and reflection. Remember the sacrifice and promise that Jesus has made. You may want to read a Scripture passage - here are some ideas:

Philippians 2:1-11, Galatians 2:16-21, Mark 15:21-29, John 19, Corinthians 15:18, Ephesians 2:1-10, Psalm 22, Isaiah 53

Communion should also involve personal reflection. It's a time to examine our relationship with the Lord and with others.

Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world. (1 Corinthians 11:27-32)

Pray.

Thank God for what he has done and his promises to us with prayers of gratefulness, joy, and hope. It's great to pray individually, but there is something special about leading a prayer out loud with any size group.

Partake.

Give instruction to your group of what to do and when. Don't leave people guessing. Following the example in Scripture, we eat the bread, followed by the cup. Feel free to offer prayers or praise in-between.

Praise.

Communion should lead to praise. Jesus has made a way for us to receive forgiveness and life! Often communion is a celebration - a fun reminder of our great God. We don't have communion because of obligation. We have communion as a proclamation of Jesus' promise of salvation.