

# THE DOCTRINE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

(Also called the Communion of the Blood and Body of Christ – 1 Corinthians 10:16-17)

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The New Testament church has two God-given ordinances that are obvious in the scriptures – these are Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Both baptism and communion are *commanded activities*, and therefore both fall clearly under the *Doctrine of Christ*. (See Matthew 28:18-20; 1 Corinthians 11:24; and Luke 22:19). As part of the Doctrine of Christ, these ordinances should be carefully and diligently observed according to the teachings of the New Testament

The Lord's Supper is a solemn event. It is for each local church, and for her members in good standing in particular. The observance requires a time of reflection, self-evaluation, and a sincerity of purpose. The Lord's Supper should never be engaged in a quick or repetitious, casual manner. It should not be done as an afterthought or an add-on activity. Furthermore, since the ordinance is intended for each church to observe for themselves, we teach that believers should only partake with their own church, and that churches should only allow their own members to partake.

What could be more lovely and gracious and beautiful than the time a church devotes to her communion with the Lord Jesus Christ? As each member meditates on this *Communion with Christ*, the reality and gravity of the observance becomes more and more clear. Communion is a *sincere fellowship* with someone, and nothing is better than communing with our Lord and Savior.

In respect to scheduling a special service for the Lord's Supper, I believe there is wisdom in this practice. Practically speaking, a special service will allow for the following:

- Only members who purpose in their hearts to partake will attend.
- The service is prepared and purposed only for the Lord's Supper, giving it that special honor it deserves. It is not an afterthought or something that has to be rushed at the end of a service.
- It minimizes the opportunity for unexpected guests (non-members) to visit and the awkwardness that follows.
- It eliminates any questions in respect to who should partake and whether a church has *close* or *closed* communion.
- Members can genuinely prepare their hearts for the service and set aside a specific time for coming together for that purpose.
- The pastor can prepare a message just for the event and the members attending.
- Members have sufficient time for self-examination. The service need not be rushed.
- Church can better "tarry one for another."
- A church can schedule the service as the Holy Ghost leads.
- It minimizes church members just following along without really understanding the meaning
- Members who are uncomfortable with partaking can just not attend

We also understand we are not to be judges over other works and how they choose to conduct their business. In cases of other churches and works, we should allow them the liberty to do as they please.

The New Testament shows Jesus initiating the Lord's Supper in three gospels, and Paul teaches the Corinthian church how they should have performed the ordinance correctly. From these passages we glean a lot of how the ordinance is to be observed correctly. Please note the following:

1. **Special Communion with the Lord Jesus Christ** – 1 Corinthians 10:16; 11:27; it is the communion (fellowship) of the church with the *blood* and *body* of Christ. It brings the church back to the same night the Lord was betrayed and taken – 1 Corinthians 11:23. The church comes together *for the better* – 1 Corinthians 11:17.
2. **Simple Commandment** – 1 Corinthians 11:24; “this do in remembrance of me.” It is to remind us of the last time Jesus communed (i.e., fellowshiped) with his disciples, until we see him again at his second coming.
3. **Select Group** – 1 Corinthians 11:18; for the church members, closed, for members in good standing; 1 Corinthians 10:17
4. **Singleness of Heart** – 1 Corinthians 11:18; come together in unity, no division
5. **Sober Mind and Body** – 1 Corinthians 11:21; not for a drunken activity
6. **Same Place** – 1 Corinthians 11:20; church comes together – not done via internet
7. **Specifically Obeyed** – 1 Corinthians 11:22, a praiseworthy action when done correctly
8. **Sympathetic Participation** – 1 Corinthians 11:22; members gather without despising the church of God
9. **Same Time** – 1 Corinthians 11:33; church to tarry one for another
10. **Sent by God** – 1 Corinthians 11:23; instructions are received from the Lord and delivered to the church
11. **Sincere Elements** – grape juice and unleavened bread – called the cup and the fruit of the vine – Matthew 26:27-29; Mark 14:23-25; Luke 22:17-18. The bread eaten was Passover bread. The drink is referred to as wine. Both wine and regular bread have yeast (leaven) and present the wrong picture.
12. **Small Portions** – 1 Corinthians 11:20-22, 34; the bread and juice are not to be intended to satisfy hunger or thirst. People should eat at home. God does not want the elements to be thought of in a physical sense.
13. **Sanctified** – thanks given for bread and juice, blessed by the Lord – Matthew 26:26; Mark 14:22-23; Luke 22:17; 1 Corinthians 11:24
14. **Symbolic** – 1 Corinthians 11:24-25; body and blood
15. **Shared** – 1 Corinthians 11:21 – all in the church can partake, all have same participation and portion
16. **Spirit Led** – 1 Corinthians 11:25; determined by each church for themselves when to observe – as oft as ye do it
17. **Sacrifice of Christ shown** – 1 Corinthians 11:26; Matthew 26:28-29; shows the Lord’s death
18. **Second Coming of Christ Shown** – 1 Corinthians 11:26; Matthew 26:29; till He come
19. **Steadiness in Observation** – 1 Corinthians 11:26; every church to perpetually carry out the ordinance “till he come”
20. **Self-examination** – 1 Corinthians 11:28; there should be a time allowed before for prayer and confession
21. **Single Evaluation before the Lord** – 1 Corinthians 11:28; each person examines himself – this is not a time for judging others. Pray individually and quietly with Lord. There is a personal communion and a group communion with the Lord.
22. **Solemn Event** – 1 Corinthians 11:21-22; not a love feast, not to be observed lightly or casually. Not an afterthought or add-on event. Not to be so regular an event that it becomes commonplace
23. **Sensitively Observed** – 1 Corinthians 11:29; church members to partake *worthily* (no one is worthy, but we partake in a worthy manner – worthily)
24. **Seriously Understood** – 1 Corinthians 11:30; those who do not partake worthily are sick, weak, or dead
25. **Separate from the World** – 1 Corinthians 11:32; church members are presenting themselves before the Lord judging themselves first. We may be chastened but we are not condemned with the world.
26. **Special Message on the Subject** – 1 Corinthians 11:19, 24; Matthew 26:29; Mark 14:25; the meaning and the implications of the Lord’s Supper should be explained so all understand. No member should just follow along without being diligently instructed. We tend to not elevate the observance of the Lord’s Supper to the level of importance that it requires. Evangelism and baptism are usually well-understood by the church. We should do the same for communion. The church should understand the gravity and importance of this communion, to the extent that Jesus judged his people for not observing rightly.
27. **Song to be Sung at the End** – Matthew 26:30. The service does not close in prayer but in song. This shows a difference compared to other church services.

## Scripture References

### Matthew 26:26-30

26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.  
27 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;  
28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.  
29 But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.  
30 And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

### Mark 14:22-26

22 And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body.  
23 And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it.  
24 And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many.  
25 Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God.  
26 And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

### Luke 22:17-20

17 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves:  
18 For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.  
19 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.  
20 Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

### 1 Corinthians 11:17-34

17 Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse.  
18 For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it.  
19 For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.  
20 When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper.

21 For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken.

22 What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye 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.

23 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread:

24 And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.

25 After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

27 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.

28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.

32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

33 Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another.

34 And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.

### 1 Corinthians 10:16-17

16 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?

17 For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.

### Luke 22:1

1 Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover.

Read when church is ready to eat bread.

Read when church is ready to drink juice.