

- 1 Corinthians 11:20** When you come together, it is not the Lord's supper that you eat.
- 11:21** For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal. One goes hungry, another gets drunk.
- 11:22** What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not.
- 11:23** 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,
- 11:24** 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.**"
- 11:25** In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "**This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.**"
- 11:26** For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.
- 11:27** Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord.
- 11:28** Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup.
- 11:29** For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself.
- 11:30** That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died.
- 11:31** But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged.
- 11:32** But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world.
- 11:33** So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another—
- 11:34** if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home—so that when you come together it will not be for judgment. About the other things I will give directions when I come.

The Lord's Supper

We come from a church that recognises two sacraments Baptism and The Lords Supper.

[A sacrament is an act of worship which uses symbolism to convey a spiritual blessing- A visible sign of an inward grace.]

We participate in faith as they are two of the commands Jesus left with us.

See Matthew 28 :19 and Luke 22:19-20

Why do we use the word Communion?

Two words make one [common + union]. Therefore communion means something we have in common that unites us.

When we refer to communion we often mean the Lords Supper. Some Christians call this the Eucharist. However the communion of the saints is something bigger than just the Lords Supper. It is the idea that as Christians we share our lives together. Our love for others flows out of God's Love for us. This is why Paul is angry with the Corinthians; they are not showing the love of God to one another in their meetings. This lack of love makes the meaning behind the symbol a farce. They claim to celebrate the love from God, but they show no love. They display no respect to one another.

A significant part of the Lord's Supper is that it is done with humility in a group setting. It is not done by an individual, but it is administered. The symbol of one being blessing another being or a group of people is often forgotten, but this is exactly what God did through Christ.

- John 13:1** Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.
- 13:2 During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him,
- 13:3 Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God,
- 13:4 rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist.
- 13:5 Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him.
- 13:6 He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, do you wash my feet?"
- 13:7 Jesus answered him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand."
- 13:8 Peter said to him, "You shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me."
- 13:9 Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!"
- 13:10 Jesus said to him, "The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of you."
- 13:11 For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, "Not all of you are clean."
- 13:12 When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you?"
- 13:13 You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am.
- 13:14 If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.
- 13:15 For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you.
- 13:16 Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.
- 13:17 If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

Jesus used symbols in his teaching

Very few Christians literally participate in feet washing ceremonies; this is because most of us understand that what Jesus was using was a powerful analogical image.

In this story the feet washing represents humble service and the bathing spoken of represents the ultimate sacrifice of Christ that restored our relationship with God. In another sense the feet washing might represent our participation in the Lord's Supper together to maintain our understanding of what Christ has done and the bathing might represent our baptism -the beginning or initiation of our sharing in the understanding of what Christ has done.

Washing one another's feet then comprises of both showing humility and sharing the story of what Christ has done [the Gospel].

What is the Meaning of the Lord's Supper?

In many ways sharing the gospel together and living in humility with each other is the meaning of the Lord's Supper.

Historically the Lord's Supper was initiated by Jesus at the end of the night of the Passover celebration. During this meal the story of the Passover [from Exodus 11&12] is told. The Angel of death passed over the houses which had the blood of the lamb painted on the lintel. The death visited on the firstborn son's of Egypt resulted in Pharaoh setting the Israelite slaves free. Jesus

identifies himself with the Passover lamb. On the cross Jesus dies in our place, so his blood [death] is the means by which his people will be delivered from death. In a sense death passes over them.

The symbol of the Bread being Jesus body is also deeper when we consider that at the end of the Passover meal a small piece of bread [the Afikoman], which has been broken off and hidden, is revealed and shared. In essence Jesus reference to his Body being broken for us is the big reveal of the evening. Jesus is the special bread, prepared and hidden and revealed to those who complete the celebration of the Supper. Just so Jesus is the special person who was with God and was God in the beginning by him all things are made and remade- The bread of life.

The cup of the new covenant

Under the old covenant, the law was satisfied by the blood of animals being shed to pay for the sin debt of those who broke the law.

Under the new covenant Jesus death pays for the sin debt of those who break the law...but not only that...the life of Jesus now works within people enabling them to fulfil the law but free from the condemnation of the law.

Drinking the wine is symbolic of us asking Jesus to come and live inside us and help us be better people living better [holier not necessarily material wealthy] lives.

Do this in remembrance of me

Wine reminds us of blood which is equivalent to saying life force. The pouring out of blood or 'bloodshed' reminds us of Jesus' death...in our place.

Bread reminds us of Jesus' body; beaten, broken and buried and risen from the tomb.

This resurrection and forgiveness is something we share in together.

If you take it too literally and think you are actually eating and drinking Jesus for your personal benefit, you won't benefit at all. You may even forget what the symbols are supposed to point toward. Jesus is not asking us to eat him [as if by doing so we suddenly change]. What he is saying is that he is the one who sustains us. He is the Word become flesh. This Word which created all things is the same Word that sustains all things. Communion is about sharing our lives with other people who also get there sustenance from Christ's Death and Resurrection.

John 6:53 So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.

6:54 Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.

6:55 For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink.

6:56 Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him.

6:57 As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me.

6:58 This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like the bread the fathers ate, and died. Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever."

6:59 Jesus said these things in the synagogue, as he taught at Capernaum.

6:60 When many of his disciples heard it, they said, "This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?"

6:61 But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, said to them, "Do you take offense at this?"

6:62 Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before?"

- 6:63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.
- 6:64 But there are some of you who do not believe." (For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe, and who it was who would betray him.)
- 6:65 And he said, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father."
- 6:66 After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him.
- 6:67 So Jesus said to the Twelve, "Do you want to go away as well?"
- 6:68 Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life,
- 6:69 and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God."

The ones who thought Jesus was saying he was actually bread that we had to eat [literally] fell away. But Peter recognised Jesus had the Words of life. Being in relationship with Jesus was what the metaphor of feeding on Jesus as bread meant.

Jesus does not become wine and nor does wine or bread become Jesus, they are symbols of faith. We take them knowing and remembering what they represent. We trust in Christ alone, not in the symbols. In spite of what many Christians believe there is no magic power in the bread or wine itself. We must not worship the symbol and forget the meaning. This is a subtle form of idolatry. The only power of the Lord's Supper is the power of faith that comes from the Holy Spirit; that is the faith of Christ- his death and resurrection. This is what we are reminded of when we participate.

Conclusion and application

Paul was angry with the Corinthians because they had been celebrating the Lords supper in an unworthy manner. They had forgotten the importance of Community. Likewise we too need to examine ourselves and our attitude before we part-take.

If you are not a follower of Christ it does not matter whether you part take or not, you are already in trouble with God. But if you are a child of the Kingdom then you must consider your relationship with God and the other people you are with prior to participation.

You cannot participate meaningfully in a celebration of the greatest act of forgiveness in history when you have not forgiven someone else in the room. The whole point of community is that we help each other. At times we will have doubts or dry patches in our faith, but that is when the others can bring us back to the cross- to the source- to Christ. Communion is all about what Christ achieved for us, and our need to remind one another about that.

It is not the magic in the medicine that condemns us or blesses us. It is our attitude toward God and what he has done for us and our attitude toward one another that displays our condemnation or blessing.

Do you want to be part of this Christian community?

Then take and drink and eat and remember...together. *Proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.*

The night Jesus was betrayed he instituted the sacrament of his body and blood, called the Lord's supper, to be observed in his church until the end of the world as a perpetual remembrance of his sacrifice in death and as the seal of all the benefits of that sacrifice for true believers. It also signifies the spiritual nourishment and growth of believers in Jesus and their additional commitment to perform all the duties they owe him. Finally it is a bond and pledge of believers' communion with Jesus and with each other as members of his mystical body.

Westminster Confession of Faith Chapter 29: The Lord's Supper; paragraph 1