

Communion

WHAT IS COMMUNION?

The word "Communion" is derived from the Greek word "Koinonia".

Webster's Bible Dictionary defines communion as:

1. "The act of sharing; possession in common participation --- a communion of interest
2. the act of sharing one's thoughts and emotions with another or others
3. an intimate relationship with deep understanding
4. a group of Christians professing the same faith and practicing the same rites, denomination
5. a sharing in, or celebration of, the Eucharist, or Holy Communion."

{**EUCHARIST:** the sacrament (holy ordinance) of the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion; a celebration of giving thanks for the sacramental bread and wine, the body and blood of Christ. Also called, the Divine Liturgy, the Mass, and Holy Ordinance.}

Holy Communion is further defined as:

"Various Christian rites in which bread and wine are consecrated and received as the body and blood of Jesus or as symbols of them; a Sacrament of the Eucharist, or the Lord's Supper."

{**SACRAMENT:** a solemn oath, a vow. An observance of certain rites as ordained by Christ and observed by Christians such as Baptism and the Eucharist. (the Lord's Supper)} Communion, is a holy meal which symbolizes the new covenant. It is the communion between believers and God and believers with each other commemorating the sufferings of Christ; His death, resurrection, and His imminent return. Communion is a time of consecration. It is a time when we affirm our belief in God's faithfulness and seek to serve Him in holiness. It is a time to receive by faith His many provisions. It is a time of healing in spirit, soul, and body. It is a place of examination, forgiveness, and renewal.

THE SCRIPTURAL (BIBLE) BASIS FOR COMMUNION

To the disciples and to us Jesus said: "And He said unto them, with desire, I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer."

Luke 22:15

"...the Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed took bread: And when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat, this is my body, which is broken for you, this do in the remembrance of Me.. For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He comes."

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Unlike the Levites who offered the blood of unblemished lambs as an atonement for the sins of Israel each year, Jesus, the sinless Son of God, offered Himself once to bear the sins of the whole world.

"Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world" John 1:29

As the Jews were delivered physically from death by the substitute of the blood of a lamb, we are spiritually delivered from eternal death, that is permanent separation from God, by the shed blood of Jesus Christ. Through Communion we are reminded of the divine provision of the new covenant: *"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.*

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

As partakers of the Ordinance and Lifestyle of communion we, the family of God recognize God as our Father, and hope for eternal life. Do remember this as you partake of communion.

"I ask that we love one another. And this is love; that we walk in obedience to his commands."

2 John 15-6

THE BREAD (THE BODY) AND WINE (BLOOD)

The bread (the broken body) and the wine (the shed blood) become more than symbols or emblems as we reflect on the death of our Lord. They become the essence of our hope for eternal life, the provision made by Christ for all mankind... Jew or Gentile... bond or free... male or female.

"I am the bread of life, he that cometh to Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst." "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up the last day. This is the bread which came down from heaven, not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever." from John 6:26-58
"The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life." John 6:63

CONSECRATION OF THE BREAD AND WINE

The act of consecrating wine and bread for the purpose of partaking of the Lord's Supper was a regular practice. Consecration means to:

1. to set apart as holy; make or declare sacred for religious use
(the priest or minister consecrates the bread and wine for communion)
2. to devote entirely; dedicate
3. to cause to be revered or honored; hallow

"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, it is not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread". 1 Corinthians 10:16-17

This scripture points to the practice within the first century Church of commemorating the Lord's death by partaking of Communion or the ordinance of the Holy Eucharist, the Lord's Supper. The scriptures indicate communion's central part of worship and fellowship in the early church and is an example for us to follow today.

WHO SHOULD PARTAKE OF COMMUNION?

To partake of Communion is to show and remember the work accomplished by the Lord's death until He comes. Obviously, the one who awaits the returning of our Lord is a prime candidate at the Lord's table. What of the person who has not accepted Jesus as lord, or the one who has returned to a life of the flesh? The person who does not receive by faith Christ's substitutionary work of redemption and His accomplished works has no reason to partake. The one who professes Christ as Savior and Lord is an honored guest at the Lord's Supper, and always welcome.

"There is therefore no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Romans 8:1-2

"For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spirit-minded is life and peace." Romans 8:6-8

"For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servant ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death or of obedience unto righteousness? Romans 6:14

PREPARING OUR HEARTS TO RECEIVE COMMUNION

Approach the Lord's table by soberly examining yourself for hidden sin in your heart. Let us pray as David prayed...

"Thou hast set our iniquities before Thee, our secret sins in the light of Thy countenance. Search me, O God and know my heart, try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Psalm 90:8 & 139:23-24

HOW SHOULD WE APPROACH THE LORD'S TABLE?

The first words by Christ to us after commanding that we partake of the bread and wine in remembrance of Him were these:

"Therefore whoever eats that bread or drinks that cup in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, ..." 1 Corinthians 11:27-28

WARNING: COMMUNION MAY BE HAZARDOUS TO YOUR HEALTH

"Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave there thy gift, before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." Matthew 5:23

or these results may occur...

"For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep (die)." 1 Corinthians 11:27-30

Let us judge ourselves that we not be condemned with the world.

THESE ARE THE WORKS OF THE FLESH FROM SUCH TURN AWAY:

Adultery	Idolatry	Emulations	Envy	Fornication
Witchcraft	Wrath	Murders	Uncleanness	Hatred
Strife	Drunkenness	Lasciviousness	Variance	Seditious
Heresies	Revelings			

"...and such like, of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Galatians 5:19-21

HOW OFTEN SHOULD ONE TAKE COMMUNION?

"For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he comes."

Daily (Acts 2:46) Weekly (Acts 20:7) Anytime (1 Corinthians 11:26)

WHO SHARES COMMUNION?

Father, Son, and Christians (1 John 1:3)	Christ and Christians (1 Corinthians 1:9)
Holy Spirit and Christians (Philippians 2:1)	Apostles (Acts 2:42)
Believers (1 John 1:7)	

WHAT IS SHARED IN COMMUNION?

Material things (2 Corinthians 8:10-15)	Sharing in His Sufferings (Philippians 3:10)
Privileges (Philippians 1:5)	Mystery of God's Wisdom (Ephesians 3:9)
The promise: of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 3:13-14)	

WHY DO WE NEED A COMMON FELLOWSHIP?

For God's Blessing in Unity (Psalm 133:1-3)	Teaching & Fellowship (Acts 2:42)
Demonstration of Love (1 Peter 3:8)	Accomplishing God's Work (Nehemiah 4:1-3)
Hope as a Body (Hebrews 11:39-40)	Show Covenant Friendship (1 Samuel 20:42)
Suffering Together (Daniel 3:16-30)	Sharing with Others (2 Corinthians 8:41-15)

"If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from Him, that he who loveth God love his brother also." 1 John 4:20-21

COMMUNION AND THE KOINONIA LIFESTYLE

Koinonia is the Greek word for communion. This same word, "koinonia" is used for friendship, partnership, for union, and for contribute. But also, the word "koinonia" holds the meaning that each of these actions are put into effect by the Holy Spirit. This expression "koinonia" is the essence of fellowship in the Church and the lifestyle commended by Christ when He said,

"love thy neighbor as thyself."

Mark 12:31

"For by one Spirit are we baptized into one body whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many."

1 Corinthians 12:13-14

THE RESULTS OF THE KOINONIA LIFESTYLE

"And they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine, and fellowship (koinonia), and in the breaking of bread (Communion), and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together and had all things common, and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them all to the men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart. Praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved."

Acts 2:42-47

The results then of the Koinonia Lifestyle is unity and harmony, sharing God's love and allowing that true love to spill-over into the highways and by-ways of life compelling the lost by its warmth and provision. Life begets life.

THE WORLD WILL BE WON AS WE BECOME ONE

"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word, that they all may be one, as thou Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that Thou hath sent Me."

John 17:20-23

So we see communion is not only a sacrament to remind us of the sacrifice made for us by our Lord and savior, Jesus, but is also a life style of love, fellowship, unity and sacrifice for others who are members of the family of God.

***"Behold how good and how pleasant it is
for brethren to dwell together in unity...
for there the Lord commanded the blessing,
even life for evermore."***

Psalms 133



Visible Light
MINISTRIES