
Instead, Jesus described its purpose in Matthew 26:26-29. Jesus said that the bread was His body and the cup (fruit of the vine) was His blood of the covenant poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. This was all to be observed in remembrance of Jesus (1 Corinthians 11:23-26). Specifically, it is intended to help Christians always remember Christ's sacrifice and to proclaim Jesus's death until He comes.

Today, the Lord's Supper continues to be important for everyone who desires to follow Jesus. Christians throughout the world are expected to assemble with local churches on the first day of every week (in part) to partake of the Lord's Supper. Therefore, this is part of what following Jesus according to the New Testament pattern looks like. And, those who partake of it must continue to let it cause them to remember the sacrifice of Christ for them and draw them closer in His service!

Bible Question & Answer Series

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Bible Question & Answer

What Is The Lord Supper?



What Is The “Lord’s Supper”?

What is the “Lord’s Supper”? Most churches practice something called the “Lord’s Supper” or “communion.” For, the Bible teaches Christians to partake of the Lord’s Supper when the church gathers at specific times. Let’s consider what the Bible teaches about what the Lord’s Supper is and why it is important to you.

1) Instituted by Jesus. The Lord’s Supper was not created by just any person or church. Instead, it was instituted by Jesus Himself on the night He was betrayed (just prior to His crucifixion). The timing of when Jesus chose to institute it is also significant in that the Jews were preparing to remember the Passover. This referred to the time when the Israelites were enslaved in Egypt and God brought the ten plagues on the Egyptians so His people would be let go. Before the final plague (the death of the firstborn), every household of the Israelites was to offer a year-old lamb (or goat) without defect and apply its blood to

the doorpost and lintel of the house and eat the meat. Then, God would pass over the houses with the blood on them so they would be spared. This was then to be remembered each year at the time of the Passover (Exodus 12:1-28).

As Jesus observed Passover with His apostles (Matthew 26:17-19), Jesus used the opportunity to institute the practice of taking the Lord’s Supper (Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-23). Although the phrase “Lord’s Supper” is not used in any of these texts, it is referred to as such in 1 Corinthians 11:20, 23-26 whenever the apostle Paul made reference to the same event. Especially notice that Jesus instituted this as a memorial of the sacrifice He was about to make for the sins of the world, as the Passover Lamb sent from God (John 1:29; 1 Corinthians 5:7).

2) Practiced by the early church. Jesus instituted the Lord’s Supper with the intention that His followers would continue its practice. So, as we read the inspired record of the early church in the New Testament, there are some references to its practice (sometimes referred to as breaking bread). For

example, Acts 2:42 says that the early church devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer. 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 contains some instructions from Paul to the Corinthian church about how they were abusing the Lord’s Supper by making it into a common meal and causing division. And, Acts 20:7 shows the approved example that the Lord’s Supper was observed by the early church on the first day of the week (on a weekly basis), again referring to it as breaking bread.

3) Two elements. When Jesus instituted the Lord’s Supper, it contained only two elements (Matthew 26:26-29). The first element Jesus gave was the bread. Specifically, Jesus would have had unleavened bread due to Passover restrictions. The second element Jesus gave was the fruit of the vine. Grape juice fits this description. These are the only two elements Jesus gave any authority for concerning the Lord’s Supper – and He required both.

4) Its purpose. Jesus did not just institute a meaningless ritual in the church.