

THE PURPOSE AND PRACTICE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

7 Purposes for the Lord's Supper . . .

Luke 22:19-20 (NET)

Then he took bread, and after giving 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 in the same way he took the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood."

1. A Memorial to Remember CHRIST & the CROSS.

"Do this in remembrance of Me" (Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 11:24-25).

God knows we are good at forgetting, losing focus and losing our appreciation for the cross, His grace, and the gospel. One important purpose of the Lord's Supper is to lead us to a fresh appreciation and experience of Christ and His sacrifice on the cross.

2. A Celebration of GRATITUDE.

This is a memorial feast in which our expressions of heartfelt thanksgiving are very much appropriate, and which give glory to our Savior.

3. A Public Proclamation of the GOSPEL.

"For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes." (1 Corinthians 11:26)

"This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood." (Luke 22:20)

The Lord's Supper is an opportunity to teach: ourselves and our children. By partaking of the elements, we not only remind ourselves of His death, but also the significance of His death . . . and in the process of reminding ourselves we also proclaim it (through our observance) to others.

The Lord's Supper is a declaration of the gospel of grace, redemption, forgiveness, and the satisfaction of God's justice by Christ on the Cross.

4. An Expression of Confident EXPECTATION.

"For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes." (1 Corinthians 11:26)

Christians are a people with a glorious future! In the Lord's Supper we proclaim His death until He comes, which says that He is alive and He intends to return for His people!

5. A Time of Self-EXAMINATION.

A person should **examine himself first**, and in this way let him eat the bread and drink of the cup. (1 Corinthians 11:28 NET)

The Lord's Table is not to be avoided because of sin. Rather, sin is to be confessed, forsaken and avoided for the sake of participating in the Lord's Supper.

1 Corinthians 10:16-21 (ESV)

The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? ¹⁷Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. ¹⁸Consider the people of Israel: are not those who eat the sacrifices participants in the altar? ¹⁹What do I imply then? That food offered to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? ²⁰No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons. ²¹You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.

6. A Demonstration of Unity Among BELIEVERS.

The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a {joint} participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a {joint} participation in the body of Christ? ¹⁷Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. (1 Corinthians 10:16-17)

On the night of our Lord's betrayal and arrest He prayed that His people might be united (John 17). Jesus died in order to create a unified body of believers!! Therefore, one of the major messages of the Lord's Supper must always be: UNITY!!

7. A Time of Fellowship with CHRIST.

What do I imply then? That food offered to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? ²⁰No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons. (1 Corinthians 10:19-20)

Pagans not only fellowship with each other but also with the demons they are really worshipping. The same is true with the Lord's Supper. When we join together, we join in unity in fellowship with each other in worship and in fellowship with Christ.

4 Principles for Practicing the Lord's Supper . . .

1. The Practice of the Lord's Supper Should be REGULAR.

Scripture does not give us specific command as to how often we should observe the Lord's supper but it is clear by the example of the early church that it should be done regularly. Missing the Lord's Supper should be the exception, not the rule!

2. The Practice of the Lord's Supper Should be REVERENT.

There should be respect and reverence for the sacrifice Jesus made which the elements represent.

3. The Practice of the Lord's Supper Should be REFLECTIVE.

Reflect on: Christ, the Cross, the Gospel, grace, hope, & the holiness Christ's sacrifice demands.

4. The Practice of the Lord's Supper Should be REAL.

It should not be done as a formality or just as a religious practice.