

PERSONAL PREPARATION FOR HOLY COMMUNION

Because of the importance of the Local Church's gathering to celebrate Holy Communion, it is imperative that each person be in a right relationship with the Lord before he/she receives. Certainly no non-Christians or backsliders, (like people living in adultery etc) are to receive Communion.

What should a person do before he eats the bread and drinks the cup at the Communion service? *1Cor 11:27,28*

Why should you make sure you are right with God before you take Communion? *1Cor 11:29* _____

What can happen to a person who takes Communion unworthily? (Use a modern version) *1Cor 11:30* _____

What must we do if we are not to be judged? *1Cor 11:31* _____

On the contrary, consider what are the blessings that God pours upon us when we take the Communion worthily? Write down what you think, as a contrast to the judgments in *v30*. _____

To take the Lord's Table in a worthy manner, is to make sure that you have forgiven all others their sins against you, released them from your judgment and are the praying blessings of God upon them, *Mat 18:32-35. Mk 11:25,26, Col 1:9-11, Ac 26:18.*

No 11

CHRISTIAN LIFE BIBLE COURSE

Study Eleven: Holy Communion

The Holy Communion is a very vital aspect of Church life, *1Cor 10:16*. The particular name by which it is known varies from church to church: "The Lord's Table," *1Cor 10:21*, "The Lord's Supper", *1Cor 11:20*, "The Eucharist" (literally "Thanks-giving,") *Lk 22:17-19*.

INSTITUTION OF THE HOLY COMMUNION

Holy Communion was instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ on the night of His betrayal. *Mat 26:26-30; Mk 14:22-26; Lk 22:17-20*. In the Communion service, bread and grape juice (or similar substances) are used.

- What does the bread represent? *Mat 26:26* _____
- What does the grape juice represent? *Mat 26:27,28* _____
- After Jesus had given thanks, what did He do to the bread? *1Cor 11:23,24*. _____
- Why did Jesus break the bread? _____

AN ACT OF REMEMBRANCE

In the Old Testament, God gave Israel a series of Feasts throughout their calendar year which commemorated great truths. The first Feast of the year was called "The Passover", *Ex 12:11*, and served as a yearly reminder that it was through the blood and body of the lamb that Israel was delivered from Egyptian bondage. Jesus kept this Feast with His disciples on the night before His crucifixion. He transformed the "Passover" of the Old Covenant into the Communion

of the New Covenant – making His own Body and Blood the fulfilment of the Passover Lamb, *1Cor 5:7*.

What are we reminded of when we partake of the Communion?

1Cor 11:26 _____

What do we look forward to when we partake of the Communion?

1Cor 11:26 _____

When we are present at a communion service, then, we should remember the terrible death that Jesus died on our behalf and the great benefits that we have as a result of Calvary. We ought also to be mindful that the resurrection of Jesus goes hand in hand with His death, *1Cor 15:20*, and turns Calvary into triumph.

AN ACT OF PARTICIPATION

Write out *1Cor 10:16* _____

The word translated “Communion” in the King James Version literally means “sharing” or “participation”. In other words, the Communion Service is not just a “naked memorial”; it is in some way a real sharing and participation in the benefits that Jesus won for us on the Cross. Although we enjoy communion with Christ from day to day by the Holy Spirit, this is a sacred act that we can do **with the Church** which lifts “communion” to a higher level. The re-creation of the “Lord’s Supper” in this way brings a special sense of the Lord’s presence, and the other benefits of His death.

Jesus clearly teaches in *Jn 6:52-63* that we must eat His flesh and drink His blood. *V62,63* show that this is a **spiritual** participation. Jesus and Paul gave no great explanation of any chemical changes etc. Jesus simply said, “This is My body” and “this is My blood”. As we seek the Lord in faith during the communion, God’s Spirit imparts spiritual revelation and life in a way that defies interpretation.

AN ACT OF FELLOWSHIP

In a sense, the Holy Communion is the very centre of the Local Church’s fellowship. Five times in *1Cor 11*, in the space of eighteen verses, Paul uses the verb “to come together”, *v17,18, 20,33,34*. Any social, racial, or other human barrier vanishes as we gather together as brothers and sisters around the table of the Lord, *Gal 3:28*. In fact, Paul sees the truth of this represented in the very bread that we eat.

Write out *1Cor 10:17* _____

This symbolism has a two-fold significance:

- a. Each person receives a fragment from the same loaf because each is a member of the same Body of Christ.
- b. The loaf is an emblem of the crucified Saviour, and it is our participation in Him that makes us one.

AN ACT OF THANKSGIVING

As we have said before the Communion is referred to by some as the “Eucharist” which is the Greek word for thanksgiving. The service was first called this as a result of the Lord’s giving thanks, *Lk 22:17-19*. Thanksgiving, praise and worship, together with a fresh offering of our lives to be used by the Lord ought to be features of our gatherings at the Lord’s table.

MANY DIFFERENT ASPECTS

When the Local Church meets to celebrate Communion, God will often just emphasise one aspect. For example, one time it may be emphasising the death of Jesus; another time the fellowship aspects, etc. It is not necessary to hear a theological explanation of all aspects every time we partake of Communion.