

Celebrating The Lord's Supper in your Small Group

Jesus never asked His disciples to remember His birth. But He did instruct them to remember His death and resurrection. He gave the church two visible symbols (called *ordinances*) as reminders of His death. These two ordinances are baptism and The Lord's Supper.

We call these ordinances, a term in Scripture. We don't call them sacraments. You may have heard baptism called a sacrament and The Lord's Supper called a sacrament. But the word 'sacrament' can be misunderstood to mean "the ability to save." Baptism doesn't save you and The Lord's Supper doesn't save you. Only your faith in Christ saves you.

What is The Lord's Supper

1 Corinthians 11:23–26 (NIV) gives us the answer:

²³ "...The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, 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.' ²⁵ In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.' ²⁶ For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

1. It is a Simple Act

"...The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, (Verse 23)

The Bible says that for the very first Communion, Jesus, on the night that He was betrayed, took bread and broke it. He didn't have some big elaborate ceremony. He didn't wear special garments or burn incense. He didn't perform any fancy rituals.

The Lord's Supper is a very simple act. He took bread and He took wine and He gave it to the people there. When we take The Lord's Supper at Saddleback, we don't turn it into a big ritual. We just observe the elements...the bread and the juice.

2. It is a Symbol to remind us

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.' In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.' (Verses 24-25)

The bread symbolizes His body broken for us and the juice represents His blood that was shed for us on the cross. The whole purpose of The Lord's Supper is for us to remember what Jesus did on the cross.

3. It is a Statement of Faith

For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."
(Verse 26)

When you take The Lord's Supper, you are telling everyone, "I've put my trust in Christ." We look back at the work Jesus has already done at the cross and we look forward to Jesus' return to this earth. Jesus didn't stay dead after the crucifixion. He is risen and is coming back again!

Who Should take The Lord's Supper?

1 Corinthians 11:27, 29 (NIV) gives us the answer:

²⁷ So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord... ²⁹ For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves.

Only those who have trusted Jesus. Only Christians should take Communion.

If someone has not accepted what Jesus did for them on the cross, the symbols are meaningless to them and taking The Lord's Supper is a sin.

How do I Prepare for The Lord's Supper?

1 Corinthians 11:28 (NIV) tells us:

²⁸ Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup.

Examine yourself by

- Confessing your sin (1 John 1:9)
- Recommitting your life (Romans 12:1)
- Reconciling your broken relationships (Matthew 5:23–24)

When and How Often Should We Observe The Lord's Supper?

The Bible does not say when or how often. There is no instruction for this. Jesus instituted it on a Thursday night. In Scripture, Christians observed Communion in homes with small groups of people. At Saddleback, we celebrate The Lord's Supper a few times a year at our Weekend Worship Services, and we give our Small Groups permission to take it anytime they wish.

How do I Celebrate The Lord's Supper in my Small Group?

Here are a few steps you can take

1. Prepare the bread and juice beforehand. Break the bread into wafer sized portions on a plate. Pour a small amount of grape juice (not wine) into separate glasses.
2. Share Scripture or a story about God's love, forgiveness, mercy, grace, hope, etc.
3. Distribute the bread and juice to each person.
4. Explain about The Lord's Supper by reading this document.
5. Give everyone ample time to examine themselves.
6. Read 1 Corinthians 11:23–24 (NIV) and then lead them by eating the bread...
²³ "...The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, 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.'
7. Read 1 Corinthians 11:25 (NIV) and then lead them by drinking the juice...

²⁵ In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.'

8. Close by singing or listening to a worship song and in prayer.

Additional Scriptures on The Lord's Supper

Matthew 26:26-29, Mark 14:22-25, Luke 22:14-20, 1 Corinthians 10:16-21, 1 Corinthians 11:17-34

If you have any questions

Please contact your Small Groups Pastor or Community Leader. If you do not know who they are, email us at SmallGroups@saddleback.com and we will get you their info.