

Communion



Communion has been given several names. For example, it has been known as The Lord's Supper (because it was held at night), Holy Communion and the Eucharist (meaning thanksgiving).

Communion was demonstrated by the Lord before He was arrested in Gethsemane's garden, but it was based on the Passover. In the early church Communion was often celebrated at the end of a meal. This Jewish feast annually commemorated the Angel of Death passing over homes in Egypt that had the blood of a lamb on the door post (Exodus 12) resulting in the Israelites liberation from slavery in Egypt.

Read Matthew 26:17-30 and answer the following questions:

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| 1. Where was the Communion feast held? _____ |
| 2. Who along with Jesus was there? _____ |
| 3. What time of the day was it held? _____ |
| 4. What did the bread stand for? _____ |
| 5. What did the cup stand for? _____ |

The Bread

This was a symbol of the body of Christ which bore our sin upon the cross. A perfect sacrifice was needed to be offered for the sin of mankind. Christ was that perfect divine Person who was able to give His body as that sacrifice.

The Cup

The cup was used to remember the blood of Christ shed at the cross. While undoubtedly juice squeezed from grapes was used, nowhere is the word wine used in Scripture for this cup. Some churches do use wine, while others use grape juice or dark cordial as it protects alcoholics from temptation.

What does the blood of Christ do for the believer?

Read Matthew 26:28 and 1 John 1:7.

This blood is also referred to as the blood of the 'New Covenant', that is the blood of the new agreement. This means that no longer must there be the continual offering of the blood of spotless lambs in the way that was acceptable in the Old Testament. The blood of Christ allows us to be constantly cleansed, as we continually confess our sin and accept His forgiveness. The death of Jesus was a one-off event sufficient for all time.

Symbolism

Although Jesus used the bread and the grape juice for Communion it is not essential that these emblems always be used. In some countries this would be impossible as these elements are unavailable so rice could be used instead of bread, and coconut juice for the cup.

Jesus was not saying that the bread and juice were literally His body and blood. That must be made clear. If a literal translation was used (as in the case, when Jesus said, 'I am the door'), then it would become nonsense. However, although the bread and cup are only symbols (like the globe is for planet earth), there must be reverence and a sense of awe for this feast.

There are three reasons why Communion is celebrated:

1. It was encouraged by the Lord (Luke 22:14-20).
2. We are showing the importance of Christ's death (1 Corinthians 11: 23-26).
3. It reminds us that our holy God loves us so much that He has provided the sacrifice necessary for us to know forgiveness and to have a cleansed heart (Hebrews 9:14).
4. We need to pause and consider the state of our heart. Communion gives that reverent time.

Those who may take of Communion

It is clear in Scripture that only those who are believers have the right to take of Communion. That needs to be explained graciously by the one leading.

‘You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too’ (1 Corinthians 10:21).

‘A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup’ (1 Corinthians 11:28).

Reading further, it appears as if some became sick while others even died because they did not eat with a right attitude (verse 30). We should have a right relationship with God and others, before we partake of Communion.

Meaning of Communion

1. It is an act of remembrance (1 Corinthians 11:24).
2. It is to bring spiritual strength (John 6:35).
3. It is provided for fellowship (Acts 2:42).
4. It reminds us of His return, His second coming (1 Corinthians 11:26).

Conclusion

Take Communion often, even though there is no set time stipulated in Scripture as to how often you should take it. Do it joyously and yet with reverence, whether it be in a church building on a Sunday or with others in a home during the week. Honour and remember the Lord.