

## DOING THE THINGS JESUS DOES

### Eating & Drinking with God

#### DINING ROOM TABLE CHRISTIANITY

We are near the end of our practice of eating and drinking with the third dimension: eating and drinking with God. The Lord's supper was originally exactly what it sounds like, a supper. A meal around a table with Jesus and his community. This core practice changed the Roman Empire. How can we let something as simple as eating and drinking with one another change our own communities?

#### THE MEAL

READ:

1. 1 Corinthians 11:17-34

DISCUSS:

1. What role has communion played in your life?

#### READ THIS OVERVIEW

The Lord's supper, communion, the eucharist - whatever you call this meal, it is at the core of the way of Jesus. In the early church, there's no doubt it was the center of gravity in the weekly gathering. But a lot has changed over 2,000 years. Originally, it was a meal, not a bite of bread and a sip of juice or wine. It was enjoyed around a table, not in a church building. It was a joyful time spent together more than a quiet, contemplative time alone. And it was about communion with each other, not just communion with God. In fact, it was even a vehicle for social justice, as it gave food to the poor in the church and the city. But over time, the meal became the mass. In this Practice, we explore repurposing our weekly meal with our Community as *Jesus'* meal, or "the Lord's supper." This practice is split over two weeks – the first week will focus on talking together about communion and the second week will be practicing a communion meal.

#### Exercise #1: How can we think about Communion differently?

- Here's a liturgy from the Didache, a church manual of sorts, a "how-to" book from the early first century (70 AD-140 AD). They offer a liturgy to guide and guard the meal.
- It comes with two prayers to pray as you begin (one for the bread, another for the cup), and then one to pray after "you have had enough to eat" (meaning, after dinner is over).
- Feel free to have the leader read this prayer, or read it all out loud together:

"Regarding the Eucharist, you shall give thanks as follows. First, concerning the cup:

"We give you thanks, our Father, for the holy vine of David, your child, which you made known to us through Jesus your child. To you be the glory forever.

Next, concerning the broken bread:

"We give you thanks, our Father, for the life and knowledge that you made known to us through Jesus your child. To you be glory forever. As this broken bread was scattered upon the mountains and gathered to become one, so may your church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into your kingdom. For the glory and power are yours through Jesus Christ forever.

And when you have had enough to eat, give thanks as follows:

"We give thanks, holy Father, for your holy name which you have made reside in our hearts, and for the knowledge, faith and immortality that you made known to us through Jesus your child. To you be glory forever.

You, O Master Almighty, created all things for the sake of your name, and gave both food and drink to humans for their refreshment, that they might give you thanks. And you graciously provided us with spiritual food and drink and eternal life through your child. Above all we thank you because you are powerful. To you be the glory forever.

Remember your church, O Lord; save it from all evil and perfect it in your love. And gather it from the four winds into your kingdom, which you prepared for it. For yours is the power and glory forever.

May grace come and this world pass away. Hosanna to the God of David. If anyone is holy let them come (to the Eucharist); if anyone is not, let them repent. Maranatha! Amen.

But permit the prophets to give thanks as often as they wish.

**Discuss:**

1. How might celebrating communion in this way change your experience?

**For next practice:**

Next week we will be practicing a communion meal through a guided liturgy. The liturgy will have some call and response, scripture reading, sharing about our lives, and taking communion together. The hope is to experience communion as a community around a common table. It might be a good idea to plan now for the coming practice by asking someone to consider leading the practice and designating who will bring the bread and juice for communion.

## **Week #2: Fellowship Meal Liturgy**

This week we'll spend some time walking through a short liturgy focused on communion and designed to guide us into a space of reflection and sharing. The liturgy will have some call and response, scripture reading, sharing about our lives, and taking communion together. The hope is to experience communion as a community.

### **A Communion Celebration**

**Leader:**

*Blessed are you, Lord God of the universe, You are the giver of this bread – fruit of the earth and of human labor – let it become the bread of life.*

*Blessed are You, Lord God of the universe, You are the giver of this fruit of the vine and of human labor, let it become the wine of the eternal kingdom.*

*As the grain once scattered in the fields and the grapes once dispersed on the hillside are now reunited on this table in bread and wine, so, Lord, may your whole Church soon be gathered together from the corners of the earth into your kingdom.*

**All: Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus!**

*Leader: The Lord be with you.*

**All: And also with you.**

*Leader: Lift up your hearts.*

**All: We lift them up to the Lord.**

*Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.*

**All: It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

*Leader:*

*It is indeed right, from east and west, from north and south, in all the seasons of our life, to give thanks to you, O God, O Living One.*

*Dwelling beyond time and space, you abide among us, embracing the world with your justice and love.*

*And so, with all the baptized of every race and land, with the multitudes in heaven and the countless choirs of angels, we praise your glorious name.*

**All: Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord God Almighty.**

*Leader:*

*Holy God, Holy and Mighty One,*

*Hoy and Immortal:*

*You we praise and glorify*

*You we worship and adore.*

*You formed the earth from chaos;*

*You encircled the globe with air;*

*You created fire for warmth and light;*

*You nourish the lands with water.*

*You molded us in Your image,  
And with mercy higher than the mountains,  
With grace deeper than the seas,  
You blessed the People of Israel  
And cherished them as Your own.*

*That also we, estranged and dying,  
Might be adopted to live in Your Spirit,  
You called to us through the life and death of Jesus,  
Who on the night He was betrayed,  
Took Bread, and gave thanks;  
Broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:  
    *"Take and eat, this is my body, given for you.  
    Do this for remembrance of me."**

*Again, after supper, He took the cup, gave thanks,  
and gave it for all to drink, saying:  
    *"This is the new covenant in my blood,  
    shed for you and for all people  
    for the forgiveness of sin.  
    Do this for remembrance of me."**

*Together as the Body of Christ,  
We proclaim the mystery of His death:*

**All: Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.**

Leader:

*United by one baptism in the same Holy Spirit and the same Body of Christ,  
We pray as God's sons and daughters:*

**All: The Lord's Prayer:  
Our Father in heaven,  
Hallowed by thy name.  
Thy Kingdom come,  
Thy will be done  
On earth, as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread,  
And forgive us our trespasses  
As we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
But deliver us from the evil one.**

**For yours is the Kingdom  
And the Power  
And the Glory  
Forever and ever, Amen.**

(Serve each other bread and prepare glasses of juice.)

*Holy God, Holy and Merciful One,  
Holy and Compassionate,  
With this bread and cup we remember Your Son,  
The first-born of your new creation.  
We remember his life lived for others,  
And his death and resurrection,*

*which renewed the face of the earth.  
We await his coming  
When, with the world perfected through your wisdom,  
All our sins and sorrows will be no more.*

*Send upon us and this meal your Holy Spirit,  
Whose breath revives us for life,  
Whose fire roused us to love.  
Enfold in your arms all who share this meal.  
Nurture in us the fruit of the Spirit,  
That we may be a living tree,  
Sharing your bounty with the world.*

(Take Communion.)

Reading: Psalm 100.

Petitions and Intercessions (Share prayer requests)

Confession and Assurance (Share places where you are not following the way of Jesus, the group responds with "You're forgiven")

Encouragement (Share encouragements with one another, places you see the Spirit working in each other's lives.

Benediction:

*May the God of peace,  
Who brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus,  
The great shepherd of the sheep,  
By the blood of the eternal covenant,*

*make you complete in everything good  
so that you may do God's will,  
working among us that which is pleasing in God's sight,  
through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever!*