

WHAT ARE SOME BIBLICAL NAMES FOR COMMUNION?

COMMUNION (1 COR. 10:16)

A body of believers bound together by sharing in two common elements (the body and blood of Christ). It is also referred to as “participation in the blood and body of Christ” (NIV) and “sharing in the blood and body of Christ” (NASB).

EUCCHARIST OR THANKSGIVING

(LK. 22:19; 1 COR. 11:24)

The phrase “had given thanks” comes from the Greek word *eucharisteo*, and is the term some Christians use to refer to Communion.

THE LORD’S SUPPER (1 COR. 11:20)

“The term *deipnon* (**Supper**) was the normal word used for the evening meal. The addition of **the Lord’s** gives it special and much greater significance. This was a genuine meal, where the church congregated to eat the “love feast,” a meal followed by the Communion. The Communion was connected to this supper in the Corinthian church...”¹

WHY DO WE OBSERVE COMMUNION?

There are five Biblical reasons why Christians observe Communion:

To look back at the death of Christ, “this do in remembrance of me” (1 Cor. 11:24) and “For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord’s death...” (1 Cor. 11:26).

¹ John MacArthur, MacArthur’s New Testament Commentary: 1 Corinthians Copyright @ 2001 by John Mac Arthur, Jr. Electronic Edition STEP Files Copyright @ 2003, Quick Verse, a division of Findex.com, Inc.

Concerning the word “remembrance” John MacArthur offers the following observation, “For the Hebrew to remember meant much more than simply to bring something to mind, merely to recall that it happened. To truly remember is to go back in one’s mind and recapture as much of the reality and significance of an event or experience as one possibly can. To remember Jesus Christ and His sacrifice on the cross is to relive with Him His life, agony, suffering, and death as much as is humanly possible. When we partake of the Lord’s Supper we do not offer a sacrifice again; we remember His once-for-all sacrifice for us and rededicate ourselves to His obedient service.”²

To look within ourselves, “But let a man examine himself...” (1 Cor. 11:28)

To look forward to Christ’s return, “For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord’s death till he come” (1 Cor. 11:26).

To symbolize oneness with others in the Body of Christ, “For we being many are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread” (1 Cor. 10:16-17).

To be obedient to the Lord’s command, “this do in remembrance of me” (Lk. 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:25).

WHAT ARE THE THREE TYPES OF COMMUNION?

OPEN communion means that any believer can receive communion when it is served in a service.

² Ibid.

CLOSE communion means that the participants must be a member of the same denomination to receive communion in a service.

CLOSED communion means that a person must be a member of the church where the communion is being served to receive it in the service.

WHAT ARE THE THREE VIEWS OF COMMUNION?

All three views listed below believe that Christ is present at the communion meal, but the views differ as to how He is present.

CATHOLIC VIEW

Transubstantiation, when the elements are consecrated by the priest, they literally turn into the body and blood of Christ.

LUTHERAN VIEW

Consubstantiation, there are several views: The elements are literally the body and blood of Christ (Catholic View). The elements turn into the body and blood of Christ when they are eaten.

MEMORIAL VIEW

Memorial, the elements are symbolic of the body and blood of Christ.

WHAT ARE THE PREREQUISITES TO TAKING COMMUNION?

The recipient must be a follower of Jesus Christ, “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.” (1 Cor. 11:1).

The recipient must live an examined life, “But let a man examine himself...” (1 Cor. 11:28). “Before we partake we are to give ourselves a

thorough self-examination, looking honestly at our hearts for anything that should not be there and sifting out all evil. Our motives, our attitudes toward the Lord and His Word, toward His people, and toward the Communion service itself should all come under private scrutiny before the Lord. The table thus becomes a special place for the purifying of the church.”³

The recipient must have a worthy walk, “For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself...” (1 Cor. 11:29). The word “unworthily,” *anaksios* refers to the rising of one side of the scale in a balance while the other side drops low because of unequal weight. In this verse the participant’s heart, mind, and conduct are not equal to the sacred elements of communion. “The side of the scales which holds the sacrament drops down because of its weight while the side that holds the communicant’s attitude rises upward because of its lack of weight.”⁴ Thus, the believer should strive to live a life that gives him a worthy weight to receive the communion elements.

HOW CAN I PREPARE MY HEART TO RECEIVE COMMUNION?

1. Mark your calendar the day before communion in order to schedule a time of preparation.
2. Designate some time the night before taking communion to reflect on the

³ Ibid.

⁴ R.C.H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul’s First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, (No City Listed: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc. 1998), pp.476-77.

cross (Scripture reading, prayer, songs, & Gospel videos).

3. Renew your commitment to love and serve the Lord.
4. Reduce the distractions of the world in your life (TV, secular music, and other worldly amusements).
5. Make preparations to reduce your stress level before taking communion (prepare practically the night before, wake up early, avoid conflicts with others).

WHAT STEPS SHOULD BE TAKEN FOR GETTING CHILDREN INVOLVED IN TAKING COMMUNION?

Before children take communion, the parent, teachers, and church should do the following things:

1. Make sure the child has truly accepted Christ as Lord and Savior.
2. Take time to sit down and answer any questions the child may have about communion.
3. Lead the child through a time of self-examination in order to help the child determine their worthiness to take the elements. It should also be understood that the child may not be able to express himself in adult language.
4. Parents and teachers should help the child to understand that a self-examination should be done each time and that participation one time does not mean automatic participation the next time.
5. Before a child takes his first communion, the church should provide classes for the child dealing with the seriousness and celebration of communion.

A CRITICAL CONSIDERATION OF COMMUNION



And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. (Matt. 26:26-28)

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