

What Does the Bible Say About Communion?

On the night before He died, the Lord gave His church a simple meal to keep, bread and the fruit of the vine, to be eaten in remembrance of Him. We call it the Lord's Supper, or communion. It looks like very little, and yet it carries the weight of the cross. Many have made it into something the Bible never made it, and many others have let it grow stale through carelessness. Let us see what it is and how God means for it to be kept.

The Lord Gave It Himself

The Lord's Supper is not a tradition men invented. Jesus instituted it. *"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... 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"* ([Matthew 26:26-28](#)). The bread stands for His body, given for us. The cup stands for His blood, poured out for the forgiveness of our sins. He gave it to His own with His own hands, and told them to keep it.

Unleavened Bread and the Fruit of the Vine

The bread and the cup are not just any bread and any drink. The Lord gave the supper during the Passover, in the Feast of Unleavened Bread, when by God's own command there was no leaven anywhere in an Israelite's house. God had said, *"seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread"* ([Exodus 12:15](#)), and *"there shall be no leaven found in your houses"* ([Exodus 12:19](#)), and again, *"there shall no leavened bread be seen with thee, neither shall there be leaven seen with thee in all thy quarters"* ([Exodus 13:7](#)). So the bread Jesus took, blessed, and brake was unleavened bread. There was no other kind in the room.

This was no accident of the calendar. All through the Bible, leaven is a picture of sin and corruption, the small thing that works its way through the whole. Paul wrote that *"a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump"*, and told the church to keep the feast *"not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth"* ([1 Corinthians 5:6-8](#)). Jesus warned of *"the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy"* ([Luke 12:1](#)). The body of Christ had no sin in it and no corruption at all. So the bread that stands for His sinless body is bread with no leaven in it. Leavened bread would carry the very symbol of the sin He did not have.

The same reasoning guides the cup. Jesus called it "*this fruit of the vine*" ([Matthew 26:29](#)), the pure product of the grape. Fermentation is the same kind of working that leaven does, a corruption set loose to spread through what was once pure. The God who swept every trace of leaven from the house for this feast was not honoring fermentation in the cup while forbidding it in the bread. As the bread pictures a body without sin, so the fruit of the vine pictures blood without taint, the pure blood of "*a lamb without blemish and without spot*" ([1 Peter 1:19](#)). So the supper is kept as the Lord kept it, with unleavened bread and the unfermented fruit of the vine, both free of the corruption that leaven and fermentation picture, both fitting the sinless Saviour they represent.

It Is a Remembrance

The supper looks back to the cross. Paul passed on what he had received from the Lord, that Jesus said, "*this do in remembrance of me*" ([1 Corinthians 11:24](#)). It is given to keep the death of Christ before us, so that we never drift far from the one event on which everything depends. In a world that forgets quickly, God gave His people a regular, bodily way to remember what His Son did for them. The bread in the hand and the cup at the lips say, week by week, that He died for me.

It Proclaims His Death Till He Comes

The supper also looks forward. Paul wrote, "*as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come*" ([1 Corinthians 11:26](#)). Every time the church eats it, it preaches a sermon without words, declaring that Christ died, and that He is coming again. The supper joins the cross behind us to the return ahead of us, and sets the Christian's life between the two. We remember His death, and we wait for His coming.

It Is a Communion

There is a sharing in it, with the Lord and with one another. "*The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?*" ([1 Corinthians 10:16](#)). When the saints eat together, they are joined to the Lord whose death they remember and to each other as one body. It is not a private act done alone, but the family of God gathered at one table around one Savior.

When It Is to Be Eaten

The first Christians ate the supper on the first day of every week. Luke records that "*upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread*" ([Acts 20:7](#)), this was the purpose for which they assembled. As the Sabbath came every week under the old law, so the first

day, the day the Lord rose, came every week for His people to break bread. They did not wait for special seasons or rare occasions. They kept it often, and they kept it together, on the day God's people have always gathered.

How It Is to Be Eaten

Because of what it means, the supper is not to be taken lightly or thoughtlessly. Paul warned, *"whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord"* ([1 Corinthians 11:27](#)). The remedy he gave was not to stay away, but to come rightly: *"let a man examine himself, and so let him eat"* ([1 Corinthians 11:28](#)), *"discerning the Lord's body"* ([1 Corinthians 11:29](#)). To eat unworthily is to eat carelessly, with the mind anywhere but on the Lord. To eat worthily is to eat with a searched heart and a fixed mind, truly remembering Him.

So do not let this meal become a habit you hardly notice. It is the cross, set before you again and again, until He comes. Examine your heart, fix your mind on the Lord who died for you, and eat it as what it is, the body and blood of the Son of God, remembered by the people He bought.

Every Scripture reference in this study links to the King James Version. Open it and read for yourself.