

## Home Group study: week beginning 30<sup>th</sup> May 2021

### The Lord's supper

Although the instructions Jesus gives us about remembering his death by taking bread and wine seem very simple, there are many ways of actually taking communion.

Talk together as a group about the different ways you have experienced taking communion throughout your lives. How many different titles can you think of for 'communion'?

#### **Read: Matthew 26: 26-29, 1 Corinthians 11: 17-34**

The Matthew passage takes place at the Last Supper, just after Judas has betrayed Jesus and just before Peter denies Jesus. Both can be seen as acts of treachery and denial towards Jesus yet the breaking of bread together is an act of love and unity. What does that tell us about Jesus' heart to his disciples? What does it say about the spirit in which we ought to take Communion? (The description occurs in all three Synoptic Gospels<sup>1</sup>, Matthew, Mark and Luke, with slight detail differences. In particular in Luke's account, 22:19, Jesus instructs us to 'do this in remembrance of me', which Paul emphasises in the 1 Corinthians passage.)

#### **Understanding**

How does Jesus describe his blood? And what do you think v29 means?

Turning now to the 1 Corinthians passage, the description of how the Communion service was approached seems very different from the way we think of a Communion service today. What might it suggest about the way first century Christians took communion? Is there merit in trying to do the same thing today (pandemics notwithstanding!)?

As good British people we probably wouldn't behave in the way it suggests the Corinthians were behaving. But what warnings do verses 17-22 have for us in our age?

How might we eat the bread and drink the cup 'in an unworthy manner' (v27)?

What sort of things should we be examining ourselves about (v28)?

On Sunday Dave suggested that Communion is a proclamation of the Gospel and forces people to make a choice for or against God. How might that be fulfilled in v29?

How serious a matter is it for someone to take Communion without believing in Jesus?

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<sup>1</sup> Very simply, 'synoptic' means 'saying the same thing'. Matthew, Mark and Luke are called 'synoptic' because of their similarity to each other and because they all take a similar approach. They relate the history of Jesus, the things that he did, the things that he said etc. John's Gospel takes quite a different approach and gets much more into who Jesus is and into his character.

## Application

Communion is one of the few Sacraments we acknowledge and practise as a church.

A Sacrament is a symbolic act which, through God's grace, we believe has a special spiritual significance or even a Divine power behind it.

Why do you think Communion is so specially significant? In what ways is it significant both in our relationship with God and in our relationships in the Church? What attitude should we take when we come together to break bread?

Spend time taking Communion together. The Anglican Communion Service, which is based on the Roman Catholic Mass, gives a good structure for taking communion, which you may wish to follow. It includes:

- Greeting each other in the Lord's name
- A confession of sins and assurance of God's forgiveness
- A proclamation of the Glory of God<sup>2</sup> and a statement of faith
- Prayer for the Church and the world
- Breaking of bread and sharing of wine
- A prayer for God's blessing on us all

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<sup>2</sup> The words used are known as the Gloria, from the Latin *Gloria in Excelsis Deo* ('Glory to God in the highest') and are as follows:

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.  
Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father,  
we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us.  
You are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer.  
For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father.  
Amen.