

## How to Conduct Holy Communion

### Question 1: What are the main parts of a service of Holy Communion?

- **We look back to His death and we look forward to His coming.**
  - The apostle Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 11:26 – “For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, **you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.**”
  - We look back to His death. **We take time to remember Christ's sacrifice for us.** The cross – His suffering and death – must guide the way we live everyday.
    - Jesus said: ““If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and **take up his cross daily** and follow me.” Luke 9:23
  - “until He comes” – We look forward to His coming. **We take time to check that we are prepared for His coming.**
    - 1 Corinthians 11:28,29 - “A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks **without recognising the body** of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself.
    - Matthew 5: 23,24 – Jesus said: “Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.”
    - If we have offended someone, we must make every effort to put the matter right. If someone has offended us – we must forgive and not hold on to our bitterness. We are one family, one body – this family meal reminds us not to divide the body of Christ – we must learn to settle our conflicts.
    - The Holy Communion service, like our Lord's command to wash one another's feet reminds us to confess all our sins and receive His forgiveness and cleansing.
- **We share one piece of bread and one cup of wine**
  - Matthew 26:26-28 “While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, Take and eat; this is my body. Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”
  - This is a very strong reminder that Christ died so that we might be one.
  - A covenant is a binding promise. Christ promises to love us with His whole life – He gives us His body and His blood!
  - When we receive the bread and the cup, we promise to love Him and His body – the church.

### Question 2: Who can receive Holy Communion?

- Different churches have different rules about this and you should respect the rules of the church you belong to.
- Some only allowed baptized believers. Others do not allow children.
- When Jesus first started this, it was the Jewish feast of the Passover. Even non-Jews and children could share in the Passover. He gave that old tradition a new meaning.

- Many churches practice an ‘open table’ – they invite all who want to follow Jesus to share in the Holy Communion.

**Question 3: Who can lead the celebration of Holy Communion?**

- Different churches have different rules about this and you should respect the rules of the church you belong to.
- Some churches only allow ordained clergy to celebrate.
- The Jewish Passover was led by the head of the household.
- It will be good if leaders of foot washing groups could be given the authority to celebrate Holy Communion with their own group.

**Question 4: How often should we celebrate Holy Communion?**

- Different churches have different rules about this and you should respect the rules of the church you belong to.
- Some have it everyday! Some – once a week, others once a month or even once a year.

**Question 5: What does your communion service look like?**

- **We announce the invitation**
  - We are now going to have a special service of Holy Communion – anyone who wants to learn to follow Jesus is welcome to join us – even the children. But if you are not sure what we are doing, you do not have to take part – you are welcome to watch what we are doing.
- **We prepare ourselves**
  - The leader holds up the bread and asks: “What is this?”
  - The people respond together (or sometimes one child will be asked to give the answer): This is the Body of Christ.
  - The leader holds up the cup and asks: “And what is this?”
  - The people respond together: “This is the blood of Christ shed for the forgiveness of sin.”
  - Leader: Let us prepare our hearts to receive the body and blood of our Lord. In these next few moments of silence, let us ask the Lord to forgive us for all our sins. If you know that you have hurt some one and you still have not put matters right – make sure that you try and make peace with that person as soon as possible. If someone has hurt you, please forgive that person in your heart right now and ask God to forgive him too.
  - Silence for one minute.
  - Leader: Heavenly Father, please forgive all our sins as we forgive those who have sinned against us. Help us to live in love and harmony with everyone. Lord, because You are merciful...
  - The Leader together with the people: Please hear our Prayer!
- **We pray for the miracle of change (transformation)**
  - Leader: Heavenly Father, please take this ordinary piece of bread and this ordinary cup of wine and change it to something very special – so that when we eat this bread and drink this cup, we will receive the body and blood of our Lord – we will receive His life – we will receive Your forgiveness – we will receive Your Holy Spirit. As we eat this

bread and drink this cup, please change our lives to become just like Your life. Lord, because You are merciful...

- The Leader together with the people: Please hear our prayer.
- **We share the bread and the cup**
  - As a piece of bread is given to each person we say, "This is the body of Christ broken for you. Receive His love."
  - As the cup is given to each person we say, "This is the blood of Christ shed for you. Receive His forgiveness."
  - For health reasons, it is very important that those who are distributing the bread wash their hands carefully.
  - Also for health reasons, it is not good for everyone to drink from the same cup. So instead of drinking from the cup, each person dips their piece of bread in the grape juice.
- **We end with a prayer of thanksgiving and commitment**
  - Leader: Thank You Lord Jesus for sacrificing Your life for us. You died to bring us new life. Please help us to follow Your example and take up our cross every day and follow You. We know that You will return to judge the world. Please prepare us for Your coming. We pray this in Jesus' Name...
  - Together: Amen!