

Revealing God's Purpose In Taking Communion:

*"For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes."
– 1 Corinthians 11:26*

CONCLUSION

The Lord's Supper is an act of worship taking the form of a ceremonial meal (and in some cases at the beginning of an ordinary meal) in which Christ's followers share the bread and the cup. The celebration of this symbolic meal encourages us to do three things:

1. To look back and remember Christ's completed work of atonement for the sins of mankind.
2. To look in and to examine our relationship with Christ, taking inventory of our sin and of how we treat our fellow believers.
3. To look ahead to Christ's return with great anticipation.

At Canyon Hills Community Church we endeavor to maintain the beauty and significance of the Lord's Supper. It is our belief that we are free to celebrate around the Lord's table as often as we desire, on any day of the week, and at any location. This may include a hospital room, a home Bible study, a Good Friday service, a Sunday morning corporate worship service, an individual or family at home. The Lord's Supper can even be celebrated at a wedding or a funeral.

Canyon Hills' position is that a particular frequency of celebrating the Lord's Supper is not more biblically superior or necessary than another and remains faithful to the importance of Christ's command to, "Do this in memory of Me."



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What God's Word says about The Lord's Supper

*Making More and Better
Disciples of Jesus Christ*

THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Lord's Supper is an ordinance of the Church that is not to be ignored nor is it to be elevated above its intended purpose and value. This brief Bible study explores the framework of the purpose and practice of the Lord's Supper at Canyon Hills Community Church.

It has its historical roots in the Jewish celebration of Passover. (EXODUS 12)

The symbolism of a slain lamb without defect, the shed blood on the doorposts, the death angel passing over the homes protected by the blood, and the deliverance of Israel out of 400 years of slavery to Egypt are all beautiful types of the salvation to come through Jesus Christ and the re-enactment of this salvation in the Lord's Supper.

Jesus Himself instituted the Lord's Supper. (MATTHEW 26, MARK 14, LUKE 22, JOHN 13)

The very first Lord's Supper was celebrated by Jesus and the Apostles at the Passover meal before His crucifixion. It is clear that Jesus gave new meaning to the annual celebration of Passover. He replaced the lamb without defect with Himself - the sinless innocent lamb of God (John 1:29, 1 Peter 1:19, Rev. 5:12). He replaced the blood of the lamb with His own blood shed on the cross (Romans 3:25, Ephesians 1:7). Jesus replaced the roasted body of the lamb with His own crucified body on the cross (Matthew 27:26, Mark 16:6, Acts 2:36, Galatians 3:1). The blood on the doorposts of the home in Exodus Chapter 12, is now replaced by our heart, the doorpost, or the entrance to our spiritual home. Christ's blood covers over the sin of our heart and allows Him to give us new life and spiritual rebirth (Revelation 3:20, Hebrews 10:22-23, Hebrews 9:14; 26-28). And finally, Jesus replaced the Israelites'



deliverance out of slavery to Egypt with our deliverance out of slavery to sin (John 8:34, Romans 6:17-18).

The Lord's Supper is not sacramentalism.

Sacramentalism is the belief that a physical act by man brings about a special spiritual importation of God's favor and that those who do not participate in this sacrament are left in a state of less favor with God. This is not biblical. Succinctly put, this means that some believe that participating in the Lord's supper actually results in receiving a special grace that is additional to salvation. The Lord's supper does not bring about salvation (1 Corinthians 11:23-26), nor does it impart special favor.

The Lord's Supper is a sacrament.

An evangelical definition of a sacrament is "something sacred." A sacrament is an external sign or sacred symbol that points to a greater or spiritual reality. It distinguishes between the symbol and that which is being symbolized. The Lord's Supper is a physical symbol that points to the greater reality of Christ's sacrifice for the sins of all mankind (1 Peter 3:18) and our acceptance of His sacrifice. The Lord's Supper is a symbolic memorial service commemorating the supernatural act of salvation through Christ and is considered a sacred privilege given to us by Christ Himself.

The frequency of the Lord's Supper is not commanded.

Jesus did not give us a specific command as to how often we are to celebrate the Lord's Supper. Although the Jewish Passover was an annual celebration, it is possible that the early church celebrated this "New Passover Supper" daily (Acts 2:46-47). Possible interpretations of this may include:

- The phrase "daily" is complex in its translation. Many Bible versions render "daily" as "day by day." This would carry with it a less time-specific rendering and lead us to believe that the broader intent of the passage seems not to be instructing us in a specified frequency, but instead emphasizes the church activities of the Apostles and saints and their love and zeal in them.

- Since the church was growing so fast, the purpose of a "day by day" or "daily" participation may have been to teach the new converts (mostly Jewish) the whole new meaning of the Passover now fulfilled in Christ. In Acts 20:7 there is a reference to breaking bread on the first day of the week. It is not necessary to imply that the celebration of the Lord's Supper take place on each and every Sunday meeting.

While this could indeed have been the case, and may be borne out of extra-biblical sources, the text is merely a description of an event whose point is that they were meeting on a Sunday. This passage can not be used as a proof text for the celebration of the Lord's Supper each time they met or on every first day of the week. The verb in question "we came together" is indefinite as to frequency or regularity in Acts 20:7. The New Testament precedent shows that when the saints met together, they were free to participate in the Lord's Supper. The location of their meetings was mostly in homes and seems not to have had any significance in the celebration or its frequency.

There are guidelines for participating in the Lord's Supper.

Self-examination is a necessary part of participating in the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:28). Excluding the poor and turning it into a gluttonous celebration is prohibited (1 Corinthians 11:17-22). God will discipline those who make a mockery of the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:30-33).

The Lord's Supper proclaims Christ's death.

Whenever the believer participates in breaking bread we are announcing over and over again the awesome sacrifice of Christ's death for the redemption of man. This should continue until He comes again (1 Corinthians 11:26).

