

Message Discussion Guide

THE LORD'S SUPPER: CELEBRATION OF THE NEW COVENANT

The Church at Brook Hills, Dr. David Platt March 29, 2009

Luke 22:7-23; Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 11:23-32

This guide is to help you facilitate discussion with your Small Group. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering and owning the truths of God's Word. There may be questions you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on their relationship with God. Your role is to facilitate this experience not to complete the discussion guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid teaching task list.

Connect . . .

Use one or both of the following options to introduce the discussion time to follow.

Option 1

Invite learners to reflect on a recent anniversary or reunion that they have celebrated. Ask them to discuss what they were celebrating, why they celebrated, when they celebrated, and where they celebrated. Ask them if it caused them to reflect on the relationship or relationships that they were celebrating (and if so, in what ways?). Ask them to share a glimpse into the emotions and thoughts that they experienced during the celebration.

Anniversaries / reunions are celebrated regularly to remember what brought people together in the first place. Now, discuss how that compares to the relationship between baptism (our initial identification with Christ and His church) and the Lord's Supper (the celebration of our continual identification with Christ and His church).

Explain that today we are going to look to God's Word to get a fuller picture of what He has revealed to us about the Lord's Supper.

Option 2

Invite learners to share about the first time they partook in the Lord's Supper (when, where, why, how), and what their understanding of the Lord's Supper was the first time they partook in it. Did they realize the significance of the Lord's Supper at that time? Do they now realize the significance of it?

Explain that today we are going to look to God's Word to get a fuller picture of what He has revealed to us about the Lord's Supper.

Review the Message . . .

Baptism and the Lord's Supper...

Baptism demonstrates our initial identification with Christ and His church;
the Lord's Supper celebrates our continual identification with Christ and His
church.

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Discussion . . .

- Pray for God's illumination before inviting three different learners to read Luke 22:7-23; Acts 2:42; and 1 Corinthians 11:23-32. Ask for initial observations after each passage is read, "was there anything that really stood out or that God opened your eyes to after reading these passages?"

Application . . .

- What is so important about continually identifying with Christ and His church through the Lord's Supper?
- Why have many taken the Lord's Supper lightly?

Questions About the Lord's Supper...

Who should participate in the Lord's Supper?

- Believers share in the work of Christ as they partake of the Lord's Supper.
- Unbelievers see the work of Christ as they watch the Lord's Supper.

Discussion . . .

- Who did Jesus share this meal with initially? (Luke 22:11)
- Enlist a learner to read 1 Corinthians 10:16-18. Who does Paul say is to participate in the Lord's Supper?
- It is clear that only those who are disciples of Jesus are to partake in communion. What are the implications of Judas, who betrayed Jesus, being one of the 12 in the upper room with Jesus at the first meal? (Luke 22:21-22)
- In what way do unbelievers see the work of Christ as they watch the Lord's Supper?

Application. . .

- Remind learners that we are to examine ourselves before we partake in the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:27-32). Give them the opportunity to share with the group, a particular sin He wanted them to confess before they participated in the Lord's Supper this last Sunday (or maybe one that they are still holding on to). Note: You may want to remain silent for a few moments to allow God to prompt someone to do this.
- Are you demonstrating true discipleship by obeying Christ (John 14:15), who has called you from darkness to light (Colossians 1:13) ?
- Be sure that your sins will find you out (Numbers 32:23). We can't hide sin from God (Psalm 139:1-12), even though we may be able to fool people for a while (like Judas).

Where should we have the Lord's Supper?

- The only biblical requirement: gathering of the church.

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Discussion . . .

- Invite a volunteer to read the four times Paul talks about the church coming together for the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:18, 20, 33, 34). Then note that the whole context here is the body of Christ celebrating this meal together.

Application . . .

- Do you think it is biblical for a couple to take the Lord's Supper at their wedding?
- Do you think it is biblical for a parachurch ministry to partake in the Lord's Supper as a part of its meetings?
- Be faithful to gather with God's people regularly. If you do not love gathering with the body of Christ, confess that sin and turn from it. Consider what a privilege it is to worship with the people of God.

When should we have the Lord's Supper?

- The command: Observe it often .
- The question: What about weekly ?

Discussion . . .

- Ask each participant what their experience of the Lord's Supper was like growing up. In other words, how often did they celebrate it (this will give you a chance to see how each was raised: Catholic, no formal religious involvement, etc.)?
- Does Acts 20:7 shed any light on how often the early church may have celebrated the Lord's Supper?

Application . . .

- David mentioned that just because you do something often in corporate worship, does not mean that it necessarily becomes routine. How can you do the things that scripture calls us to do regularly, without it becoming routine?
- If the things God has called His people to do regularly have become routine for you, examine your heart to seek out why (give everyone a minute to reflect on this silently)?
- What do you think are the practical benefits of partaking in the Lord's Supper often?
- Will you be faithful in your participation in the Lord's Supper because of your love for Christ and the gospel?

How should we understand the Lord's Supper?

- A traditional misunderstanding: a change of substance that results in salvation.
- A biblical understanding: a symbolic meal that reflects salvation.

Discussion . . .

- Does the disagreement between historic Roman Catholicism and Protestants really matter? How does this disagreement affect a person's understanding of how someone is saved from the judgment of God for their sins?

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- Did you realize that the Roman Catholic church made such claims at the Council of Trent as, *"If anyone says that by faith alone the sinner is justified, so as to mean that nothing else is required to cooperate in order to obtain the grace of justification...let him be anathema (condemned)"* (Session 6, Canon 9)?
- What does God's word teach about justification (Romans 3:21-26)?
- Do you think most people understand how important a biblical view of justification is?
- What does the Lord's Supper symbolize?

Application . . .

- In light of this message, how might your interaction be affected with those who understand and hold to the doctrine of transubstantiation, i.e. the view of the Lord's Supper that asserts the bread and wine literally become the body and blood of Christ?
- We need to share the real good news (gospel) with those who hold to views contrary to God's Word, especially to views that closely relate to salvation.

Why should we celebrate the Lord's Supper?

- To remember...
 - The _____ body _____ of Jesus.
 - The _____ blood _____ of Jesus.
- To reflect...
 - On our _____ sin _____.
 - On His _____ promises _____.
 - We feast on His _____ forgiveness _____.
 - We feast on His _____ faithfulness _____.

Discussion . . .

- Why does scripture talk so much about remembering (Deuteronomy 7:18, Matthew 16:9, John 15:20)? Specifically about remembering what God has done for us through His Son through His body and blood (1 Corinthians 11:24-25)?
- When you remember the body of Christ, what comes to your mind? How about when you remember the blood of Christ?
- Have someone read Psalm 32:1. Discuss how freeing it is to know that what Jesus has done for us on the cross has covered our sins (past, present, and future).
- How would believing a promise like 1 John 1:9 affect how we lived on a day to day basis?
- Have people in the small group share how they have seen God's faithfulness to His promises in their lives (you may want to give them a minute to think about this).

Application . . .

- When you are reminded of God's truth do you yawn with a prideful attitude that says, "I already know that", or do you receive that truth with a heart that says, "Thank you for reminding me of what God says?"

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- Why do you think it is so hard for some people to truly reflect on their own personal sin? What would happen if a person stopped reflecting on their sin?
- We need to realize and embrace the fact that we are worse than we think we are, but that Jesus Christ is greater than we think He is. We need to learn to live by faith in God's promises. God will always keep His promises.

Why should we celebrate the Lord's Supper?

- To renew...
 - Our commitment to Christ.
 - Our commitment to each other.
 - Our commitment to His mission.

Discussion . . .

- Do most people think of the Lord's Supper as a time to confess their commitment and surrender to Christ? Do you think many people have thought about the importance in the word "Lord" as it relates to the Lord's Supper. In other words, how does the Lordship of Christ affect our commitment to Christ?
- What is so important about Paul's mention of the "one loaf/bread" that believer's partake in (1 Corinthians 10:17)?
- Have you ever thought about the fact that you actually proclaim the gospel every time you partake in the Lord's Supper? Did you realize you were such an evangelist?

Application . . .

- Can you honestly say that Jesus Christ is your Lord (Romans 10:9)?
- Do people see your love for the body of Christ in the way you reflect the unity of His body on a daily basis?

Why should we celebrate the Lord's Supper?

- To rejoice...
 - He has set us free.
 - He is coming back.

Discussion . . .

- Have people share some specific sins that Christ has set them free from.
- Have someone read Revelation 19:6-9. How does this passage remind us of how we can have joy in the midst of the trials, troubles, and temptations of life in this fallen world?

Application. . .

- How does joy affect the daily life of the Christ-follower?
- Preach the gospel to yourself daily. Don't forget what God has brought us out of.
- Mediate on the reality that we will one day be sitting at the table with the Son of God, and let that affect the way we sit at the table with other people today.

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Significance of the Lord's Supper...

The Lord's Supper is an essential component of new covenant worship
and a celebratory expression of new covenant community.

Challenge the group to be committed to taking the Lord's Supper with God's gathered body as often as possible. Encourage them to walk in the joy of the Lord as they remember (even today) what Jesus has done for them!