

Celebrating the Lord's Supper in Life Groups

"And we all eat from one loaf, showing that we are one body." I Cor 10:17

Purpose of the Lord's Supper:

Some of us come from traditions where the Lord's Supper has only been experienced as a formal ritual in a large church building. Perhaps we have only seen it led by a priest or a pastor. It may have been often quite impersonal. But the Lord's Supper was instituted in the upper room with Jesus and 12 men who had lived together in community and knew each other well. It can be an intensely personal experience with rich meaning when shared together in a small group.

1. **Communion reminds us of the great sacrifice of our Saviour Jesus Christ in giving birth to the church.** It was during a meal with the 12 that Jesus used the food they ate as symbols of his impending crucifixion. He simply took the bread they were eating as a symbol of his body. After they had eaten he took the wine they were about to drink as a symbol of his blood. Dr. Robert Banks writes: *"In the early church too, it was part of the Agape Feasts held by their cells. Each time a cell gathered, the common meal would begin with the breaking of the bread, and closed with the passing of the cup."*

At South Abbotsford Church we want to give opportunity to celebrate the Lord's Supper in Life Groups, usually in conjunction with Half-Nights of Prayer. This will be in addition to our corporate celebration of the Lord's Supper in our worship services.

2. **At Communion, we recognize that we are one body in Christ.** At the Lord's Supper we remember that by the grace of God, we have all been made his children. No matter what our age, gender, race or status, we have been made one family. The notion that "ordained clergy" should officiate at the Lord's Supper has no Scriptural basis or theological foundation.
3. **At Communion, we declare Christ's death to the world** (I Cor. 11:26) When we celebrate the Lord's Supper, the symbols of his body and blood declare to everyone our faith in Christ till he returns. We should not be embarrassed or apologetic if there are unbelievers present in our Life Groups. Communion provides a wonderful opportunity to declare the gospel.

Preparation for the Lord's Supper:

1. If you incorporate it with a meal, then there is no need to really prepare anything special in advance. You just need to be sure everyone has something to drink around the table, and that there is some form of bread on the table. If you choose to do this outside of a meal, then have a plate with some bread/bun and either one cup to pass around or pour a glass for everyone present.

2. At any time before, during or after the meal- you can use the bread and drink as means of celebrating the death and resurrection of Christ for you.
3. The facilitator may want to read I Cor. 11:23-26 just before you share the bread and cup together. He/she can then take some bread and pass it around the table. The same can be done with a cup or people can simply use their own.
4. If you pass around the bread and cup around the circle/table, it can be a very personal time together. Address the person by name beside you as you pass the elements, and you could say something like, "*Dan, Jesus loves you so much he gave his life for you...eat this bread remembering him...*"
5. Since this is a time to remember Jesus together- be sure to do that! Allow some time for people to share their love and thanks to Jesus and what he has done for them. This can also be done in prayers of thanks together. If this is a new concept for the group- you can assign prayers and sharing of thanks ahead of time.
6. If there are unbelievers present (or you are just not sure) you could say something like this at the start: *I invite all of you who have personally trusted in Jesus as Saviour to join us as we celebrate his death for us. If you have not yet trusted Jesus as your Saviour and Lord, you are free to just watch. However, we are so glad you are here with us, and we want you to see how central Jesus is to our lives.* This could all lead to great conversation and a chance to lead them to Christ.
7. RELAX! Don't get uptight that you may not be leading it "properly." Keep in mind that Scriptures never sets a prescribed pattern of liturgy for communion; it is simply designed as a time to remember together Jesus great sacrifice given for us!