

## **Part 1 - The Participants of Communion (Spiritual Preparation)**

### **1. Who should take communion? Communion is for the “Converted”.**

It is ONLY for those who have publicly professed their faith in Jesus. “Communion” comes from “Common Union”. To be in union with Christ is to accept Him as Savior.

- *1 Cor. 10:16 NIV -- The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?*
- *John 6:56 NIV -- Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him.*

The unconverted have no fellowship or union with Christ. They have no promise of Christ’s abiding with them. Paul indicates that an unconverted participant is partaking in an unworthy manner.

- *1 Cor. 11:27 NIV -- So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord.*

Many people ask if children should be allowed to participate in Communion. A child’s decision to have union and fellowship with Jesus is a personal decision. You can’t accept Christ FOR anyone else, not even YOUR KIDS!! Now I know that rubs up against every protective bone in your body, but beliefs must be taught not inherited. Infant baptism and child communion could unintentionally give your child a false sense of religious security. Their faith becomes connected to an action not a relationship. This is an excellent teaching opportunity! Communion is for those who have made a decision to follow Christ.

### **2. Who should take communion? Communion is for the “Repentant”.**

It’s also ONLY for the convert who is living an examined and consequently repentant life!

- *1 Corinthians 11:28-29 NIV -- Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup. For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves.*

The examined Christian life takes seriously the call to repentance and the promise of forgiveness.

- *1 John 1:8-9 ESV -- If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

Unfortunately, there are those who deny the grace of repentance by hardening their hearts and refusing to forgive or be forgiven. Those who refuse to acknowledge their sin, will harbor bitterness, malice, and hatred in their hearts, and refuse godly counsel toward reconciliation with God and others. They are simply neglecting the grace of repentance. In failing to repent, they are calling forth the disciplining hand of God.

- *1 Corinthians 11:29 NIV -- For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves.*

With this information I encourage you to first examine yourself – confess and repent. Then, take time to explain to your family the significance of being converted and repentant before participating in communion.

## **The Elements of Communion (Preparation of supplies)**

The original elements were bread and the “fruit of the vine” or “the cup” which would traditionally mean grape juice. The clear purpose of communion is to remember Christ. Jesus said “as often as you do this, do it in remembrance of me”. The elements are symbols of Christ’s body and blood given for us. I encourage you to find the traditional elements, or a close substitute. Please avoid using bizarre substitutes that would distract from remembering Christ as the purpose of communion. Seek God in prayer as you solemnly choose elements that best symbolize the sacrifice of Christ’s body and blood.

## **Part 2 - Step-by-Step Communion Guide**

What a wonderful opportunity and experience this will be to observe the Lord's Communion together in your home. Our church family will be meeting together in homes across the metroplex instead of our auditorium. As leader of your household, you will take on the spiritual responsibility to help your family "remember Christ," 1 Corinthians 11:23-36. As leader, you should have already prepared yourself by following Part 1 – Preparation Guide.

This Sunday, April 19<sup>th</sup>, 7 p.m., please gather your family and follow the step-by-step instructions below. Feel free to invite your family members to help read the scripture references.

1. Prepare the Communion elements (bread for Christ's body) and juice (for Christ's blood).
2. Minimize distractions by turning off the television, hand-held devices, etc. This is a little more somber service as we remember Jesus on the cross.
3. Speak to your family about what Communion is.
  - "Communion" comes from "Common Union" which means we are to be united to Christ by accepting Him as our Savior and Lord. **READ: 1 Cor. 10:16, John 6:56.**
4. Speak to your family about the importance of being repentant of our sins.
  - We do that by taking time to be thoughtful and examine ourselves. **READ: 1 Cor. 11:27-29.**
  - An "unworthy manner" can mean:
    - participating without Salvation,
    - participating ritualistically (not with a devoted heart and mind, going through the motions),
    - participating with a spirit of bitterness or hatred toward another believer,
    - participating with a sin of which you will not repent or confess,
    - participating with a belief that the ceremony itself imparts grace or merit rather than understanding the sacrifice it "represents". The ceremony itself is not Salvation.
  - **READ: Psalm 139:23-24.** Take time for each person to reflect and pray.
5. Speak to your family, reflecting on all Jesus did and went through to pay the penalty for our sin.
  - **READ: Isaiah 53:1-10.**
6. Invite your family to take a piece of bread. **READ 1 Cor. 11:23-24.**
  - Eat the bread and word a prayer of thanksgiving for Christ's body, broken for us.
7. Invite your family to take a cup of juice. **READ 1 Cor. 11:25-26.**
  - Drink the cup and word a prayer of thanksgiving for Christ's blood, shed for us.
8. Speak to your family that this was a somber, costly gift that Jesus gave to us. We do not remain sad, but we look forward to what happened 3-days later, EASTER! We celebrate that Jesus took the penalty for our sins but rose in victory over the penalty of death. HE CONQUERED DEATH!
  - **READ: Matthew 28:1-7 and 1 Cor. 15:55-57**
  - Close with a prayer of praise and thanksgiving!