**Learn in Community**

 Small Group Study

**Volume Overview**

**Why is my church family important?**

“For where two or three gather together as my followers, I am there among them.” ([Matthew 18:20](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt18.20))

*When we think of church, it’s easy for our minds to be instantly drawn to the building where we attend. However, in God’s design, the church isn’t the building that we gather in. Instead, the church has everything to do with the people who are gathered there. In essence, the biblical church is not a building that we go to, but a family of believers we belong to.*

*As our Father, God’s heart is to adopt us into His family (*[*Ephesians 1:5*](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Eph1.5)*). When we choose to put our faith in Jesus, we instantly join God’s family. We not only belong to Him, but we belong to each other. Just like our natural families here on earth were meant to function, God uses our church family to meet our needs. A healthy church family offers love, encouragement, guidance, and accountability. As the family of God—the Church—we grow together, celebrate together, share together, and even serve together. As we make a commitment to God’s family, we will become stronger, more devoted followers of Jesus.*

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| First time leading *Learn* for Adults? Check out the [Facilitator Guide](https://0b769b0ed3569ef9d18b-f88d8272f61086866d50d048b43ef630.ssl.cf2.rackcdn.com/sites/biblengagementproject/Listen_Facilitator_Guide.pdf). |

To access session content and videos from a computer, visit: [BibleEngagementProject.com/downloads](https://bibleengagementproject.com/downloads)

**Engage**

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| **QUESTION**What do you remember about either your first Communion or a memorable Communion experience? |

Depending on your faith background, your Communion experiences may vary. Communion might be something you did because your parents told you to. It might be something that was simply a ritual. Or maybe to you, Communion is very sacred because of its deep meaning in your life. Your experience with Communion can also be shaped by who led you through it. Perhaps your early or memorable experiences were shaped by a pastor, a priest, or a relative. The disciples had the opportunity of a lifetime. They were present at the event that set the pattern for Communion, led by Jesus himself! They had the opportunity to fully understand the meaning and importance of taking Communion together.

**Watch**

As we watch this video, think about your answer to this question: What do you think it would have been like to be present when Jesus introduced Communion?



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| **QUESTION**What do you think it would have been like to be present when Jesus introduced Communion? |

**Consider What the Bible Says**

With the crucifixion near, Jesus gathered His disciples for a final meal. You may have heard this meal referred to as the Last Supper. If we knew we were having a final meal with friends and family, most of us would throw a fancy celebration or a going-away party. But not Jesus. Knowing that His hours were numbered, Jesus used this meal as another opportunity for teaching His disciples.

**Communion Focuses Our Heart on Jesus**

Read [Matthew 26:17–19](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt26.17-19).

The meal was already centered around the festivities of the Passover. This was an annual Jewish custom that celebrated the Israelites’ salvation from Egyptian slavery. It was a reminder of how God had spared the Israelites from death through applying a lamb’s blood on their doorposts. (See [Exodus 12:23](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ex12.23).)

In the next passage you’ll read, Jesus stood before His disciples, taking this traditional meal to the next level. Distributing the bread and wine, Jesus focused their hearts on what is most important. He informed them that soon His body would be broken and His blood would be poured out. Just as the lamb’s blood on the doorframe during the first Passover prevented physical death, Jesus is the Lamb who will allow everyone the opportunity to escape spiritual death ([John 1:29](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn1.29)). His death, burial, and resurrection bring wholeness to everyone who believes.

**Communion Focuses Our Heart on His Sacrifice**

Read [Matthew 26:26–28](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt26.26-28).

Jesus used this shared meal to point toward His work on the Cross. His body was going to be broken, and He would endure unimaginable pain. His blood was going to be poured out, and He would give His life for all humanity. Jesus was going to take upon himself the punishment that our sin deserves ([Romans 3:23–26](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ro3.23-26); [1 John 2:2](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Jn2.2)). And though they likely didn’t know it at the time, the disciples were taking part in a meal that would be repeated by generations as Jesus’ followers contemplate His sacrifice.

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| **QUESTION**What does Jesus’ sacrifice demonstrate about God’s love for you? |

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| **QUESTION**Why is it important for believers to focus on Jesus’ sacrifice? |

**Did You Know?**

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| The meal Jesus and His disciples shared together would have been the Passover Seder. This meal was not just a simple dinner, but instead a large feast which many Jews looked forward to every year. To most Jews this would have been one of the most important nights of the year as they spent time looking back in remembrance of God’s deliverance of their ancestors from enslavement in Egypt. |

**Communion Focuses Our Heart on Our Attitude**

In his letter to the Corinthian church, the apostle Paul looked back at Jesus’ sacrifice, teaching that such a sacrifice must compel us to examine the motives and intentions of our heart as well as our attitudes toward others.

Read [1 Corinthians 11:23–31](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Co11.23-31).

Paul’s recounting of the Last Supper reminds us that the attitude we bring to this sacred activity matters. It begins with an often-repeated word in relation to Communion—remembrance. Remembering the gift of His life for us is humbling. And remembering the relationship we have as a result should draw us closer to Him.

The attitude recalibration doesn’t stop with remembering though. Paul compelled those taking Communion to look at their own life. A primary purpose of Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection was to set us free from sin and death. It’s wrong when we bring that sin with us to this time of remembrance. Jesus wants us to know and experience true spiritual freedom. This should challenge us to examine our heart and ensure that we continue to take account of our personal sin, allowing His forgiveness to transform us.

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| **QUESTION**Have you had a Communion experience where either your remembrance or repentance was deeply meaningful? Share about it if you’re willing. |

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| **QUESTION**How do you know when your attitude needs adjusting? |

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| **QUESTION**What freedom have you experienced through your relationship with Jesus? Share an example with the group. |

**Communion Focuses Our Heart on Community**

Read [1 Corinthians 10:16–17](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Co10.16-17).

This passage from Paul’s letter to the church at Corinth reinforces the importance of unity with other believers. When we look closely at the word *communion,* we can see “common union.” Our faith is the common bond that joins us together. When we focus our heart and mind on Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection, we’ll love and serve others better.

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| **QUESTION**Why is unity so important among believers? |

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| **QUESTION**What would your church look like if you experienced a stronger spirit of unity? |

**Communion Focuses Our Heart on Our Future**

Read [Matthew 26:29](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt26.29).

Throughout His time on earth, Jesus made multiple references to heaven. He wanted us to understand that His sacrifice on the Cross was not just to pay our debt of sin, but to give us eternal life ([John 3:16](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn3.16); [Romans 6:23](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ro6.23)). Our life does not end when we take our last breath on earth. All believers have a home with God ([John 14:1–3](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn14.1-3)). We can rest assured that we’ll spend eternity with Jesus.

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| **QUESTION**What is your understanding of eternal life? |

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| **QUESTION**What do you imagine heaven will be like? |

**Reflect**

**We Share Communion Together**

Communion should not be just a ritual. It’s an act of worship that believers should share together. Its purpose is to unite our heart with God and each other around the redemptive work of Jesus on the Cross. Communion is a reminder of God’s great love for us and the price Jesus paid to give us spiritual freedom, wholeness, and eternal life. For those who are saved, Communion is a celebration!

**Listen to God**

Let’s pause and listen to what God might want to say to us about what we have read and shared. Be silent for a few moments and reflect on the following questions. Respond to the one that most resonates with what God is saying to you now. Then complete the others during Day 1 of your devotion time this week.

**Personal Reflection Questions**

*Record your answers to the following questions in the space provided or in your personal journal.*

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| **QUESTION**Do you treat Communion more as a ritual or an act of worship? How can Communion become more an act of worship for you? |

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| **QUESTION**Carefully examine your heart. Do you know of any sin you need to confess to God, so you don’t dishonor Communion? Take time to reflect on making your heart right with God and others. |

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| **QUESTION**Are you living the life Jesus is calling you to live? Is He asking you to take a step of faith or obedience in any certain area? |

**Activate**

Communion is a tangible way to remember and celebrate the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. His sacrifice on the Cross has paid the way for us to experience freedom from spiritual darkness, peace with God, and unity with other believers.

**Challenge**

Now that you’re aware of the importance of Communion, consider taking it more frequently. While Communion is something you typically participate in at church, you don’t have to wait for your pastor to regulate the time and frequency of this act of worship. You can take Communion as often as you like, in church service, in a small group like this, or with family and friends.

Use bread or a cracker as the symbol of Jesus’ body. Use grape juice as the symbol of His blood. Once you have gathered these elements, consider reading the following Scripture before taking Communion: [1 Corinthians 11:23–26](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Co11.23-26).

**Prayer Requests**

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| Note any requests from the group and remember to pray for them during the week. |

Before next time, continue to spend time in God’s Word with the personal devotions.

**What We Believe**

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| **Official Doctrine**The Lord’s Supper or Communion, consisting of bread and the fruit of the vine (grape juice), is a memorial of Christ’s suffering and death ([1 Corinthians 11:26](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Co11.26)). In eating and drinking the symbols of Christ’s suffering and death, the believer expresses their awareness that through salvation they (1) have been made right with God, and (2) share the divine nature of eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ ([2 Peter 1:4](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.2Pe1.4)). The ordinance also looks forward to Christ’s second coming ([1 Corinthians 11:26](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Co11.26)) for it is a reminder to proclaim the Lord’s death “until He comes”! |
| **The Significance of This Doctrine**Communion is not simply a religious custom. It embodies the central message of the Christian faith. Communion is a periodic (often monthly) reminder that the believer has received free salvation through the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This ordinance focuses regular attention on the central truth of Christianity. |

**Learn on Your Own**

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| *Before you begin each devotion, pray and ask God to speak to you through His Word. Record your answers to the following questions in the space provided or in your personal journal.* |

**Day 1: We Share Communion Together**

Read [Matthew 26:17–19](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt26.17-19), [26–30](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt26.26-30); [1 Corinthians 11:23–26](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Co11.23-26).

Look back over Learn in Community and complete your responses to the Personal Reflection Questions. Plan how to complete the Activate component if you haven’t already done so. If time permits, reread the Scripture too.

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| **QUESTION**What is God saying to you about Communion? |

**Learn on Your Own**

**Day 2: Remember His Body**

Read [Isaiah 53:4–9](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Is53.4-9).

Jesus breaking bread in front of His disciples was a symbol of the physical trauma His body would soon endure. The very next day He was beaten and whipped. The soldiers punched Him in the face. They pulled out His beard and pierced His hands and feet with nails on the cross. He endured the most extreme physical punishment so we could be forgiven and healed. When we take Communion, we remember that Jesus was broken so we could be made whole.

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| **QUESTION**What do you feel when you think of the physical punishment Jesus endured for you? |

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| **QUESTION**Does any area of your life feel broken and in need wholeness? |

**Learn on Your Own**

**Day 3: Remember His Blood**

Read [1 Peter 1:17–20](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Pe1.17-20).

Through Communion, we remember that Jesus conquered death so we could have life.

Jesus passed the cup of wine to His disciples as a symbol of His blood that would be given on the Cross. Jesus encountered public torture, a crown of thorns on His head, and the barbaric practice of crucifixion. His innocent blood was poured out to cover the debt, guilt, and shame of our sin.

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| **QUESTION**What debt do you owe and what punishment do you deserve for your sin? Imagine your life without the love and forgiveness of Jesus. |

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| **QUESTION**Have you recently offered thanks to Jesus for paying for your sin? Consider writing a prayer to Him. |

**Learn on Your Own**

**Day 4: Remember His Covenant**

Read [Hebrews 9:11–15](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Heb9.11-15).

Because the wages of sin is death ([Romans 6:23](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ro6.23)), the old covenant between God and His people required sacrifices to pay the debt for sin. These payments were made through the sacrifice of bulls, sheep, goats, and doves. These sacrifices were a temporary covering for sin.

However, when Jesus died on the Cross, He became the ultimate and complete sacrifice for our sins. Under this new covenant, we’ll never again have to attempt to pay for our sins. His sacrifice was not temporary, but eternal. Through Communion, we remember that our debt for sin has been paid in full.

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| **QUESTION**Jesus’ final words on the cross were, “It is finished.” ([John 19:30](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn19.30)). How does this connect to the Hebrews passage you just read? |

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| **QUESTION**How do you feel knowing that Jesus’ sacrifice for you was final and eternal? |

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| **QUESTION**How will you choose to live in response to Jesus’ sacrifice? Prayerfully reflect on anything in your life that needs to change. |

**Learn on Your Own**

**Day 5: Remember His Return**

Read [John 14:1–4](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn14.1-4).

It’s important to remember that Jesus’ work on the Cross was just the beginning. Because we believe in the resurrection of Jesus, we can trust that Jesus will one day return just as He promised. We can have peace because we know Jesus has not only erased our debt of sin, but also prepared for our eternity. Through Communion, we remember that one day we will be with Jesus for all eternity.

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| **QUESTION**Is the return of Jesus something you think about often? Why or why not? |

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| **QUESTION**Why is it important for us to tell others that Jesus is coming back? Who should you tell? |