

[ARM Prison Outreach International](#)

"Ministers' Minute" Volume 10 Number 2

"This Do in Remembrance of Me"

Matthew 26:17-29

Editor's Note: This "MM" is the second email message of 2011 in a series that ARM is sending as an encouragement to preachers, chaplains, and Christian workers around the world. This issue is the 110th "MM" sent!!! All are archived -- just [click here](#) to see links to all messages sent since January of 2002.

This month's message is by Bill McCoy, evangelist in Arkansas; we are thankful he has allowed us to share it here. It is my prayer that this message will encourage you and those you teach and lead.

May God bless your labors! -- Rod Farthing, Development Director

The Ordinances of the Church - The Lord's Supper

The word "ordinance" is not a bible word. The root word of "ordinance" is "ordain." God has ordained two practices associated with the death/blood of Jesus – baptism and communion. God has commissioned the church to administer these two ordinances. In recent centuries both of these ordinances have been diminished by many – the Lord's supper by frequency and baptism by mode and purpose. Today we consider the Lord's Supper.

BACKGROUND

9 Plagues water to blood, frogs, gnats, flies, death of livestock, boils, hail, locusts, darkness -- but Pharaoh would not buckle

Ex 12:1-28, 43-51 Passover (1 day), Feast of Unleavened Bread

(7 days, started day after Passover) was the first (historically &

on the calendar) & most important of Jewish holidays, feasts, celebrations. It was their Independence Day, Memorial Day, & New Year combined in one week.

INSTITUTION

Matt 26:17-19, 26-29; Mark 14:12-16, 22-25; Luke 22:7-20; 1 Cor 11:23-26

QUESTIONS

What shall we call it?

the Lord's supper

1 Corinthians 11:20 (NIV)

When you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper you eat communion

communion = sharing, fellowship, participation

1 Corinthians 10:16 (KJV, ASV)

The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?

the breaking of bread

Acts 2:42 (ESV)

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Acts 20:7 (ESV)

On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread

the eucharist

From “eucharisto” -- a Greek verb meaning to “give thanks.”

Luke 22:17, 19 (ESV)

And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, "Take this, and divide it among yourselves. ... And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

What elements are to be used?

The elements Jesus used to institute the Lord's supper were the elements of the OT Passover. The various passages linking the elements of the Lord's supper indicate the clear connection with the Passover; hence, unleavened bread would have been used. God's clear instructions regarding both the initial and the perpetual celebration of the Passover specify that the bread was to be prepared after their homes were swept clean of leaven/yeast.

Exodus 12:15 (ESV)

Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven out of your houses, for if anyone eats what is leavened, from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel.

Regarding the liquid or beverage in the Passover, the OT says nothing. Both the instructional and historical accounts mention only the Passover lamb, or its substitutes for those who could not afford a lamb, and the unleavened bread. Only in the NT do we read about a liquid or beverage in the Passover celebrated

by Jesus and His disciples. And the liquid/beverage is described only as “a cup” or “the cup” or “this cup” and “the fruit of the vine.” Conspicuously absent in the Bible is the word “wine” in connection to the Lord’s supper. Nowhere does God specifically forbid the use of fermented grape juice (wine) in the Passover meal or the Lord’s supper, but neither is there any example of any OT or NT saints doing so. I think we lack biblical authority to condemn the use of wine in the Lord’s supper, but there certainly is no biblical authority to defend its use. The significance of the unleavened bread was that leaven/yeast requires time to make bread rise, and the Israelites did not have time to wait for the effect of the leaven. By the same token, the production of wine requires time for fermentation to take place. I am personally convinced that neither the Jews in general nor Jesus nor His disciples used wine in the celebration of the Lord’s supper.

The ingredients for unleavened bread are readily available in nearly all parts of the world. These ingredients are already found in nearly every home, even in the most impoverished cultures. The preparation of unleavened bread is quite simple. Grapes are grown in most parts of the world and require only picking and squeezing to produce grape juice. So the elements for the Lord’s supper are readily, easily, and cheaply available. Is it wrong/sinful to use any other elements – e.g., cherry Kool-Aid and vanilla wafers? Not necessarily. Any time we remember the price that was paid for our salvation and examine ourselves in relation to that price, it is good. But if we are going to do that, why not follow the example of Christ as closely as possible?

Is it symbolic or sacramental? Some basic views:

“Transubstantiation”

--the bread and wine become the actual body and blood of Christ and is thus sacramental (a means of accessing God's grace)

“Consubstantiation”

--the bread and wine do not change, but the literal presence of Christ is present in, under, and with the elements and is thus sacramental (a means of accessing God's grace)

Symbolic, Commemorative

--terms “body” and “blood” figurative, symbolic, commemorative
--Christ is spiritually present
--it is not sacramental (not a means of accessing God's grace)

How should it be observed?

Concerning the logistics of the serving of the Lord's supper the Bible is absolutely silent.

Exclusively 1 Cor. 10:14-22

Reverently 1 Cor 11:17-22, 27

Introspectively 1 Cor 11:28-32

If we committed a sin in the last week should we abstain from participation in the communion service? If so, none of us could participate. If we have been struggling with a sin over a longer period of time, should we abstain? Again, if so, few if any of us could participate. Indeed our participation in the breaking of bread and remembering Christ's death is part of our means of battling sin in our lives. Now if we were guilty of a willful, premeditated sin that we have not yet confessed in repentance, seeking God's forgiveness, then, perhaps we should abstain.

But, for that matter, what better time to humbly approach God with absolute contrition than in the Lord's supper.

About what should we think as we observe the Lord's supper?

- Jesus is the only means of salvation
- My utter inability to save myself
- My complete dependence on God's grace/Christ's righteousness
- Temptations that trouble me
- Adjustments I need to make in my life
- Needs of the local church body
- Brethren with whom there is friction
- People I know who need Jesus

Editor's note: Biblical observances of the Lord's supper are always linked to being together with fellow believers. Technology and innovations are able to suggest another more individual approach. Options like the following should be cautiously considered in regard to how they impact the importance of Communion being a group activity. (However, this is not to infer "special" circumstances or isolation that lead to observing the Supper by oneself is necessary improper.)

Believers are invited to partake of Communion in front of their computers while following the service via Twitter, the brain-child of U.K. Methodist minister Tim Ross. Rev. Ross will send out a prayer in a series of tweets and ask participants to "read each tweet out loud before typing 'Amen'" in response. Hundreds of people have registered for the service, and Rev. Ross hopes thousands will join them by the time the service takes place next month. "The perception of church is often that it is rusting away in antiquated buildings and not in touch with the world around us," says Ross, "but this is a statement that we're prepared to embrace the technological revolution." Telegraph.co.uk 7/24/10

How often should it be observed?

There is no command regarding the frequency of the observance of the Lord's supper.

1 Corinthians 11:25-26 (ESV)

In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Proclaiming the Lord's death is a good thing. We proclaim His death as often as we "eat this bread and drink the cup."
Frequent is good.

While there is no specific command regarding the frequency of the observance of the Lord's supper there is a principle called "apostolic precedence." Absent a specific command from the apostles, we simply follow their example and the example of the first century Christians under their oversight.

Acts 20:7 (ESV)

On the first day of the week, when we [*Paul & company*] were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the next day, and he prolonged his speech until midnight.

Acts 2:42 (ESV)

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

How often do you suppose the first century church studied the

apostles' doctrine, participated in offerings, and prayed? How often do churches in our century study the apostles' doctrine, collect offerings, and pray? If the less frequent observance of the Lord's supper makes it more meaningful, why would the same not be true for collecting an offering, presenting a sermon, or offering a prayer?

Who should participate? (open or closed communion?)

Exodus 12:43-49 (ESV)

And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "This is the statute of the Passover: no foreigner shall eat of it, 44but every slave that is bought for money may eat of it after you have circumcised him. No foreigner or hired servant may eat of it. ... If a stranger shall sojourn with you and would keep the Passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised. Then he may come near and keep it; he shall be as a native of the land. But no uncircumcised person shall eat of it. 49There shall be one law for the native and for the stranger who sojourns among you."

These OT Passover restrictions obviously do not directly apply to our observance of the Lord's supper under the new covenant. But that does not mean that they are useless for answering this question. Indeed they are quite useful. For OT males circumcision was that point in time when they came into covenant relationship with God. Jewish boys were circumcised on their 8th day of life. A proselyte/ convert to the Hebrew faith was circumcised at the time and age of his conversion.

Regardless of the age, people who were not in covenant relationship with God were not allowed to participate in the Passover meal. While there is no NT scripture as explicit as Ex. 12:43-49, what we are told makes it just as clear that the Lord's supper is intended only for those in covenant relationship with

God – i.e., for those who have chosen to place their faith in Jesus Christ, to obey the gospel, to be cleansed by the blood of the covenant represented by the fruit of the vine.

1 Corinthians 10:16-17 (ESV)

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? 17Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.

1 Corinthians 11:24b-26, 28-29 (ESV)

This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." 25In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." 26For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. ... 28Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. 29For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself.

Jesus ascended to heaven and intercedes for us as He prepares to return.

But before he ascended, He left

His purse to Judas;

His clothes to the soldiers;

His body to Joseph of Arimathea;

His mother to John;

His peace to His disciples;

His supper to His followers;

His gospel to the world;

His presence with God's children.

Remain faithful unto death .." Rev. 2:10B

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In 2010, 70 ABA Bible courses were mailed from ARM every day!

“This Do in Remembrance of Me”

Matthew 26:17-29