

Foot-Washing

and

Communion

1. In preparation for the Lord's Supper/Communion, the practice of foot washing leads the believer to a deeper appreciation of Christ's love, humility, of Jesus giving of Himself, in His birth, whole sinless life and death, to make the provision of salvation available to all human beings.

This rite is a type of a higher cleansing of the heart, which is the source of alienation, jealousy, pride and all types of sin. As believers stoop to wash each other's feet, all thoughts of putting oneself first, self-aggrandizement, pride, selfishness and self-centeredness are to give way to the spirit of love, humility, fellowship and of genuine discipleship in terms of servanthood. Thus, it is an ideal preparation for the celebration of the Lord's Supper. In this spirit one experiences union with God and with one another and is thus prepared to meet with the Lord in the celebration of His Supper.

2. Foot washing, according to Jesus' words in John 13:10, does not replace baptism. "He that is washed [baptized] needeth not save to wash [his] feet". Once a person has been baptized ("washed" completely), there is no need for undergoing baptism anew each time a sin is committed or a desire for spiritual cleansing is awakened. Unless a believer lapses into open apostasy or learns of new salvational truths, no need exists for a complete re-baptism, only for the washing of feet in representation of the removal of sin, following sincere repentance and confession. Baptism is the door to the church, a symbol of renunciation of the old life and the adoption of a new life in Christ (Romans 6:4). Foot washing points to humility and cleansing (John 13:10–16).

3. From John 13:14-17 it is clear also that Christ has imposed a moral obligation upon His disciples, both of His immediate apostles and the wider circle of the church, to wash each other's

feet. The symbolic act of foot washing should be an expression of a believer's sacrificial love toward fellow members. Persistent, willful non-participation may be interpreted as a voluntary severance from Christ (John 13:8).

4. ¹Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.

²And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him;

³Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God;

⁴He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself.

⁵After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.

⁶Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?

⁷Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.

⁸Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.

⁹Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.

¹⁰Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.

¹¹ For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.

¹² So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?

¹³ Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.

¹⁴ If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.

¹⁵ For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

¹⁶ Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.

¹⁷ If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them. (John 13:1-17.)

**[Foot-
washing
time. 😊]**

5. In the Lord's Supper there is a real communion with Christ, though not with the idea that Christ's body and blood are present in the elements. Christ's body and blood are no more present today in the elements of bread and wine than they were when the Lord instituted the ordinance, took bread and gave it to the disciples, saying, "Take, eat; this is my body", then likewise took a cup and gave it to them, explaining, "Drink ye all of it. For this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins". (Matthew 26:26–28). His instruction was clear: "This do in remembrance of me" (1 Corinthians 11:24, 25).

6. The unleavened bread and unfermented fruit of the vine—which alone can appropriately symbolize the sinless Life, unblemished Sacrifice, of the Person of Christ—are shared in remembrance of Him; they speak of His pure/sinless life, sacrificial death, salvation from the power/penalty of sin and proclaim them until He comes. In view of the Jewish custom of removing all leaven from the home on the eve of Passover (Exodus 12:15, 19, 13:7), it can be safely assumed that the bread used at the Last Supper was unleavened.

The descriptions of the Lord's Supper of both the Synoptics and Paul's, use the expressions "cup" and the "fruit of the vine" for the drink representing Christ's blood. The word "wine" is not used. Alcohol is a product of decay and death, unfit to symbolize the redeeming blood of Jesus. Thus, the use of fermented juice or alcoholic wine in the Communion service is not appropriate. The fresh pressed juice of the grape correctly represents the blood of Christ, poured out for the forgiveness of many.

Nothing corrupted by fermentation, the symbol of sin and death, could represent the Lamb without blemish and without spot. The bread represents Jesus as the only sinless person; the grape juice is a perfect symbol of His atoning blood.

7. The very nature of the ordinance denotes a spiritual relationship between the individual and the Lord, the Lord's table is

set only for those who have a share in Him and in His salvation. A prerequisite may be inferred from Paul's urgent request that the church censure from the body those known to be living in open sin (1 Corinthians 5:1–13). Still, Christ's attitude toward the disciple who betrayed Him should warn Christians against undue exclusiveness.

8. By eating and drinking, human beings take nourishment into their bodies. By food and drink they are physically strengthened as what they take becomes part of their very cells. By drinking the contents in the cup and eating the bread, Christ's disciples become partakers of Christ's life. Not only do they eat with Him in fellowship, they appropriate His qualities into their lives.

9. Christ Himself was the "living bread which came down from heaven" (John 6:51), to have life we must eat His flesh and drink His blood. One who ate His flesh and drank His blood would "dwell" (John 6:56) in Him. In John chapter 15 Christ uses a figure from agriculture to portray this same relationship: "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me." (John 15:4.)

Obviously, it was impossible for those who listened to Christ literally to "eat" Him and "drink" His blood; it was also absurd to expect that His disciples would literally attach themselves to His person like a literal branch to a vine. Thus, the abiding, the eating, and the drinking must be figurative. Seen in this light, the cup and bread of the Lord's Supper are symbols of a greater reality. While not the substance of Jesus' body and blood, the bread and the cup of the fruit of the vine represent His broken body and spilt blood, His death on the cross and the saving gift issuing from it.

10. The cup represented the “New Testament” said Jesus (Luke 22:20). The covenant idea was clear in Jewish thinking. Yahweh had first covenanted of His own free will to bless Israel; the people had then agreed to love and obey Him. The breach in this covenant had resulted in the Babylonian deportation in 586 B.C.. God had always wanted His Law to be in the hearts of His people (Deuteronomy 6:6; Psalm 37:31; Isaiah 51:7), but they had failed Him. Jeremiah had already expressed the certainty of a new covenant—one not written on tables of stone but on the hearts of God’s people (Jeremiah 31:33, 34). This new covenant was not new in that it meant a change in God’s law or intention but in the means by which it was ratified. Jesus’ own blood would confirm God’s promises of salvation. In the Last Supper this new covenant became a reality. As the disciples partook of the contents of the cup, they participated in the provisions and power of that new covenant, made possible by Christ’s death, as it is our privilege today. Christ’s blood was the symbol and the means of His voluntary and substitutionary atonement; it was the guarantee of the establishment of the new covenant.

11. The celebration was to be “in remembrance” of the liberation from sin, its power and its ultimate penalty, eternal death, made possible by Christ’s death, just as the Passover was observed in remembrance of Israel’s liberation from Egypt. On the other hand, just as the Passover anticipated the sacrifice of Christ as Passover lamb, the Lord’s Supper anticipated the victory of the Lamb in the kingdom (Matthew 26:29; Mark 14:25; Luke 22:16, 18). An Old Testament parallel of this “remembrance” appears in the exhortation for a memorial to be kept of the Passover (Exodus 12:14) as a symbol of God’s benefits. The blood of the new covenant was that “which is shed for many” (Matthew 26:28; Mark 14:24), or more intimately, “for you” (Luke 22:20). By this shedding, forgiveness of sins would be obtained (Matthew 26:28), reconciliation.

12. Baptism binds us to Christ in His death (Romans 6:3, 4), a death He suffered in our stead and for our salvation. The Lord's Supper, likewise, is the proclamation of our Lord's death and resurrection, till He come (1 Corinthians 11:26), but among Christians it points to the death that He Himself explained as the basis of the new covenant (Mark 14:24). Just as baptism celebrates one's fellowship with Christ and one's desire to be part of Christ's body, the Lord's Supper is a celebration by baptized believers of the redeeming event that brought them together.

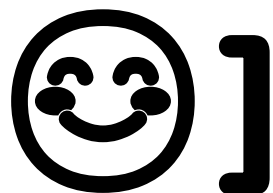
While baptism expresses a convert's decision to belong to Christ, the Lord's Supper shows the church's desire to proclaim Christ's death as God's all-sufficient Sacrifice, act of salvation with it being made efficacious by His all-sufficient priesthood in the heavenly sanctuary. The Lord's Supper is the means whereby those who have sealed their covenant with Christ join with Him in that sacrificial self-offering to the Father's will. Participation in the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper remembers Christ's broken body and spilt blood while looking forward to the Second Coming (Matthew 26:28; 1 Corinthians 11:23–26).

13. In Luke's Gospel the cup is shared before the bread, and a second cup closes the meal (Luke 22:17, 20). It is possible that the first cup was part of the Paschal meal; thus it would not be part of the Lord's Supper. The narrations in Matthew and Mark, as well as in 1 Corinthians, note the sharing of bread first, followed by the one cup.

14. With His promise not to drink of the "fruit of the vine" again until He would drink it with His disciples in the kingdom, Jesus gave the assurance that He would be reunited with His friends (Matthew 26:29; Mark 14:25). Thus Jesus promised to participate with His disciples in the Messianic banquet (Isaiah 25:6–8) in the kingdom of God (Matthew 22:1–10; Luke 14:15–24) in the day of the final consummation (Revelation 19:9, 21:3–5). In spite of the imminent

separation, there was a bright eschatological future. The celebration of the Last Supper is not only a backward look or a reflection on the redemptive action of God through Jesus Christ; it was and is also a forward look into the future, to the moment of His glorious return as prophesied in John 14:1–3.

**[Please have
unleavened
bread ready to
break and eat.**



15. “²³For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread:

²⁴And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.” 1 Corinthians 11:23-24.

**[Please have
unfermented
grape juice
ready to
drink. 😊]**

16. “²⁵After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, this cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

²⁶For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.” 1 Corinthians 11:25-26.