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# COMMUNION IN THE CIRCUITS

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## A guide to help student host communion with their Circuit

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Communion is a powerful time that is used to bond individuals to God and to each other. It is a time to remember what Christ has done for us on the cross, and to celebrate what that does to us. The Bible also speaks about addressing any concern you have before your brother before approaching God in communion. Both of those, remembrance and repentance, create a powerful atmosphere for your circuit.

From Earl Creps Phd

### **Communion: the Lord's table**

Some Christian traditions refer to Communion as the "Eucharist," however, the wording used is much less important than the recognition that "the Lord's supper" (1 Corinthians 11:20) takes place at "the Lord's table" (1 Corinthians 10:21). The original language here is quite emphatic; this experience belongs to God.

Jesus modeled the Communion moment at a Passover meal that would eventually be called the Last Supper (Matthew 26:26-28). The common label is incorrect. This was really the first supper, the beginning of two millennia of believers celebrating Christ's presence among them. Three truths present themselves every time we meet with the Lord around His table.

**Past tense: a table of history.** The Lord's table recognizes the historical reality of Jesus' sacrifice. Of the bread, Jesus said, "This is My body which is broken for you." Of the cup, He said, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood" (1 Corinthians 11:24,25, NKJV). Rather than being a hollow ritual about Christ, the Lord's Supper commemorates what He has actually done for our forgiveness and reconciliation with the Father.

In water baptism, we individually identify with Christ's death and resurrection. But at the Lord's table, the entire community focuses on the Cross and the empty tomb. In this act, the history of redemption is affirmed by the congregation, and the congregation is affirmed by the Agent of that history. As Jesus said, "Do this in remembrance of Me" (1 Corinthians 11:24,25). Assemblies of God churches serve Communion frequently in order to bond the congregation together around the central reality of Christianity: the Cross.

**Present tense: a table of accountability.** One purpose of the Communion experience is to call participants to a moment of accountability before the Lord. Paul addressed the church at Corinth on this issue. The congregation was fractured by competing loyalties and was displaying grotesque moral and relational failures. Even the regular fellowship meals, and the following Communion services, were coming to resemble the feasts held in local pagan temples (1 Corinthians 11:18-22).

The Corinthians needed to "examine" themselves: "For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself" (1 Corinthians 11:29, NIV). This injunction means that the blessing of Communion is not only neutralized, but reversed, when the Lord's table (and

the sacrifice and community it represents) is treated with disrespect. There is no benefit in the bread and cup for Christians who choose to live in flagrant disobedience before coming to the table.

Assemblies of God churches tend to take a sober attitude while serving Communion, providing opportunity for members to consider the quality of their lives and make things right with God and with others.

**Future tense: a table of prophecy.** Communion is temporary. One day the ordinance will be replaced permanently by fellowship among Christ and His people in eternity (Revelation 19:9). Jesus spoke of this when He told the Twelve at their final Passover meal, "I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom" (Matthew 26:29).

Every time the church celebrates Communion, then, we "proclaim the Lord's death until He comes"

(1 Corinthians 11:26). Coming to the Lord's table is a way of recognizing that the future will not be an endless extension of the present. Christ is coming for His church. The bread and the cup foreshadow the real Last Supper, the one that will never end.

Ordinances are visible representations of invisible realities. We are water baptized to signify our entry into the kingdom of God through identification with Christ in His death and resurrection. We come to the Lord's table to remember the present reality of the Cross, to make our lives accountable to God, and to look forward to Christ's return. As we participate in the ordinances, we connect both to God and to His people.

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Here are some tips if you are interested in hosting communion in your circuit.

- **Don't use wine. Grapejuice and flatbread are fine.** It's not as much about the actual elements, as it is about how we approach God. We've even used just grapes before, no crackers or anything. Try to pick something that is less distracting, and allows everyone to focus on worship, not eating. **BONUS:** Don't bite off more than you can chew. It can be awkward to ask for more grape juice.
- **Be aware than many people have a lot of opinions about communion.** Be graceful with those who don't have the same experience as you do. Do your best not to offend them, but to help them understand the big purpose communion. Rememberance and Repentance.
- **Consider background worship music.** It helps set the atmosphere and avoid distractions.
- **Consider having a time to allow for each to reconcile with each other.** See 1 Cor 11
- **Consider having a time to allow for repentance.** See 1 Cor 11
- **Consider your environment.** Communion is a very intimate experience. It's very common to have tears, or spontaneous confession. Your atmosphere should be conducive to this. Be sure that it's not done in an area that could be easily interrupted by random people, cell phones or other distractions.

## Verses to Consider:

23 For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." 25 In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." 26 For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. 27 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. 28 Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup. **1 Corinthians 11:23-28 (NIV)**

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body." Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." **Matthew 26:26-28 (NIV)**

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it; this is my body." Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, and they all drank from it. "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many." **Mark 14:22-24 (NIV)**

And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you." **Luke 22:19-20 (NIV)**

Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf. **1 Corinthians 10:16-17 (NIV)**

And when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. **1 Corinthians 11:24-26 (NIV)**

Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." **John 6:53-54 (NIV)**