

Lord's Super



The Holy Seed Church





LAST SUPPER

One of the surest responsibilities of eldership is assisting the pastor in the celebration of communion, or leading in the service yourself. Only ordained ministers or elders conduct the service. Communion is one of the most solemn and yet joyous occasions in our churches.

When it is a time that calls for heart-searching and forgiveness, it is also a time of encouragement and spiritual renewal. Therefore, being able to lead the congregation in this sacred service is one of the most deeply spiritual duties that you, as an elder, will be called upon to perform.

{a}RENEWING RELATIONSHIP:

The celebration of communion gives opportunity for those attending to renew and rebuild relationships with God and with their fellow members. As they join together in the washing of one another's feet and in the eating and drinking of the symbols of Christ's death, they are reminded of their need of God's continued grace and forgiving love and for closer fellowship with one another. The Communion service should unite our members and help them to leave with renewed strength and confidence to continue God's mission in the world.

(a) WHEN TO HOLD

The church Manual says, "In the holy Seed church the communion service customarily is celebrated once per quarter." The words "customarily" suggest only that it has been the practice or custom of our church to hold Communion on a quarterly basis. Paul states, for as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes (1 Corinthians 11:26). This informs us that the Bible has not established any set number of time for holding the service. It is not how often we celebrate the Communion that is important, but how often we remember "Lord's death."

The communion service should most often be held during the Sunday worship hour. However, there may be other or additional occasions when your church chooses to celebrate the service: the conclusion of a week of prayer, the end of a series of revival meeting, a camp meeting, a church retreat, or during youth meetings.

Whenever or wherever communion is celebrated, careful preparation should be made with every detail thoughtfully planned and rehearsed. The service ought to be announced at least a week in advance so people may prepare for the event. Deacons and deaconesses should prepare the bread and the wine well beforehand and have the sanctuary and the rooms to be used for Foot washing properly equipped.

(b) **PREPARING THE EMBLEMS**

Only unleavened bread and the unfermented juice of the grape should be used in the Lord's Supper. Where it is impossible to obtain grapes, grape juice, or grape concentrate the juice of raisins may be used. In isolated areas where none of these are readily available, the conference or mission will provide advice or assistance.

Recipe for communion bread.

1. 1 Cup fine-ground flour (preferable whole grain)
2. 1/4 teaspoon salt
3. 2 tablespoons cold water
4. 1/4 cup olive or vegetable oil

Sift flour and salt together. Pour the water into the oil, but do not stir. Add this to the dry ingredients and mix with a fork until all the flour is dampened. Roll out between two sheets of waxed paper to the thickness of thick pie pastry. Place on an ungreased, floured baking sheet, and mark off with a sharp knife into bite-size squares, being careful to pick each square to prevent blistering. Bake at 450 degrees Fahrenheit for 10 to 15 minutes. Watch carefully during the last five minutes to prevent burning. Serves 50 persons.

(c) **WHO MAY PARTICIPATE?**

At the time of his last supper, Jesus declared that the bread was a symbol of His body which was "given for you" Luke 22:19. The wine was a symbol of His blood "which is shed for many for the remission of sins" Matthew 26:28. Jesus gave His life for sinner and His invitation to them is to partake of the Communion in remembrance of His sacrifice that is able to set them free from sin. All who feel the need for forgiveness from sin should seek in this ceremony the symbol their cleansing.

The Holy Seed Church observes open Communion

Adults wishing to participate should not be stopped from doing so. It is not the work of church officers to decide who is worthy or unworthy to take part. "Christ's example forbids exclusiveness at the Lord's Supper. It is true that open sin excludes the guilty. This the Holy Spirit plainly teaches. But beyond this none are to pass judgment. God has not left it to men to say who shall present themselves on these occasions. For who can read the heart?" There may be some in the congregation who feel that their sin is the very reason they should participate! Especially encourage these members to attend. Tell them that, as they come in repentance and

accept the symbols of Jesus death, they will find forgiveness for their sins and release from their guilt.

(d) **SERMON**

It is the usual custom in our churches that a 15-20 minutes sermon is preached before members separate for the Foot washing. During this sermon you have opportunity to make clear the meaning of the Foot washing and to encourage members to make clear the meaning of the might have had with others in the congregation. Sometimes you may choose to vary the service by spending a few minutes explaining the meaning of Foot washing and then leaving the rest of the sermon until after participants return. By saving the sermon until before the Lord's Supper emblems are passed you will be able to focus attention more fully on their meaning.

{f} Here are suggested communion sermon texts:

1. Jesus' example in foot washing. John 13:13-17
2. The Lord's Supper (Mark 14, Luke 22) Matthew 26:26
3. Self-denial in those who follow Jesus. Matthew 16:24
4. Eat the flesh and drink the blood. John 6:53-56
5. One bread, one body. 1 Corinthians 10:16-17
6. Proclaiming the Lord's death. 1 Corinthians 11:23-26
7. Christ's suffering 1 Peter

Note: Each person will be delivered one on a different occasion regarding Lord's Supper not all at a time because time is short to handle service.

{g} FOOT WASHING

Foot washing is a powerful symbol. When we kneel before one another as Jesus once did, and take someone's feet in our hands to wash them, we are taught important lessons of humility. Through this ceremony, disagreements between members can be settled and wrongs made right (Matthew 5:23). The water that is poured over our feet by our partner represents the spiritual cleansing and refreshing that comes when Jesus applies His blood to our lives.

Foot washing should be carefully planned. Basin, water, towels, adequate space and seating, and congenial surroundings need to be provided by the deacons and deaconess. Visitors, new members, youth, and children should be tactfully encouraged to join the foot washing, either to participate or to observe. Assist people to find partners with whom they can share the ceremony.

Because Foot washing can be an occasion for making wrongs right, opportunities might be provided for families to share the ceremony together. Alienation most often occurs within families, perhaps between husband and wife, parents and children, or between

children. The ceremony of Foot washing is an excellent way for families to make new beginnings. Consider making provision for families to take part together. When members have assembled ready for Foot washing, the ceremony can begin with prayer. There may be some present who would like to ask forgiveness of their partner for some wrong they have committed. Encourage this kind of confession between participants.

In some places members sing hymns quietly as they wash each other's feet. Some partners like to pray for each other during the ceremony. The whole experience should be a time of sharing and joy that brings members together in unity. At the completion of the Foot washing, members may shake the hand of their partners, or embrace or kiss them, according to the local custom for showing Christian love.

(a) LORD'S SUPPER

It works well for the congregation to sing a hymn as they reassemble and the leader, along with the assistants, take their place behind the Communion table. The servers will follow and be seated in the front seats. You may make some introductory remarks about the Lord's Supper or begin your short sermon according to whichever order of service you have chosen to follow.

The bread is then uncovered and prayer is offered for God's blessing upon this symbol of Jesus' body. The deacons then take the bread and offer it to members of the congregation. On their return, the elders and yourself are served and you lead the congregation in eating the bread. The same procedure is followed for distributing the fruit juice. During the serving of the bread, hymns sung, passages of Scripture such as 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 may be read, hymns sung, testimonies given, special music presented.

(b) In some of our churches the deacons carry both the bread and juice on the one tray. Worshipers take them together from the tray. Following the service, the juice glasses are in racks provided in the backs of the seats. By following this method, the deacons need to move through the congregation only once, eliminating activity extraneous to the purpose of the ceremony.

(c) ENDING THE SERVICE

The communion service should end joyously. Wrongs have been righted. Sins have been forgiven. Faith and hope have been restored. It is a time for rejoicing. Close the service with bright, joyful music. Dismiss the congregation by benediction or silent prayer. Following the serving, deacons and deaconesses should dispose of the leftover

bread and juice in a respectful manner. In no case should it be eaten or drunk.

(d) THOSE UNABLE TO ATTEND

Often there are church members unable to attend communion because of sickness, isolation, old age, or any number of other reasons. Elders and deacons should attempt to visit these people and offer them communion. If the person is sick, Foot washing is not usually included.

24. GROUNDBREAKING :

A groundbreaking service encourages congregational involvement and unity in supporting a building project. It engenders enthusiasm especially if the church has been planning, praying, and giving for the building over a long period of time. At last tangible is happening.

(a) PLANNING THE SERVICE:

Pastor and elders should work together in planning a groundbreaking.

(b) SETTING THE TIME

Groundbreaking is not entirely a religious service and thus does not belong on church service day. Sunday is often an ideal time.

(d) INVITING THE GUESTS

Conference/mission representatives should be invited. Local political and other community leaders might attend. Pastors from other churches will sometimes come. The news media ought to be notified and encouraged to give liberal coverage.

(e) PREPARING THE SITE

The site should be cleared. Perhaps a platform needs to be erected and a sound system installed. If the service is going to be long. Chairs may be needed. Drawings of the proposed building should be prominently displayed. A mockup of the structure will help people visualize it. If the ground is to be broken with shovels, several should be provided. Sometimes the shovel blades are painted gold or silver. Alternatively, an earthmoving machine may be used to turn over the first dirt.

(f) An excellent plan

for including congregational participation is to break the ground with a plow. A long rope is attached to it, and the congregation pulls the plow through the ground creating a beautiful symbol of a congregation pulling together in the building project. If the building has been marked out ahead of time, a furrow can be plowed around

its perimeter and the building easily visualized when the groundbreaking is finished.

(g) ORDER OF SERVICE:

The order of service suggested below may be used when the audience is comfortably seated and when you have planned for regular service. However, the service could be abbreviated, depending upon local circumstances.

Opening - Many congregations do not sing well outdoors. For that reason, congregational singing may be omitted, especially if the group is small.

Prayer – Involve a non-the holy seed church pastor or a leader in the local congregation to offer the prayer.

Special song, sermonette – This ought to be very brief. It should consist mostly of a scripture reading and a litany in which everyone can participate. Ezra 3:10, 11; 6:14 Matthew 21:42; Acts 4:11; 1Corinthians 3:9-11; 1 Peter 2:4-8.

Special song, Speeches

Special guests may be invited to speak briefly, but in view of the full program they should be few in number. Have someone narrate the history of the church or of the present building project, and talk about the immediate plans for beginning the building.

Groundbreaking

Special participants in breaking the first ground usually include the pastor; head elder, building committee chairperson, and representatives from the conference /mission and community. A child should be included as a representative of the church of the future. If the building is a school, include the school board chairperson, principal, and a teacher.

Special song or hymn of dedication

Benediction

(g) STONELAYING

A stone laying service may take place of groundbreaking. It is held after the building has begun and features the laying of a stone to become part of the foundation. The service can follow the same general order as for groundbreaking.