

To KNOW Christ and one another more deeply,
To CARE for one another in truth and in love,
To GROW as followers of Jesus.
- CG Mission Statement

Worship: Matthew 26:26-29

(Here is a psalm/song to help your group as you worship. You can go through it together or in groups in meditation and/or in

Read Matthew 26:26-29 using the prayer practice of Lectio Divina. Read the passage aloud 3 times. After each reading, spend a few minutes reflecting. After the first reading, open yourself to the presence of God. On the second reading, listen for a certain word or phrase that stands out to you. On the third reading, listen to what God's invitation might be for you.

Icebreaker

Share a time when you experienced a meaningful meal with others. What made it so special?

Text for Discussion: I Cor. 11:17-32, 10:16-17

Turn in your Bibles and read this passage aloud together.

Aid for Discussion: Sermon Summary

Becoming a follower of Jesus means our life is no longer simply our own (1 Cor. 6:19). We now have union with Christ, His presence and power now residing within us. We live within an entirely new reality where God has declared us forgiven and free. But how does this become the new reality by which we live our lives? How do we grasp God's presence and receive the grace that changes us? Our Father knows our Faith is weak, so He has given us pictures of the Gospel to remind us how much we need Him. These "Means of Grace" include prayer, reading the Bible, learning how to meditate on His promises, and the Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper is intended to be a meal that brings God's people together. But it isn't simply a means of remembering what Christ has done on our behalf. It is the gift of Christ Himself (Luke 22:19). Jesus is present in the Lord's Supper, and by partaking in it, we commune with the living Christ (1 Cor. 10:16). In it, God has given us a window into the divine reality of His creation. This meal is a place where God promises to meet us. What our mind doubts, our mouth tastes; when our faith falters, our fingers can touch. It is a means of grace whereby Jesus feeds our faith, nourishes our souls, and gladdens our hearts.

It is also a coming together of God's people, as we experience communion with each other in Him. Being in Christ changes *everything*, including and especially how we see other people. The value and distinctions our culture places on people no longer count. While the people of Corinth practiced communion in a way that reinforced these worldly divisions, we are called to partake in a way that echoes the Gospel. By honoring what it took for us to be reborn in Him, we are recognizing the community of believers for who we really are: the one body of Christ. What does this sacred meal therefore call us to remember?

The Lord's Supper reminds us we live in a spiritual, supernatural world.

The Lord's Supper is so much more – and so much more important – than we ever imagined. It is the gift of Christ Himself, a visible sign of our union with Him and communion with each other.

The Lord's Supper reminds us that our faith is weak. When we have disappointed ourselves, it is a time to bring our hearts before God in our frailty. The Lord's Supper reminds us that not only is it ok to feel weak, it is a condition of receiving Grace.

How we live in community should embody the Gospel we profess. We are to welcome one another as Christ has welcomed us (Rom 15:7), so that the Lord's Supper expresses our unity as the Body of Christ. This means we are to become hospitable and generous peacemakers. This meal is not a private personal act of piety; we are joyfully coming together as the Lord's people.

Guiding Question of the Week

(This question is intended as a target for the whole conversation. Do not ask for responses now. It will be repeated later in the study.)

How is Christ present within the Lord's Supper?

Questions for Discussion

(Remember it is better to wrestle deeply with two good questions than gloss over many. Sub-bullets are intended for potential follow-up.)

Opening questions...

- Take turns reading through the entire passage – I Cor. 11:17-32, 10:16-17. What stands out to you?
- What does Communion mean to you?
- When has the Lord's Supper been particularly meaningful to you?

Digging Deeper...

- Looking at vs. 20-22 how have you seen divisions in the church affect the worship service or taking of the Lord's Supper?
- Look at vs. 23-26. Paul repeats the words used during the Lord's Supper. How do you respond when you hear these words during Communion?
- Look at vs. 27. Paul instructs the Corinthians to examine themselves before taking the Lord's Supper. How is that done?

Application Questions...

- What would it look like to welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you (Rom. 15:7)?
- Practically, how can we keep communion from becoming an empty ritual?
- What can we do to best prepare ourselves before we next take the Lord's Supper?
 - Is there someone in your life that you need to reconcile with?
- What is one thing we can do between now and our next meeting to act on the reality of what we explored today?

Praying for One Another

(Here are some ideas from the study to help focus your time in prayer as a group. Use by themselves or along with other prayer requests.)

- Thank God that He has given us the Lord's Supper allowing us to participate in Christ's life
- Pray for each other and our church that our times of celebrating the Lord's Supper will provide assurance, encouragement and hope.
- Pray for someone that you have unreconciled conflict with. Ask God to help you forgive that person.

Experiment of the week

(A suggestion for engagement in following the way of Jesus this week)

We all have at some point people in our lives that we have unresolved conflict with. Take some time this week to address the conflict. Here are a couple of different ways you can go about doing that:

- Pray for that person for a week.
- Write a letter to the person and have a friend read it before you send it (to make sure the letter makes sense).
- If you have wronged someone, take some time to apologize to that person.
- Write a letter of encouragement to build someone up who you might have been holding a grudge against.

Share about your experience in next week's meeting.