

Calvary Chapel Santa Cruz

Holy Communion

Communion, often called “The Lord’s Supper,” is a memorial in which Christians identify with the crucifixion of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 10:16, 11:20). It’s a time for believers to remember the Lord’s broken body and His shed blood for all people (Luke 22:19-20).

Institution of Communion

Jesus Christ instituted communion on the eve of His death when He ate the Passover meal with His disciples (Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-25).

Meaning and Symbolism of Communion

Bread and wine were once served for the Lord’s Supper. Today many churches, including ours, use unleavened crackers and grape juice. This is consistent with the Passover elements used by the Jews, and with Jesus’ words concerning the “fruit of the vine” (Matthew 26:29).

The bread symbolizes Christ’s body, which was beaten and broken for us as He died for the sins of humanity. The cup of wine or grape juice symbolizes His blood, which was shed for us as He paid for our sins (John 10:17-18; Ephesians 1:7; Romans 5:8-9).

Essentials for Observing Communion

Anyone who participates in the Lord’s Supper must first be a believer. Jesus commanded His disciples to observe communion (Matthew 26:26); therefore, a person must have placed his or her faith in Jesus Christ for salvation before taking part in communion.

In addition to being believers, we must prepare our hearts to participate in the Lord’s Supper. Paul instructed believers not to “eat this bread or drink this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner...” (1 Corinthians 11:27).

Last, we must examine our lives for any unconfessed sin. Paul reminds us, “Let a man examine himself” (1 Corinthians 11:28) to avoid bringing judgment upon ourselves. As we become right with God through confessing our sins (1 John 1:9), we may then participate in the Lord’s Supper in a worthy manner.

Past Significance of Communion

Communion is a time to look back, remembering the Lord’s death on the cross. His death was more than just an atoning death—it was a substitutionary death. He died in our place so that we might live. He took our sins upon Himself so that we could receive His righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Present Significance of Communion

Communion is a time to look within, considering our lives in light of our profession of faith. As we enter into a time of communion with the Lord, we are to thank Him for our salvation and the privilege of being His children.

Future Significance of Communion

Communion is also a time to look ahead toward the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Paul said we’re to “proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes” (1 Corinthians 11:26). The Lord’s Supper foreshadows the great Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19).

Today, we stand between the two most important events in human history: the First and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. When we observe The Lord’s Supper as Christians, we become connected to both.

Here at Calvary Chapel of Santa Cruz

Typically, we observe communion on the third Sunday morning of each month. We are flexible with this, and are open to the Holy Spirit’s direction concerning other times when communion may be served publicly.

We do encourage families and small groups of believers to observe communion as the Lord directs them. Jesus did not specify that it must be led or directed by an ordained pastor; it is an observance for every believer, since we are all part of a holy priesthood (1 Peter 2:9-10; Revelation 1:5-6).

The observance of Communion brings wonderful spiritual blessings to all who partake in faith.