



WHAT IS COMMUNION?

In the Bible, the word for **communion** means “sharing together” or “holding something in common.” As followers of Jesus, we participate in Communion because we “share together” faith in Christ for our salvation through his death and resurrection. It is a special time for believers to worship and remember Christ’s great love. Others who would like to join the experience of Communion are welcome to observe but asked not to participate unless they share this kind of faith in Jesus.

At Grace Church, we observe Communion through three elements: **foot washing, the bread & the cup, and the love feast**. We believe that each of these elements captures a dimension of the gospel that is important to be remembered and celebrated. They are symbols that point beyond themselves to something deeper—namely, Jesus and his love being worked out in our lives past, present, and future. As we remember Christ’s love for us through Communion, we grow in our love for Him and others.

FOOT-WASHING

EXPLAINED

- This first part of communion reminds us of **our ongoing need to be cleansed from sin**. It’s a time of introspection and humility. In foot-washing, Jesus wants us to remember that even though believers have been forgiven of all sin—we still need His power and forgiveness on a daily basis.
- Washing feet is something Jesus asked us to do (**John 13:1-17**). When Jesus washed His disciples’ feet, He provided an example for us to practice. While foot-washing is many things—an ancient custom, an act of humility, physical cleansing—it ultimately is a symbol of something greater. It represents Christ doing a real, internal cleansing in our hearts through his love and forgiveness.

EXPERIENCED

- **Get Ready:** Fill a bin/basin with warm water. You can also use alternatives like wet wipes or hot towels. Make sure to have towels or paper towels to dry feet.
- **Set the Tone:** Read John 13:1-17 if context is helpful. The overall tone of foot-washing is humility and sobriety. You should do foot-washing in silence or with soft singing. By the nature of the practice, we suggest washing feet only with family or the same gender.
- **Practice the Element:** *As your feet are being washed*—think about you the struggles and temptations you are experiencing in life; confess these things and ask God to reveal how you can depend on him in them. *After you have washed someone’s feet*—take a minute to pray for them, specifically for their spiritual well-being and to develop a humble and obedient heart before God.

THE BREAD & THE CUP

EXPLAINED

- This second part of Communion reminds us of ***the price Jesus paid to secure eternal life for us***. The bread and cup are important because they represent Christ's broken body and shed blood. When we decide to follow Jesus, a great exchange takes place: God considers our sins paid for by Jesus' death and the righteousness of Jesus to be ours (2 Corinthians 5:21). It's an incredible but costly gift.
- Jesus asked us to continue observing the bread and cup until He returns (1 Corinthians 11:23-30). Those in the early church took it very seriously. We are warned to examine our own lives before participating, checking that we are in proper relationship with God and one another.

EXPERIENCED

- **Get Ready:** You will need some form of bread & drink. Most often, crackers & grape juice are used.
- **Set the Tone:** Read 1 Corinthians 11:23-30 if context is helpful. The overall tone of the bread and cup is somber and contemplative.
- **Practice the Element:** Before taking the bread and cup, spend time in self-reflection considering your relationship with God and others. Is there love and closeness? Peace and unity? Does something need forgiven or restored? If so, pause to address this in prayer with God or by talking with those you need to seek reconciliation. After this, take the bread and the cup. Close in prayer, thanking Christ for his sacrifice and forgiveness.

THE LOVE FEAST

EXPLAINED

- This third and final part of Communion reminds us of ***the future celebration shared with Jesus in heaven free from sin and death***. The love feast highlights that the Church—all believers—is his dearly loved bride. The Bible promises a special future occasion, the ultimate love feast, with Jesus himself as host (Revelation 19:6-9). This is why a meal shared in Christian love and friendship is one of the symbols Jesus commits believers.
- We practice the love feast because Jesus included it with His disciples (John 13) and because the early church included this practice (1 Corinthians 11; Jude 12). We look forward with hope to the amazing day that we get to see Jesus face to face—celebrating His victory over Satan, sin, and death.

EXPERIENCED

- **Get Ready:** The love feast can be as extravagant or as minimal as desired. Smaller groups usually prefer to do full meals, while larger groups sometimes do just cheese and crackers. Either is acceptable.
(Consider individuals with food allergies)

- **Set the Tone:** Read Revelation 19:6–9 if context is helpful. The overall tone of the love feast is one of excitement, enjoyment, and celebration.
- **Practice the Element:** Sit down with your family, friends, small group (this may need to be virtual). Engage in spiritually meaningful conversations during or after eating. How can we hope in Christ despite our current doubts and fears? What about the gospel have I forgotten that I need remember? How is Jesus better than what we have or want? What about our future with Christ in the new heaven and new earth do you look toward with anticipation? Close the love feast time by praying—thanking God for his promises and asking for strength as we wait for him.