



Week 6: Passion Week

*Note—We are encouraging you to practice communion together with your group this week. This will require that you stop by the store for some bread and juice in advance. Taking communion as a group of believers is a privilege that can draw your group closer to God and each other. **Mark Stuenzi has prepared a special video message for you to watch as a part of taking communion this week. You can access it at parkerhill.org/good-friday***

GET GOING

What do you see when you see the Cross? What some see as an instrument of torture others see as a treasure. The Cross is the place where mercy and justice meet. When we look at the Cross we see that our sin was so bad that it cost nothing less than the life of Jesus, the Son of God. We also see that Jesus gave Himself willingly to pay the penalty for our sins. The cross is God shouting to us, “I love you and I will do whatever it takes to rescue you.”

COMMUNION

1. **Read John 19:17-27. What stands out to you from this passage?** (Group Leader, please prepare ahead to point out what stands out to you.)
2. **Read John 19:28-37. What stands out to you from this passage?** (Group Leader, please prepare ahead to point out what stands out to you.)
3. Summarize John 19 by saying something like this: The phrase “It is finished” means “Paid in full.” Jesus’ death paid the full penalty for our sins. His sacrifice saved us. There is not a single sin that His pain did not pay for. Communion is a celebration of this life changing reality.
4. Pass out the bread and juice. Then read this: 1 Peter 2:24 says this about Jesus Christ: “He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree so that we might die to sin and live for righteousness. By his wounds we have been healed.” Then pray to thank God for sending His Son to die for our sins and to give us new life. Have everyone take the symbols in remembrance of Christ.

WRAP IT UP

Ask some of your group members to close your time together in prayer, thanking God for the precious gift of His Son.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCE

Can We Do This? Celebrating communion in Community Groups

Once we've done something a certain way for a long time, any change in routine can feel strange and may even be met with a degree of fear and suspicion. This is especially true in churches, where traditions are cherished and change comes slowly. You may have some of those feeling as you think about leading the celebration of communion in your Community Group. In order to assure you and your group members that this is actually a very Biblical way of celebrating communion, examine the following passages of Scripture:

Luke 22:8-12

Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover."

"Where do you want us to prepare for it?" they asked.

He replied, "As you enter the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him to the house that he enters, and say to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' He will show you a large upper room, all furnished. Make preparations there."

We can observe two things in this passage: First, we find that when Jesus instituted this practice, it was not with the crowds of people to whom he sometimes ministered. He shared this meal with His twelve closest followers in a private setting... in a home! Secondly, we observe that Jesus gathered in this upper room with His followers to celebrate the Jewish Passover. Passover was a feast that was always celebrated in homes, not in the public places of worship such as the Tabernacle or the Temple. Jesus took the elements of that Jewish Passover meal and infused them with a whole new meaning.

Acts 2:42-27

Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles.

All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need.

Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. (Acts 2:42-47)

Many theologians agree that the phrase "breaking bread" in this passage refers to the sharing of the Lord's Supper. Verse 46 plainly states that this took place in homes. Since there were no Christian "church buildings" until hundreds of years after the birth of the church, the home was a primary gathering place for the church. The early Church knew nothing of church buildings which would accommodate hundreds of people. Therefore, they met in large, public places to hear the teaching of the Apostles, and then met in homes for many other aspects of their worship.

Furthermore, there is nothing in scripture that links the administration of the Lord's Supper to the church leadership or anything corresponding to our modern concept of "ordination." It seems that if Jesus wanted church leadership (elders or deacons) to "administer" the Lord's Supper, there would be some clear instruction to that effect in the Bible.

Our conclusion? The celebration of communion in a small-group setting is actually a very Biblical practice and will provide the opportunity for increased intimacy and connection with God and fellow believers.