

**What
are
the Purposes
of
the Lord's Supper?**

Should we do it at all?

**Matthew 26:26 – 30
Mark 14:22 - 26**

The symbolism of the bread and the cup are given, but the writers do not mention if Jesus suggested that the symbolism be repeated.

Luke 22:19 – 20 The symbolism of the cup and bread are given along with “Do this in remembrance of Me.” Paul quotes that line twice in 1 Corinthians 11:24 – 25.

Only twelve men other than Jesus were present at the first presentation of the symbolism. No one recorded whether Jesus mentioned if this symbolism should be re-enacted by anyone other than the apostles.

However, Paul taught the Christians of Corinth to repeat it (1 Corinthians 11:26). Jude 12, Acts 2:42, Acts 20:7, and 2 Peter 2:13 mention the occasion as a generally accepted practice.

Descriptions of congregational gatherings written in the second century describe the practice as central to the meeting.

What reasons or symbols did God place in the Lord's Supper for us? Can we limit ourselves to just one? Does God expect us to use all the parts?

Remembering Jesus

(1 Corinthians 11:24 – 25) “Do this in remembrance of Me.” The immediate context in Luke 22:19 – 20 is to remember His sacrifice. However, dividing the history of Jesus into separate categories is very difficult. Topics to remember that are necessarily connected to His sacrifice are His character, sinlessness, love, divinity, and many other interconnecting facets.

Fellowship

(1 Corinthians 10:16) Fellowship is a connection between spirits. “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the fellowship of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the fellowship of the body of Christ?” In the Lord’s Supper, our spirits are connected with both Jesus and the church.

Unity

(1 Corinthians 10:17) “For we, though many, are one bread and one body, for we all partake of that one bread.”

Participation in Jesus’ Sacrifice

(1 Corinthians 10:10) “Observe Israel after the flesh: Are not those who eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?” The Lord’s Supper recalls the sacrificial meals of the Law. In John 6:31 – 58, Jesus draws the same comparison. In 1 Corinthians 5:7, Paul calls Jesus “our Passover.” Jesus’ sacrifice represented several types of sacrifice

Singleness of Purpose

(1 Corinthians 10:21) “You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord’s table and of the table of demons.” Our participation illustrates that we have only one Lord.

Proclamation of His Return

(1 Corinthians 11:26) “As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes.”

Self-Examination

(1 Corinthians 11:28) “But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.”

The bread symbolizes the body of Jesus

(1 Corinthians 11:24) The best reading is “This is My body which is for you.” The same idea is in John 6:31 – 58. In addition to the sacrifice image, Jesus compares Himself to manna that maintains the spirit rather than the body. In Hebrews 10:10 – 14, the sacrifice of the body of Jesus is compared to the Mosaic sacrifices.

Unleavened Bread of Sincerity and Truth

(1 Corinthians 5:7 – 8). One of the images of the bread is that of purity, using the Feast of Unleavened Bread as a backdrop.

The bread is also a remembrance of Passover, Release from Slavery, Affliction, and Haste.

**Exodus 12:27, 13:8;
Deuteronomy 16:3**

The blood of Jesus symbolizes...

(1 Corinthians 11:25) “This cup is the new covenant in My blood.” (Matthew 26:28) “...which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”

Consuming the Blood of Jesus

(John 6:31 – 58) The Law specifically forbade the drinking of blood (Leviticus 17:10 *et al*), as did the apostles (Acts 15:29). Jesus’ image of drinking His blood represents taking the character of Jesus into ourselves.

Sprinkled Blood

**(Hebrews 9:11 – 10:22)
Jesus' blood is compared to
the blood sprinkled in the
Mosaic rituals of dedication
and purification, by which
our consciences are
cleansed.**

Summary of Symbols

The Practice:

**Remember Jesus
Fellowship
Unity
Participation in Jesus' sacrifice
Singleness of purpose
Proclaim His death and return**

The Bread:

**The body of Jesus
Sincerity
Truth
Release from slavery
End of affliction
Haste to escape**

The Cup:

**The blood of Jesus
Confirming the covenant
Becoming like Jesus
Dedicated and purified**

Frequency

- 1. Frequency is not given.**
- 2. Since it is a symbol of unity, group action fits.**
- 3. God thinks we need this symbolism.**
- 4. How often would faith say to repeat it?**