



Fellowship in the Breaking of Bread

A pattern of thanksgiving worship for use in the home

Introduction

In New Testament times the service we know as Holy Communion was called the breaking of bread. It was probably observed in a simpler way than it often is today. (*Acts 20, 7*)

A central part of the service is thanksgiving, the Greek word for which is *eucharisto*; this is why it is also sometimes known as the Eucharist.

The Gospel record shows the Eucharist has strong links with the Old Testament Passover, reminding us that Jesus is the Lamb of God. By His death and resurrection, we are set free to love and serve Him as Lord of all the world.

The pattern of service that follows has no formal consecration of the bread and wine and can be led by the homegroup leader or other group member if that is desired.

Even though we cannot be together at the present time, we can join in celebrating this thanksgiving in our own individual homes. You might want to do this over the phone with a friend, or join one of the on-line 'gatherings' we will be organising. To do this you will need a plate with a roll or mini loaf, a beaker with red wine or grape juice for each person, a napkin and a lighted candle.

The Breaking of Bread

Ldr: Brothers and sisters in Christ, as we come to break bread together, we remember that our roots go back to the early church and we seek to follow the pattern they set for us, as we shall now read together from the book of Acts.

**All: The believers devoted themselves
to the Apostle's teaching and to the fellowship,
to the breaking of bread and to prayers.
They broke bread in their homes and ate together
with glad and sincere hearts
praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people.
And the Lord added to their number daily
those who were being saved. (Acts 2, 42 and 46)**

Ldr: Let us now pray that our hearts shall be like theirs; let us praise God for His goodness to us and to the world and let us pray for our communities and ourselves, that we would know God's grace and saving presence.

A time of silent prayer, or you may wish to pray together if you are with someone at home.

Ldr: Let us hear now what the Apostle Paul wrote to the Christians at Corinth. 'For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.'

(1 Cor. 11, 23-26)

All: Therefore, whoever eats the bread
or drinks the cup of the Lord
in an unworthy manner
will be guilty of sinning against
the body and blood of the Lord. (1 Cor. 11, 27)

Ldr: We admit we are unworthy; we need forgiveness and healing.

All: Have mercy upon me, O God,
according to your unfailing love;
according to your great compassion
blot out my transgressions.
Wash away all my iniquity
and cleanse me from all my sin. (Ps. 51, 1 and 2)

Ldr: As high as the heavens are above the earth, so great his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. (Ps. 103, 11 and 12)

Rejoicing in our forgiveness we now read the Gospel call to make remembrance with bread and wine.

All: When evening came
Jesus was reclining at table with the twelve.
While they were eating
Jesus took bread, gave thanks,
and broke it and gave it to his disciples saying
“Take eat; this is my body given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.”

Then he took the cup, gave thanks
and offered it to them saying,
“This is my blood of the new covenant
which is poured out for you and for many
for the forgiveness of sins.” And they all drank from it.

(Mt. 26, 26-28; Mk. 14, 22-24; Lk. 22, 14, 19-22)

Ldr: At the invitation of our gracious Lord and sure of his living presence with us, we share the bread and wine. We remember Jesus, his body broken for us.

We eat together. If you are sharing this thanksgiving with others in your home, have one person (with clean hands) break the bread into the required number of pieces. Then each person should take their own piece.

Ldr: We remember Jesus, his blood shed for us.

Each person drinks from their own cup.

After the Breaking of Bread

Ldr: The Lord has made himself known to us in the breaking of bread. Let us praise him with glad and sincere hearts.

All: **Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever.
 Through Jesus therefore,
 let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise
 - the fruit of lips that confess his name.**

Ldr: And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

All: **May the God of peace,
 who through the blood of the eternal covenant
 brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus,
 that great Shepherd of the sheep,
 equip us with everything good for doing his will,
 and may he work in us what is pleasing to him,
 through Jesus Christ,
 to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.**

(Heb. 13, 8, 15-16, 20-21)