

A PREPARATION GUIDE FOR THE LORD'S SUPPER

Read 1 Corinthians 11:17-34

1. Look Around in FELLOWSHIP (vv. 17-22; 1 Cor 1:10)

- Use the elements as symbols to reaffirm our unity as one body of Christ and our communion (*koinonia*/participation) with each other (see 1 Cor 10:16-17).
- Address any potential division with others BEFORE taking the elements (see Matt 5:23-24) or you will cause “more harm than good” in the church body.
- *“‘Grace received’ that does not recognize the need to be gracious to others misses the point of the Lord’s Table altogether.”* (Gordon Fee)

2. Look Back in REMEMBRANCE (vv. 23-25)

- To remember, biblically, is to recall a past event (Christ’s death) in such a dynamic way that it becomes a present reality, having impact on us NOW.
- Meditate on WHAT Christ delivered you from (read carefully Eph 2:1-5,12-13)
- Meditate on WHO Jesus is...that He DIED...HOW He died...and WHY He died.
- Remember as you take each element, Christ was broken...and poured out...for you (Luke 22:19-20).
- If Baptism is like a wedding—a one-time public vow of commitment to Christ—then Communion is like a wedding anniversary, a special time to remember our vows and renew our pledge of love with our Beloved.

3. Look Upward in EXPECTATION (v. 24)

- Though Christ is not physically in the elements, we should still expect Him, as the Host, to be present with us as we celebrate His Supper. Look for Him!

4. Look Outward in PROCLAMATION of the Gospel (v. 26)

- Remember this is not a mindless ritual, but a powerful “proclamation” in which the very elements symbolically illustrate the Gospel/new covenant to all present.
- Do not underestimate the evangelistic effect of celebrating the Lord’s Supper on unbelievers observing us, or even its edifying effect on believers (cf. Rom 1:16).

5. Look Inward in SELF-EXAMINATION (vv. 27-32)

“For if he eats the bread and drinks from the cup unworthily, not thinking about the body of Christ and what it means, he is eating and drinking God’s judgment upon himself; for he is trifling with the death of Christ.” (v. 29 in *The Living Bible*)

- Recognize the sacredness of the Lord’s Table...do not approach it in an “unworthy” (casual/careless) manner with an unexamined, unclean heart (Ja 4:8)
(Picture someone eating at a five-star restaurant with filthy, unwashed hands!)
- Take time to search for unconfessed (or even unrealized) sin in your heart before God (Psalm 139:23-24) and deal with it immediately (1 John 1:9).
- Who should avoid the Lord’s Table? (cf. Heb 10:29)
 - Unbelievers (including our children if they do not know Christ yet)
 - Believers who refuse to repent of known sin (or are under church discipline)
 - Believers who have not taken time to examine their hearts before God

6. Look Forward in ANTICIPATION of Christ’s Return! (v. 26)

- Note the time limit on this ordinance, anticipating the time “until He comes” again.
- It is a “rehearsal dinner” for the real wedding supper of the Lamb (Rev 19:9)!
It allows us to express our longing for His return, when our faith will be sight.