

The Gables – Communion

Introduction:

The topic today is *Communion*, otherwise known as *The Eucharist*, otherwise known as *The Lord's Supper*. Please note that we'll be having Communion at the conclusion of this fellowship meeting.

What would you do if you wanted to make sure people remembered you after you died?

As a nation, we choose to recognize great public servants through memorials. If you visit Washington D.C., and walk along the National Mall, you can observe the Washington Monument, the Lincoln Memorial, the Jefferson Memorial, The Roosevelt Memorial, the Martin Luther King Memorial, the World War II Memorial, the Korean War Memorial and the Vietnam War Memorial.

Many public buildings are named after famous people in memory of them. Examples right here in the Hartford area includes the Bushnell Auditorium and the Wadsworth Athenaeum.

Colleges are often named after their benefactors. Examples include: John Harvard, the namesake of Harvard University; Elihu Yale, the namesake of Yale University; and, Ezra Cornell, the founder of Cornell University. In fact, nearly every building on every college campus is named after someone.

Businesses are often named after their founders as well. Examples include: Hewlett-Packard, Bloomberg, Cadillac, Colgate, Hilton, Marriott, Abercrombie & Fitch, Sears, Lord & Taylor, Bloomingdales, Macy's ... the list goes on and on.

But it's not just the famous people who have something named after them. All of us, when we die and are buried, we'll likely have some type of memorial installed beside our grave.

How did Jesus Christ decide He wanted to be remembered? He instituted a sacrament known as Communion.

What is Communion?

Dialog between Rick and Donna:

Rick: Can someone please read 1 Corinthians 11:23b-26? You'll notice that these are the instructions Jesus gave to his disciples the day before He was crucified.

- **1 Corinthians 11:23b-26 (ESV)** – "... the Lord Jesus on the night when 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 also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink

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it, in remembrance of me.” For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

What did Jesus instruct his disciples to do, Donna?

Donna: Jesus told us to eat the bread, which represents His body, and to drink the wine, which represents His blood.

Rick: That’s right. Why did Jesus ask us to do that?

Donna: To remember Him.

Rick: Yes, that is a very important part of it, but what else?

Donna: That we proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

Rick: What does it mean to “proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes?”

Donna: Two things. First, when we take Communion, we’re acknowledging that Jesus died for our sins. Second, it means that observing Communion is a continuing action; we’re to observe Communion until Jesus comes back ... How often are we supposed to observe Communion?

Rick: Christians have different opinions on that.

- The early church likely observed it daily. Can someone please read Acts 2:46?
 - **Acts 2:46** – “And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts ...”
- Later on, it was probably observed weekly. Can someone please read Acts 20:7?
 - **Acts 20:7 (ESV)** - On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the next day, and he prolonged his speech until midnight.
- There is no command in the Bible regarding how often Communion is to be observed today. Catholics believe it should be observed daily during mass. Most Protestants observe Communion weekly or monthly.

Rick: Can someone please read John 6:53:58?

- **John 6:53-58 (ESV)** - So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me.

Donna: What does Jesus mean when he says that you will have “no life in you” if you don’t take Communion?

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Rick: Christians have different opinions about this. Catholics believe that the bread and wine are actually indwelt by the Spirit of Jesus after being blessed by the priest, and that they are actually ingesting Him when they partake of Communion. Many Protestants believe Jesus is saying that Christians – those who have received Him as savior and are following Him as Lord – should be looking to Jesus as the source of their spiritual nourishment by faith every day. For example, in John 14:6, Jesus said, “... I am the way and the truth and the life ...” So, truth comes from Jesus.

What is another important part of taking Communion, Donna?

Donna: That we abide in Jesus.

Rick: What does it mean to “abide” in Jesus?

Donna: To be in a right relationship with Him; that we have received Him as Lord and Savior, confessed our sins, and strive to follow Him each day. I guess that’s why they call it “Communion;” we are to come together with God, to be one with Him ... What happens if we take Communion and aren’t abiding in Him?

Rick: Can someone please read 1 Corinthians 11:27-29?

- **1 Corinthians 11:27-29 (ESV)** - Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world.

Donna: What does it mean to “drink judgment on himself?”

Rick: If we fail to recognize the solemn nature of Communion, and acknowledge all that God has done for us by providing the forgiveness of sins through the sacrifice of Jesus, we dishonor this sacrament. It is important for unbelievers not to take Communion because they don’t understand the significance of Communion and may do harm to themselves without realizing it.

Donna: Why are we to examine and judge ourselves?

Rick: So that God won’t have to judge us. God wants us to examine our lives before taking Communion. He wants us to confess and forsake any known sins He has revealed to us, so we can stand before Him renewed, and take Communion in a manner worthy of Him.

Can someone please read Matthew 26:26-28?

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- **Matthew 26:26-28 (ESV)** - Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.” And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”

Donna: What does the passage mean by covenant?

Rick: A covenant is a formal agreement between two parties to do something. God has promised to forgive our sins if we have placed our trust in Jesus to pay the penalty for our sins through His shed blood on the cross.

Can someone please read John 6:51?

- **John 6:51 (ESV)** - I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”

Rick: Why is this passage important, Donna?

Donna: Because it shows that Jesus, the Bread, is not just someone who lived and died 2,000 years ago, but that He is alive today. We’re not saved from hell by eating bread. We’re saved by faith that Jesus died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins.

Rick: Who do you think should observe The Lord’s Supper?

Donna: All Christians who are in a right relationship with Him.

Rick: That’s right. We want to be sure we have confessed our sins and thanked God for His mercy before taking Communion. Can someone please read 1 Corinthians 10:17?

- **1 Corinthians 10:17 (ESV)** - Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.

Jesus only prescribed two sacraments: baptism and Communion. Therefore, Communion is a solemn event that should be taken seriously by all who partake of the elements.

At this time, Donna will begin handing out Communion.

For those of us who are Christians, please meditate on all God has done for you, thank Him, and ask forgiveness for any unconfessed sins you may have committed. This should be done before partaking of the bread and cup.

For those of you who are not Christians, or are not sure how you stand before God, I suggest you pass on Communion until you are in a right relationship with God.

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Scripture Verses on Communion:

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1 Corinthians 11:23b-26 (ESV) – “... the Lord Jesus on the night when 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 also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

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Acts 20:7 (ESV) - On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the next day, and he prolonged his speech until midnight.

1 Corinthians 10:17 (ESV) - Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.

Acts 2:46 – And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts,