

What is communion?

As the church gathers at the Lord's Table, it is involved in a multifaceted act of worship, full of deep meaning. When we take communion we are:

Remembering

"Do this *in remembrance of me*." (1 Corinthians 5:7)

The bread and wine are symbols of Jesus, reminding us of his life, sacrificial death and his resurrection.

Proclaiming

"For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you *proclaim the Lord's death*" (1 Corinthians 5:26)

The taking of bread and wine is an enacted announcement of the fact and the significance of Jesus' death and resurrection.

Encountering

"When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. 31 Then *their eyes were opened and they recognized him...*". Luke 24:30,31

"open the door and we will *share a meal together* as friends" (Revelation 3:20)

In taking bread and wine we encounter Jesus afresh. He is the real host at the family table and as we share in the bread and wine our eyes are opened again to his presence.

Affirming

'This is my *blood of the [new] covenant*, which is poured out for many. (Mark 14:22-24)

When we take bread and wine we affirm God's blessing of salvation, through the giving of the new Covenant: God's promises of forgiveness, eternal life, the Spirit and future inheritance, secured for all believers through the death of Jesus. (Hebrews 9,10)

Anticipating

"For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death *until he comes*". (1 Corinthians 11:26)

When we take bread and wine we look forward to the return of Jesus and the full and final triumph of God's kingdom.

Expressing Unity

"For those who eat and drink without *discerning the body of Christ* eat and drink judgment on themselves". (1 Corinthians 11:29)

When we take bread and wine we affirm that we are part of one body (symbolised by one broken loaf). It is spiritually dangerous to take bread and wine whilst in a state of anger or unforgiveness with another member of the church.

Participating

"The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a *participation in the body of Christ?*" (1 Corinthians 10:16)

When we take bread and wine we actually participate in all that it represents. In that sense the bread and wine are more than 'just' a memorial - they are a 'means of grace'. God meets us and reconfirms all that the signs represent even as we take them in faith.

Celebrating

Let us be glad and rejoice, and let us give honour to him. For the time has come for the wedding feast of the Lamb, and his bride has prepared herself. (Revelation 19)

When we take bread and wine we have a foretaste of the final joyful consummation of all things.

(For a fuller explanation of these themes watch the Digging Deeper on the Lord's Table here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HLe80FEkOCg&t=879s>)