

WHAT MISSIONVIEW BELIEVES:

# COMMUNION

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## WELCOME

We are so glad that you are interested in communion at MissionView!

In the New Testament, Jesus instituted two *ordinances* (sometimes referred to as *sacraments*) for his followers to practice: Baptism and the Lord's Supper, which we often call Communion. These practices serve as public reminders of what God has done and is continuing to do.

At its core, communion is an act of remembrance and a participation in the ministry of Jesus Christ. It is practiced by believers who have recognized the cost of their salvation that Jesus paid on the cross and the glory of his victory over sin and death.

This booklet will describe:

- What Scripture says about communion.
- What communion illustrates.
- What communion is not.
- Who participates in communion.
- How we practice communion.
- Why we practice communion.

## **WHAT SCRIPTURE SAYS ABOUT COMMUNION**

Communion has its roots in the Old Testament Feast of Passover. This ancient Jewish holiday commemorates God's rescue of the Hebrew people from slavery in Egypt and his provision for their exodus into the promised land of Israel (Exodus 12).

It is during this Passover Feast, the day before he was crucified, that Jesus institutes "The Lord's Supper" in the New Testament. While dining with his disciples, he encourages them to consider the bread and wine as his body and blood and to observe this practice as a means of remembrance, thus acknowledging his imminent departure and eventual return (Matthew 26:26-30, Mark 14:22-25, Luke 22:14-20).

The Apostle Paul expounds on this event as a proclamation of Christ's death (1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

The imagery of the passover, the command of Jesus, and the exhortation of Paul all contribute to the importance of communion. For centuries, followers of Christ have gathered to partake in communion in one way or another, sometimes at great risk of persecution (Acts 2:42).

Communion is an acknowledgement of the person and work of Jesus Christ in a way that displays our union with Him and fellow believers.

## **WHAT COMMUNION ILLUSTRATES**

Communion is meant to function as a visible symbol of a deeper invisible reality. It's like a wedding ring; a married man wears this visible symbol to proclaim the invisible reality of his commitment to his wife.

By eating the bread and drinking the wine, you are invited to remember the death of Christ. The bread and cup are symbols that remind us of the broken body and shed blood of Jesus for us; the cost of our salvation.

Additionally, having something visible, tangible, and even edible serves as a practical reminder of our union with Jesus and one another as brothers and sisters in the church family. It is a proclamation of the lordship of Jesus and a participation in his life, death, and resurrection.

## **WHAT COMMUNION IS NOT**

Communion is not what saves us. We are only saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8-9). It does, however, point to the means of our salvation in the death and resurrection of Jesus (Romans 5:8).

Similarly, communion is not required for salvation. Scripture does not encourage individuals to participate in communion as a prerequisite to salvation, nor is it required for salvation to be complete. Rather, believers practice communion after salvation as they respond to Christ's command and remember His work.

There is nothing magical about the bread or cup that we use for communion, though we do believe it to be a spiritual and reverent practice.

At MissionView, we do not adhere to the doctrine of "transubstantiation," where the elements of communion become the body and blood of Jesus. Similarly, we do not maintain that there is an additional sacrifice of any kind taking place during The Lord's Supper (Hebrews 7:27, 10:10). Rather, we take a figurative and memorial approach.

### **WHO PARTICIPATES IN COMMUNION**

Communion is reserved for believers who have made a profession of faith. You do not need to be a member of MissionView to participate.

At MissionView, believers of all ages are encouraged to participate. Though the symbolism is often difficult for young children to grasp, there is benefit to partaking with the church family.

Often new Christians question whether or not they are spiritually ready for communion. No matter how new to Christianity you are, the answer is yes! Communion is an act of remembrance commanded by Jesus.

Beyond the good news of Jesus, there is no additional doctrinal requirement for participation in communion. Scripture does give caution against taking communion in an unholy manner, however (1 Corinthians 11:17-33). Believers should temporarily refrain from communion if their lives are currently characterized by a season of rampant, unrepentant sin.

### **HOW WE PRACTICE COMMUNION**

At MissionView, we believe the exact methodology for practicing communion is flexible, and each method has its merits. For example, we may encourage the congregation to:

- Remain seated for a time of reflection.
- Come forward to receive the elements from our elders.
- Listen to a worship song.
- Confess sin.

- Receive teaching from the pulpit.
- Take communion with a meal.

We believe that because of our union with Jesus and other believers, communion should be observed in the context of the local church.

We typically use gluten-free crackers to represent the bread and grape juice to represent the wine in an attempt to make The Lord's Supper more inclusive.

### **WHY WE PRACTICE COMMUNION**

We practice communion to be obedient to Jesus, as he commanded that we do so (Luke 22:14-20). This should be an ongoing practice in the lives of believers.

We practice communion to express our union with Christ in his life, death, and resurrection (1 Corinthians 10:16).

We practice communion to express our union with fellow believers (1 Corinthians 12:12-13).

We practice communion to remember the work of Jesus and to proclaim His name until His return (1 Corinthians 11:26).

We practice communion to examine ourselves and repent of sin (1 Corinthians 11:27-19).

We practice communion to worship the God who has saved us from sin and death.

### **FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

If you have more questions about communion, connect with us at the church office. A staff member would love to continue talking through things with you.