

## What About Communion?

Another unique practice among Christians is communion, which is sometimes called the Eucharist or Lord's Supper. While believers are baptized only once to symbolize their new identity as Christians, participating in communion is an ongoing practice. On the night before Jesus' death he ate his final meal with his disciples. It was a special Passover dinner that recalled a significant time in Jewish history when God delivered his people from Egypt. During this meal, Jesus broke some bread and gave it to his disciples. He said, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." Then he took some of the wine and said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you." (Luke 22:19-20, TNIV) By using the common elements of bread and wine in the context of an already meaningful tradition, Jesus was marking the occasion deep into the hearts and minds of his followers.

After Jesus rose from the dead, the meaning of his mysterious words became clear. Through Jesus' sacrificial death, God had offered forgiveness of sin to all people. So when early Christians gathered together again, they remembered Jesus' death on their behalf by sharing bread and wine together in a meal much like that last supper. Thus, communion represents a restored relationship. By believing in Christ's sacrifice, we can have restored relationship with God. And when we share communion together, believers embody a special type of relationship they have with one another as fellow children of God.

When Christians take communion, it is a bittersweet celebration. We reflect on the sins for which Christ died and also consider if there are any specific issues in our lives that we need to confess to God. Yet, communion also celebrates and proclaims God's grace. It is a reminder to us that Christ is the object of our worship and the focus of our hope. Of course, there is nothing magical about the elements of wine or grape juice and bread. But it serves as a powerful act for remembering God's provision for us and renewing ourselves again to his will for our lives. If you are a follower of Christ, it's a privilege to identify with him through baptism and to celebrate his sacrifice with other believers through communion.