



COMMON TABLE (Part 4) - “As We Gather”

1 Corinthians 11:23–31 NIV

23 For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, 24 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.” 25 In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.” 26 For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes. 27 So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. 28 Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup. 29 For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves. 30 That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. 31 But if we were more discerning with regard to ourselves, we would not come under such judgment.

*“We give you thanks, Father, for the life and truth revealed in Jesus Christ:
Yours is the glory for ever and ever.
As the grain once scattered in the fields,
And the grapes once dispersed on the hillside,
are now united on this table in bread and wine,
So, Lord may your whole church seen be gathered together,
From the ends of the earth into your kingdom,
For yours is the glory and the power, through Jesus Christ, for ever and ever. Amen.”*
– From the Didache (2nd Century)

Key Points

- Our interactions are expressions that reveal and contribute to what we think about others.
- God's intention is that His people will live and act as His family.
- A meal is a family space. At the table, you're treated like family.
- Showing up to the table requires preparation - to consider yourself in the context of others.
- The table reflects both our belonging and our invitation to belong.
- A meal is a common space and a leveling space. At the table, we experience the reality of what we have in common.
- A meal is both an abundant provision and a declaration of dependence; grace works in the same way.
- When we receive communion, we receive a new reality and a new responsibility.

READ

Open your time together by reading the Scripture passages and quotes on Page 1. Then, take a moment to consider what you just read:

- Read 1 Corinthians 11:23-31. According to this passage, why is self-examination important before partaking in communion? What does this verse suggest is the ultimate purpose of such introspection?
- Read the quote from the Didache. How does the communion table beautifully symbolize the Church gathered together?

REFLECT

- How do our interactions with others reveal our thoughts and attitudes towards them? Can you think of examples from your own life where your interactions expressed your beliefs about someone?
- In what ways can we relate the concept of a meal being a family space to God's intention for His people to live as His family? How does this idea impact our behavior towards one another within a faith community?
- What does it mean to say that "at the table, you're treated like family"? How can this concept be applied to foster a sense of belonging within a church or community?

RESPOND

- How does showing up to the table require preparation align with the notion of considering oneself in the context of others?
- Where does self-examination need to take place in your life?
- In what ways does receiving communion bring about a "new responsibility"? How can this responsibility be understood and lived out within a faith community?

PRAY

Close your time together with prayer requests. Ask how you can pray, support, and lift one another up. Pray over these requests collectively or by breaking into prayer partners.

