



**Sermon Based Small Group
Leader Discussion Guide**

Sermon Title: "Observing the Lord's Supper"

**Sermon by Pastor Tom Harrington
Week of April 17, 2011**

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<p>Session Objectives (Group Leader)</p>	<p>By the end of the session, group members should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grow in our appreciation for the Lord's Supper so that we continue to treasure this meaningful and personal expression of God's grace. • Identify what God's Word tells us about the Lord's Supper so that we can better teach others. • Discuss the main areas freedom and deliverance provided to believers in Christ.
<p>Personal Connection (Group Leader)</p>	<p>How does my story connect to the reading? To prepare to lead this Bible study:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on the times that you have shared in the Lord's Supper. Ask yourself, "Do I always remember the sacrifice Christ made on my behalf or has it become routine?" • Think of what you do to remember someone special that is far away. • Pray for each member of your group by name.
<p>Icebreaker</p>	<p>Two options, choose one:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.) If you were on death row (innocently accused of course), what would your last meal include and who would you want to share it with? 2.) Think about something that was given to you by a friend or family member that is no longer with you. What is it, and what does it mean to you?

Big Idea	The Lord's Supper reminds us of what Jesus did and the relationship he desires to have with us.
Sermon Text	<p>Matthew 26:26-30 (New International Version)</p> <p><i>²⁶ While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body."</i></p> <p><i>²⁷ Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. ²⁸ This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. ²⁹ I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."</i></p> <p><i>³⁰ When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.</i></p>
Digging Deeper	<p>Learning more about the lesson</p> <p>Man has erected many memorials and monuments to remember great men and events—The Pyramids, Statue of Liberty, Washington Monument, Lincoln Monument. God has also left us with memorials as tokens of important events and covenants—rainbow (Genesis 9:11-17), pot of manna (Exodus 16:32-34), stones from Jordan River (Joshua 4:1-9), Passover (Exodus 12:1-14). The Lord's Supper is the world's greatest memorial commemorating the world's greatest event (1 Corinthians 11:26).</p> <p>The Lord's Supper is a church ceremony using bread and the fruit of the vine to symbolize our spiritual participation in the body and blood of Jesus Christ, remembering His death and hoping for His soon return.</p> <p>Throughout the Bible, we see examples of the sharing of meals as important part of maintaining a strong relationship with God. In Genesis 2:8-9, God made food for Adam and Eve and had fellowship with them. The sacrificial system in the Law of Moses kept the thanksgiving meal theme as seen in Leviticus 7:15. Jesus ate food while on the earth even after His resurrection (John 21:15). Furthermore, the Lord's Supper involves food and drink and was established during the Passover meal, a memorial meal rooted symbolically in the Jewish people's experience of captivity and Exodus from Egypt. Therefore we look to the truths of the Lord's Supper as a spiritual fellowship meal with deep meaning.</p> <p>1. How would you have felt if you were with Jesus at this meal?</p> <p>Possible Follow-Up: What thoughts might have been going through your mind following some of the things you had witnessed over the course of the last week (e.g., triumphant entry into Jerusalem, Jesus' overturning money changers in temple, Jesus just having finished washing your feet before the meal)?</p>

LEADER'S NOTE: Jesus instituted The Lord Supper at the Passover Meal. The theme and reality of having fellowship during a meal continues. However, now when we sit at the table it is a spiritual fellowship meal made possible by Jesus becoming the Lamb of God, the bread of life, the eternal sacrifice for the sins of the world.

2. Why did Jesus give the disciples bread *"while they were eating?"* Was he worried there was not enough food?

LEADER'S NOTE: In our culture, we tend to think of bread coming out before the meal. In this case, this bread in the story is known as the afterdish; it's broken off the bread at the beginning of the meal and set aside for the end of the meal.

Jesus said, "I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever" (John 6:51). When we eat the bread of the Lord's Supper we are being spiritually nourished by the Spirit of Jesus. Like water doesn't save you in baptism, neither does the bread have any special power or the presence of God. Jesus taught us to recognize the spiritual aspect of His nourishment when He said, "Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4). (see also John 7:38).

3. Reread Verse 28. What purpose did Jesus explain was fulfilled in the blood of the covenant? Read Hebrews 2:17 and Leviticus 17:11.

LEADER'S NOTE: "forgiveness of sins " -Instead of taking the life of Adam and Eve, God used the blood of animals, concluding with the eternally effective blood of Jesus Christ. Atonement is a word used to describe this loving and merciful act by God.

4. When we celebrate communion at church together, what should we be thinking about?

LEADER'S NOTE: Participation in the Lord's Supper is my declaration and commitment to stay a member of God's external by continuing to recognize that His blood was shed for my sins, even my current sins. So, what should we be thinking about? First, our sinfulness, and second, our gratitude for the fact that

God has saved us through Jesus Christ! The ancient word for the Lord's Supper is *eucharist*, (YOO-ka-rist) meaning, "Thanksgiving." As you progress from the time of your baptism you should see your life becoming more holy and when you consider your sinfulness and the wickedness of the world you should become more bothered by it. But we can rejoice because Jesus has overcome the world. Read 1 John 5:4; 2:1-2 and 2 Peter 1:5-8.

5. Why do we need a memorial to remind us of Christ's death?

Leader Note: We are a forgetful people. The Lord's Supper declares our participation in all that happened when Jesus defeated the devil, demons and darkness. At the Lords' Supper we celebrate the blood of Jesus shed on the cross to defeat the power of death. Read 1 Corinthians 10:18-22; 11:27-32.

Taking it Home

How will I live it? Apply it?

In your life, how are you or could you continue to remember the Lord's death until His return? Write your thoughts, below:

Investing and inviting spritual seekers to consider Christ this Easter:

Identify someone you would like to have a spiritual discussion with:

Share something special with a friend or family member to remember you by:

Looking Ahead	How can I prepare for the next Small Group meeting? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's Easter! Invite your group members to attend "Community," 9:00-10:00 Sundays in the fellowship hall. • The text for next week is John 20:1-18. The theme is "From Discouragement to Divine Encounter."
Prayer Focus	How can I connect with God and others through prayer? <p>Pray, asking God to help us remember what Jesus did for us, on the cross and through his resurrection. Pray that when we are in church during communion next time, we would take time to recognize what each symbol means and remember what Jesus did. Praise Jesus for dying on the cross for our sins, so that we could trust in Him and live with God forever.</p> <p>Leader Note: Invite group members to share specific areas that have affected their relationship the Lord. Then have the group pray for one another about these things. If a group member does not wish to share his or her action steps, pray that God will make clear what those steps should be in the days to come.</p>
Updates	Announcements from: Care Coordinator Outreach Coordinator, Social Coordinator