

# Thoughts on Communion

## What is this event?

**It is a meal.** Not much of a meal, perhaps, but we eat and drink together, just as the early Church did. We may share the meal anywhere, in the open air, in public places, in church buildings or in our own homes; but wherever we eat, we remember that the centre of the Christian faith has always been the home, where we share meals and share our lives with one another.

**It is an act of obedience.** Jesus told us to do this, each time we share a meal together, and so we do. We may not fully understand why we do this, but we know Him, we love Him and we trust Him, and that is enough.

**It is a reminder of Who Jesus is.** Jesus told us to do this in remembrance of Him. We share this meal because we know Jesus, and because we want to know Him better. Our focus is on Him, not on rituals or disciplines or doctrines, or on any of the other things which attach (sometimes helpfully, sometimes not) to the the call of following Jesus.

**It is a celebration of His victory** over sin and death and Hell. Meals are used to celebrate all kinds of events, such as festivals, birthdays and anniversaries. This meal celebrates the death and resurrection of our Lord. We celebrate because He was dead and He is dead no longer: He has conquered death, and we share in His victory over death, so we no longer need to fear it.

**It is a recognition of His presence** with us: we believe He is present in the shared meal, and in His people. Ever since we first encountered Him, He has been with us every step of the way, whether we were walking in obedience or not.

**It is a proclamation of His death and resurrection**, and of what that death and resurrection have achieved for us and for all people.

## What are we proclaiming?

**We proclaim the coming of God's Kingdom**, which was made real in this world through His birth, and which was opened to all people through His death on the cross.

**We proclaim forgiveness** through the blood of the one perfect sacrifice, full and free, forgiveness for every sin, past, present and future. We seek to avoid sinning, not because we are afraid of being punished, but because we love Him.

**We proclaim a new kind of life**, the life of Jesus, Who shows us what it means to be fully human, what it means to fully live, by offering ourselves in love and service to others.

**We proclaim our dependence on Jesus**, our need to abide in the vine, to continually feed on Him, because His words and example provide spiritual nourishment we can get nowhere else.

**We proclaim our desire and intention to follow Jesus**, to live His life as He guides and empowers us through His Spirit, so that like Him we will be willing to suffer and die for the sake of love, rather than harm others through our actions or inaction.

**We proclaim our unity**: we being many are one body, because we all share in the one bread. We are united, not because we eat the physical bread, but because we are all joined to Jesus; and not just us, but all those who share in Jesus' life, in our area, in our city, in our nation and across the whole globe: we are all one people, one body.

### ***Next steps***

This was written by Paul Hazelden as a contribution to the *Strong Foundations* exploration. You are welcome to use it and distribute it how you like, but feedback would be appreciated.

- Is it helpful?
- Would you change anything?
- Would you like to talk about how we can learn from each other about how best to follow Jesus where we are?

You can contact me through the web form at mad-bristol or join the conversation on the *Strong Foundations* site.

- Web form: <http://mad-bristol.org.uk/contact/>
- Strong Foundations: <http://strongfoundations.pbworks.com>

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