

The Lord's Supper (Passover) Instructions

Dear Friends and Brethren:

I hope every one of you will be able to meet with one of the chartered churches of the Intercontinental Church of God, or one of the hosted fellowship groups, for the observance of the Passover. However, I know this is not always possible due to distance, travel costs, age, or illness. If you must observe the Passover at home this year, here is an outline which will help you to observe it in the same manner we have always observed it in God's church.

There is no more deeply meaningful rite than the "Lord's Supper," commonly called "The Passover." Of course, technically, we do not "keep the Passover," for God's word says, "...Christ OUR PASSOVER is sacrificed for us" (I Corinthians 5:7).

However, for more than fifty years, God's people have referred to the "Lord's Supper" using both terms: "The Passover" and "The Lord's Supper." When evening comes (usually about 7:30 pm, depending on the time zone) on the beginning of the 14th of Abib (or Nisan), Hebrew Calendar, you should have prepared in advance the necessary basins and towels for the foot-washing ceremony, and the necessary amount of wine and unleavened bread. A non-fortified red wine, such as Merlot or Cabernet is preferred. Matzos, or perhaps home-made unleavened bread, should be laid out on a platter or plate, and small cups for pouring the wine. In larger groups the wine is poured into small cups in advance.

The person conducting the ceremony, perhaps the husband or the head-of-household (or an individual observing the ceremony alone), should begin with prayer: Asking God's blessing on the special evening, remembering Christ's sacrifice for sin, thanking God for the rich meaning of the symbols Jesus Christ ordained for our annual memorial supper.

Then, turn to and read John 13 verses 1-17. Following the words, "If ye know these things, HAPPY are ye if ye do them," announce the foot-washing ceremony. Men and women separate, perhaps using a different room, or if impossible, simply

face the chairs the opposite direction in the interests of modesty. If three persons, think of each as A, B and C. A washes the feet of B, who washes the feet of C, who then washes the feet of A, so that all perform the ritual of foot-washing as Christ commanded. After drying the feet and replacing socks and shoes, be seated once again. For a single individual, simply wash your own feet.

Turn to and read 1 Corinthians 11:23-24. If you wish, you might also turn to and read Matthew 26:26 and Luke 22:19. All say virtually the same thing.

After reading the scripture, bow your head(s) in prayer and ask God's blessing on the unleavened bread. Then, solemnly break the bread into small bits and each person present eat a piece of the bread, contemplating the fact that Christ said He is the "bread of life" which came down from heaven; that the bread you are eating will become a PART of you, will be assimilated by your body, even as Christ is to dwell in our innermost being through the Holy Spirit of God.

Then, turn to and read 1 Corinthians 11:25-29. You might also want to read parallel scriptures in Matthew 26:28-29 and Luke 22:20. Then, all bow heads and the leader, or individual by himself or herself, ask God's blessing over the small cup of wine, acknowledging the deep significance of the shed blood of the "Lamb of God," Jesus Christ, Who is our Savior; thanking God for His merciful forgiveness; for His grace and pardon and His daily intervention in our lives. Then solemnly drink the wine.

Following this we have traditionally read aloud and expounded on John 14 through 17. For brevity, one may select various passages from these three chapters. Every word is important, however, and is the only account of all that Jesus said to His disciples before they went out to the Mount of Olives (John 18:1) to be betrayed by Judas. The true "Lord's Prayer" is found in chapter 17. It is the actual prayer Jesus Christ prayed "*on the night in which he was betrayed.*" This statement is important, for it proves that Jesus Christ was slain in the afternoon of the 14th of Nisan, just as the High Priest was slaying the first of the sacrificial lambs. Notice again 1 Corinthians 11:23.

Finally, after having read the three chapters in John, turn to and read Matthew 26:30. I have always liked to reflect on how Jesus Christ, so heavy with dread over what lay before Him, wanted to enjoy one last song with His disciples. This proves Christ loved singing. It proves they had done such things many times before.

Actually, the Greek word says they “sang a Psalm” rather than the word “hymn,” such as is found in modern hymn books.

If a group is present, sing an appropriate hymn, such as one of the Psalms about forgiveness written by Dwight Armstrong. Following the singing of the song, the group disperses. The one in charge should then pour out any left-over wine (that has been blessed; no need to pour out wine which was not specifically set aside to be blessed) and throw away any left-over bread that was blessed.

May God bless each one of us as we observe His solemn Passover in commemoration of the death of our Savior, and may HE make us truly THANKFUL for his gracious forgiveness of all our sins!

Sincerely,

Garner Ted Armstrong Evangelistic Association