

Church at Home: Agape Meal

We have an opportunity today or at any time to share a meal just as the early church did in remembrance of Jesus.

You can do this alone or share the roles with others in your house, especially if you have youngsters.

Remember none of us are truly alone, God is with us through his Holy Spirit and share in this meal as the body of Christ.

Below is an Agape meal, a bit of a forerunner to what we recognise as Communion today. This meal has elements of the Passover tradition in it, i.e. the presentation of the different parts.

The simple meal suggests using bread and grapes but you can use anything you have around the house – Jesus used bread and wine because of the occasion and what was on the table - at other times he used fish!

Opening prayer:

Heavenly Father this is the day that you have made, and we rejoice in it, with one voice and heart in the name of your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen**

Saying Sorry:

God of heaven, we ask this morning that you will forgive us for all the things we have done throughout this week that do not glorify your name, when we have been distant from you, draw us now back into your presence where we now worship you, knowing that Jesus has paid the price for those times and things. **Amen**

Readings:

Acts 2: 42-47

The Fellowship of the Believers

42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. 44 All the believers were together and had everything in common. 45 They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. 46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

John 10: 1-10

10 "Very truly I tell you Pharisees, anyone who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. 2 The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. 5 But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice." 6 Jesus used this figure of speech, but the Pharisees did not understand what he was telling them.

7 Therefore Jesus said again, "Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. 8 All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them. 9 I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved.[a] They will come in and go out, and find pasture. 10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

Sermon

The Agape Meal

The Agape meal is an old tradition found in the early Church it is all about coming together in the name of Jesus to share a simple meal as He often did, a meal of 'self-giving love,' Agape.

(The main parts can be read by a Parent, in Jewish tradition at the Passover it would be the mother who starts the meal, with three children reading the three parts. Remember as we are physically distant, we may be saying the words alone, together in Spirit)

How wonderful it is, how pleasant, when brothers and sisters live together in harmony. The Lord pronounced His blessing, even life forevermore.

All: This is the place, and this is the time, Here and now, God waits to break into our lives.

Reader one: To change our minds

Reader two: To change our hearts

Reader three: To change our ways

All: To make us see the world we live in and the whole of our lives in a new light. To give us hope, joy, and a future set in God's love.

Table setting

On this table are reminders of Jesus' love for us, symbols of His promise of life eternal.

Reader one: We have a Candle. *(light the candle or turn on another room light)*

To remind us that Jesus said, "I am the light of the world and whoever walks in the light will never walk in darkness."

Reader two: We have Bread. *(use whatever you have, preferably containing flour)*

Jesus also told us that "I am the bread of life" and He gave up His life for us.

Reader three: We have Grapes. *(any fruit or fruit juice will be okay)*

Jesus told us "I am the true vine" we are reminded that we are all part of the body of Christ, the Church and Jesus gives us the new wine of the Kingdom of God. So, we share in this simple meal to remind us of God's love for each of us. These simple symbols are a sign that we come together as one in the love of the Father and in the life of Jesus and in the powerful free gift of the Spirit.

The Meal is shared

The meal is ended, so may we go from this place today in peace, may we learn to live with each other in the love of Jesus now and forever. **Amen.**

Prayers:

Please use this space to bring before God your own prayers for this week, today and every day as we seek His intervention in our lives at this time.

Maybe ask Him to take away any doubts we have that often blind us to His presence in our lives so that the Church of Jesus Christ may be the light in the darkness that gives us hope. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.**

Blessing:

May the road rise up to meet us. May the wind be always at our back. May the sun shine warm upon our face; the rains fall soft upon our fields and until we meet again, may God hold us in the palm of His hand. And the blessing of God almighty the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit rest upon us, and be with those we love and pray for near and far now and forever. **Amen**