



# ements

The Components of the Weekly Gathering

## Community Group Leader's Guide

August 20-27, 2017

## Weekly Summary

*The term “communion” means “a shared or mutual participation.” It is not a word that we find in the Bible. It comes from the word “community.” In communion, you can see there is a shared or a mutual participation of the redeemed community (a common union); therefore, it is called communion. This celebration is also called “the Eucharist” in some traditions, particularly in the Roman Catholic tradition. Eucharist comes from a Greek word meaning “to give thanks.” Jesus gave thanks, broke the bread, and gave it to his disciples; raised the cup and gave thanks, and gave it to his disciples. It is a thanksgiving feast in the the historical church tradition. We also consider it a thanksgiving feast, or a Eucharist, to give thanks. However, the Bible has a word that it uses for this celebration, and the term is “the Lord’s Supper.” Paul actually uses that phrase in 1 Corinthians 11 to describe what we are going to do today/tonight. The Lord’s Supper is what he calls it. The Lord’s Supper is dinner with Jesus. It is the meal we take with God to celebrate his saving work. Let’s break this idea down and then participate in it together...*

## Getting Started

**Icebreaker:** *Is there anything in your life that you do to remember/celebrate someone who is no longer around? Why? How?*

## Going Deeper

*Read Luke 22:7-23; Acts 2:42-47; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:17-34.*

**1.) Based on what we just read in these passages, what is the purpose of communion?**

*The primary purpose of communion is to take time to remember all that the Lord did for us. It is a time to worship and give thanks for the forgiveness of our sins and the new life and relationship that we have in Jesus Christ. This time of remembrance was initiated by Jesus just before His death. Because we tend to be forgetful people, in the Old Testament believers were called to remember the faithfulness of God through various memorials. In the New Testament, this is the way that Jesus wanted us to remember His love and forgiveness of our sins.*

## **2.) Where and how often should we celebrate it?**

*The frequency of communion is a very convoluted topic in the church, and a variety of opinions abound. In our opinion, we believe the New Testament clearly teaches us that we take the Lord's Supper each week as we gather together on the Lord's day. That said, if Acts 2:46 is interpreted in this context, it is clear that the early believer's observed it beyond this. So we believe that it is a good thing for believers to celebrate not only "at church" or in the "church building" but also in homes and appropriate places all around the city. We can celebrate regularly and often. God invites us to celebrate as often as we feel is appropriate.*

## **3.) Who can take it? What is the power of believers taking it together?**

## **4.) What other guidelines are given to our partaking in communion?**

### **Application (Experience communion together)**

*This is obviously something that will take many groups out of their comfort zones. Prepare ahead of time and help reassure your group that this is merely a chance to worship together through communion, and maybe bring significance to the Lord's Supper in a way that was lacking in their lives before.*

### **Here are some guidelines and a timeline:**

- **Prepare the elements ahead of time. Break up pieces of cracker or soft bread on a small plate or tray, or pass around a loaf of bread for group members to tear off a piece. Have the elements prepared beforehand, and then simply bring them into the room or to the table when you are ready.**
- **Focusing on your own experience, say something brief about God's love, forgiveness, grace, mercy, commitment, tenderheartedness, or faithfulness. You'll also want to connect your words with the personal stories of the group. For example, "These past few weeks I've experienced God's mercy in the way He**

untangled the situation with my son. And I've seen God show mercy to others of us here too, especially to Jean and Roger." If you prefer, you can write down ahead of time what you want to say.

- As you begin your time of celebration, read some selected passages of Scripture that remind us of the Lord's death, burial, and resurrection: *Psalm 22, Isaiah 53, Mark 15:21-29, John 19, 1 Corinthians 15:1-8, Galatians 2:16-21, Ephesians 2:1-10, Philipians 2:1-11.*
- After a time of reading, pass the pieces of crackers or bread around and ask each member to tear off a small piece that represents the body of Jesus Christ that was broken for us.
- Then read 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 again.
- Then pass the cups of juice or a single cup around and have everyone dip their bread into the cup. Encourage each member to spend some quiet minutes in prayer and reflection after the bread and juice have been taken.
- Encourage each member to spend some quiet minutes in prayer and reflection after the bread and juice have been taken.
- After all members have been served, close with voluntary prayer.
- Close by asking this question: What did you learn through this experience?

*Another option would be to have the bread and cup placed on a table in the middle of your group. After a time of sharing, reading, and prayer, people serve themselves by going to the table, tearing off a piece of bread, and dipping it in the juice. You may also consider having group members serve one another. Again, feel free to be creative as you celebrate this time together.*