

A Liturgy for Celebrating Maundy Thursday at Home*

April 9, 2020

Background and Suggestions for your home celebration

On Maundy Thursday we recall Jesus' last supper with his disciples. That meal was a celebration of Passover, when God delivered the Jewish people from death and bondage. Passover is historically a meal celebrated at home around a festive dinner table.

We recover those historic roots in this meal. If possible, make it a festive celebration. Use the good china, even if you are only eating peanut butter sandwiches or leftovers.

You will need bread for communion and wine or other drink to share with everyone.

Lighting the Candles

We give you thanks O God,
for this solemn and holy night.
We are one family
within in this circle of light.
We ask that we may always be one with you
in the circle of your loving presence.
Amen.

Opening Litany

In remembrance, we gather:
to be with the One who teaches us the meaning of faithfulness.

In remembrance, we worship:
***lifting our voices to the One
who calls us to love one another.***

In remembrance, we feast:
***breaking the bread which makes us whole,
drinking the cup which fills us with grace***

Prayer of Thanksgiving for the Meal

Jesus, you visited the homes
of ordinary folks like us.
You sat in kitchens and around dinner tables
and talked about loving each other and loving God.
Help us to remember that when you were a guest at meals
amazing things happened:
water turned to wine
five thousand were fed
a lost soul came home.
Help us also to remember

that wherever two or three are gathered you are present,
and so are among us now;
here in this place
and moment of
infinite grace and possibility.
Amen.

Dinner

Questions for children:

I wonder what it would be like to eat dinner with Jesus?
I wonder if this dinner reminds you of another meal we share?
If you could invite anyone to dinner tonight, who would it be?

Questions for adults

What was a memorable meal? What made it memorable?
When have you felt God present in a meal?
Why is sharing food with one another so important?

The Story

Moses said to the people, "Always remember this day. This is the day when you came out of Egypt from a house of slavery. God brought you out of there with a powerful hand. (Exodus 13:3)

Liberating God,
it was the beginning of hope:
that night long ago when you prepared to lead
your people to freedom.
As they readied themselves,
you fed them
with your grace,
so that all sin, pain and bitterness
could be set down and left behind
when it was time
to follow you.

When it was time, Jesus sat down, all the apostles with him, and said, "You've no idea how much I have looked forward to eating this Passover meal with you before I enter my time of suffering. It's the last one I'll eat until we all eat it together in the kingdom of God."

Taking the cup, he blessed it, then said, "Take this and pass it among you. As for me, I'll not drink wine again until the kingdom of God arrives."

Taking bread, he blessed it, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, given for you. Eat it in my memory."

He did the same with the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant written in my blood, blood poured out for you. (Luke 22:14-20)

Servant Lord,
it was the beginning of salvation:
that night long ago when
you prepared your disciples
for all the things which were to happen.
You humbled yourself
by washing their feet,
so they could follow you in service and love
into a world which would reject you
and hang you high on a cross.
We remember together the prayer
you taught us to pray:
*Our Creator who art in heaven, Hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in
Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil. For yours is the kingdom and the power
and the glory forever. Amen.*

The Lord's Supper

In those early days
when no one was around to watch,
you planted the seeds, Beloved Savior.
Seeds which would blossom
into sheaves of wheat.
You trained
grapevines
to curl round
your fingers
so that,
on that last night,
you could take that loaf of bread,
breaking it
into pieces of healing
which can
take our shattered lives
and put us back together as your beloved people.

Break bread and share it around the table

In that room,

you took the grapes
of wrath, fear, doubt,
and squeezed them through
your breaking heart,
pouring the sweet nectar
of hope, wonder and peace
into a simple cup.
We cannot begin to understand
the rich complexity of your love
but we taste it as we drink this cup.

Pour wine or other drink into glasses or cups as all drink together.

Every time we eat the bread,
our brokenness is made whole;
every time we drink from the cup,
we receive unceasing grace;
Amen.

Benediction

On this holy night,
we have received the Good News:
God has come in Christ Jesus
to fill us with hope and peace,
to bathe us in grace and mercy.
In remembrance, we go recommit ourselves
to bring hope where despair has taken up residence.
To be servants to those who are broken.
To love as selflessly as we are loved by Jesus Christ,
our Lord and Savior.
Amen

**Adapted from In That Upper Room Called Your Heart by Thom Shuman*