

A Christian Passover Ceremony

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On the fourteenth day of the first month
is the Passover of the LORD.
~ Numbers 28:16 ~

The Christian Passover is the most solemn and meaningful of God's annual holy days. This sacred ceremony commemorates the death of Christ which made God's plan of salvation possible. By keeping the Passover, we show our acceptance of His sacrifice and renew our covenant with God each year.

This ceremony is so important that if individuals missed the opportunity to keep Passover in the first month, due to uncleanness or travel, they are required to keep the exact same ceremony in the second month. God spoke to Moses stating:

Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'If anyone of you or your posterity is unclean because of a corpse, or *is* far away on a journey, he may still keep the LORD's Passover. On the fourteenth day of the second month, at twilight, they may keep it. They shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. They shall leave none of it until morning, nor break one of its bones. According to all the ordinances of the Passover they shall keep it. But the man who *is* clean and is not on a journey, and ceases to keep the Passover, that same person shall be cut off from among his people, because he did not bring the offering of the LORD at its appointed time; that man shall bear his sin (Numbers 9:10-13).

God commanded the Passover to be kept forever (Exo. 12:24). This command was not given to the nation of Israel alone (Deu. 29:9-12). Converts of every race are accepted as Abraham's children, and are to keep God's Passover (Gal. 3:29). The Apostle Paul confirmed this amazing truth when he wrote, "they *are* not all Israel who *are* of Israel" (Rom. 9:6). For this reason, the New Covenant Passover is required to be observed by all Christians. As Christ stated:

Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day (John 6:53-54).

The Passover commemorates the suffering and death of our Savior. Christians symbolically eat His flesh and drink His blood by partaking of bread and wine during this ceremony. Therefore, there should be a profound reverence associated with this observance.

No Foreigner Shall Eat It

This service is unique in that only members baptized in God's Church are to participate in the symbols of foot washing, eating the bread, and drinking the wine. This precedent dates back to the time of the exodus, in which God commanded:

This *is* the ordinance of the Passover: No foreigner shall eat it. But every man's servant who is bought for money, when you have circumcised him, then he may eat it. A sojourner and a hired servant shall not eat it (Exodus 12:43-45).

Nobody who was uncircumcised was allowed to partake of the Passover. This rule did not apply to Israelite women for obvious reasons. Nonetheless, women had to be committed to obeying God in every way. God made this point clear when stating:

And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments of the LORD and His statutes which I command you today for your good... Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer (Deuteronomy 10:12-16).

Israel was told exactly what circumcision represented. As a second witness, Moses declared:

And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live... And you will again obey the voice of the LORD and do all His commandments which I command you today... For the LORD will again rejoice over you for good as He rejoiced over your fathers, if you obey the voice of the LORD your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this Book of the Law, *and* if you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul (Deuteronomy 30:5-10).

Israel agreed to the covenant with God that required them to keep all of His laws. A similar commitment is made by true believers today who show their devotion by the rite is baptism. The Apostle Paul mentioned this when writing:

In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with *Him* through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses (Colossians 2:11-13).

Repentance and immersion in water reflects the desire to put our old way of life to death. For these reasons, only those who have been baptized may partake of the symbols during the Passover ceremony. Un-baptized members are welcome to attend, and parents should include their children as observers so that they can explain the reasons for these activities (Exo. 12:26). However, only baptized members are to participate in the foot washing, eating the bread, and drinking the wine.

Unworthy Manners

The Passover ceremony is not a time for lightheartedness or excessive eating and drinking. This does not mean we cannot smile or greet one another in a cheerful way. There should be a sense of joy in the triumph of what our Savior has done for us, and it is not wrong to communicate our appreciation. On the other hand, the Passover is a solemn ceremony. The Apostle Paul warned us:

Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks *this* cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord (1Corinthians 11:27).

Partaking of the Passover in an unworthy manner can be applied a number of ways. It certainly means taking it with a light or half-hearted attitude. It can also mean eating the bread and drinking the wine without a proper understanding of what they represent. It could also include taking the symbols at the wrong day or time. The Christian Passover is to be celebrated after sundown on the beginning of the 14th of Nisan (Exo. 12:6).

Using wrong symbols would also qualify for taking the Passover unworthily. For example, God commanded that leaven be removed from our homes, and the bread to be eaten Passover evening is to be unleavened (Exo. 12:8-19).

The drink this night is to be wine. Grapes ferment quickly and the grape harvest in Judea is in the summer time. Any juice from grapes used in the spring could only have been wine. Wine requires fermentation leading to a degree of alcohol present.

Another important aspect of Passover is the attitude in which we come to partake of the symbols. Paul continued to expand on the method of keeping the Christian Passover by relating we should spend time examining ourselves beforehand:

But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body (1Corinthians 11:28-29).

While examining ourselves, it is important to realize that none of us are worthy of Christ's sacrifice. If we do not discern Christ's body by understanding what He went through for our sake then we take the Passover in an unworthy manner. We must gratefully comprehend the broken body and shed blood of Christ that was given for the forgiveness of our sins (Col. 1:14).

We should not partake of the Passover with an attitude of pride, anger, or resentment. If we have offended a brother, we must sincerely attempt to make amends beforehand.

The Apostle Paul also said that the ceremony should not include consuming food or drink in an attempt to satisfy thirst or appetite. While Christ and His disciples did have a meal, some Christians misused the event (1Cor. 11:20-34). In order to maintain gravity and solemnity, we should not include a meal or allow for an excessive use wine as a part of the ceremony.

Why this Booklet?

Christians should assemble together to observe the Passover whenever we are able. When believers are unable to attend a service hosted by an elder, the Eternal Church of God has provided details of this ceremony so that individuals can keep this observance at home.

This booklet contains a set of instructions relating how to properly keep the Passover. We have provided the Church's traditional format and the recommended scriptures to be read. In the event members do not feel comfortable leading the service in its entirety, we have provided a prerecorded message. We offer this

material fully understanding that members may use some or all of it at their discretion.

Preparing for the Passover

Preparation is the most important part of any project. This also applies to God's Passover ceremony. The host must ensure that things are done decently and in order (1Cor. 14:40).

The first step is to know how many people plan to attend and what materials you will need. Some things will have to be procured. If you intend to use the prerecorded audio service, a CD player of reasonable quality must be secured. We also suggest printing an adequate number of copies of the song that is to be sung this night. The words to the hymn "God So Loved the World" are located at the end of this booklet.

Tubs for foot washing should also be acquired in advance. Small 12" x 18" inch plastic tubs are preferable and may be found at most department, discount, and hardware stores. Experience has proven that procuring a few more of these than anticipated is a wise practice. If they have been stored, check for cracks and cleanliness before reusing them. Participants usually supply their own towel, but it may be helpful to also have a few extra on hand.

The Unleavened Bread

A sufficient amount of unleavened bread should be provided for the evening. Homemade or store-bought unleavened bread is acceptable. Make sure that the bread is entirely unleavened. This is easily accomplished by purchasing kosher Passover matzos.

Do not pile the bread on the tray so that it becomes messy when it is broken later during the ceremony. In addition, any bread (including crumbs) left over from the tray should be collected and burned with fire this same night. There should be nothing left over from the bread placed in the tray in accordance with God's command regarding the remains of the lamb (Exo. 12:10).

The Wine

When purchasing wine for Passover, several things should be considered. We recommended a better-quality red wine. Historically, the Church has used an unfortified wine with alcohol content somewhere between 10-13%. Wines which have higher alcohol level are sometimes fortified with another alcoholic beverage and we do not recommend using them.

The wine should be poured into small glasses the night of the service. Depending on the number of participants, it might be wise to purchase a wine tray and small plastic cups that are traditionally used in larger services. These items are inexpensive and add a respectful approach to the service.

After the ceremony is concluded, any remaining wine from the glasses should be poured out onto the earthy ground as was the blood of our Savior. It is not necessary to discard wine that was not poured from the bottle.

Preparing the Room

The room should be properly prepared for this observance. Christ sent His disciples to prepare the room for His last Passover as Luke recorded:

Then came the Day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover must be killed. And He sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat." ...So they went and found it just as He had said to them, and they prepared the Passover (Luke 22:7-13).

The rooms for the Passover ceremony should be free of leaven. The hall or rooms to be used for the service should be clean and neat. Traditionally, the table for the wine and bread is covered with a white table cloth. White napkins are also used to cover the wine glasses and the bread tray.

The Foot Washing

It is important to have enough room for the foot washing service. Women have frequently been separated from the men

when the actual foot washing takes place. Separation can be accomplished in a number of ways by either using two rooms or setting a distance of space between the men and women.

There may be occasions when members find that they have to celebrate the Passover alone. In such a case, there is no other person whose feet can be washed. Don't fret.

We must be aware that this part of the service is not a commandment. After Christ performed this act, and He explained to the disciples what it represented, He said, "blessed are you if you do them" (John 13:17). The foot washing was an example of humble service toward others. This means that the foot washing part of the ceremony is a good thing for us to practice. However, if circumstances do not allow, then we are not violating one of God's laws.

Using the Prerecorded Ceremony

Should you desire to use the prerecorded ceremony, we recommend listening to the entire audio prior to the Passover. This is necessary to check volume levels and familiarize yourself with the format of the service. Each portion of the ceremony plays as a separate section. As you listen to the audio, you will hear how each part follows the script provided in the section of this booklet titled *Conducting Your Own Service*.

Note that volume will need to be slightly louder when a room is filled with people as opposed to being empty. In addition, be aware that we have taken the liberty of modifying the traditional service by the introduction of an optional song at the beginning of the prerecorded ceremony.

Hand out copies of the music to each member before the ceremony begins. After everyone is seated and the sun has set below the horizon, simply start the audio.

The Unleavened Bread

After washing your hands, The speaker will proceed through the portion of the service explaining the symbolism of the bread. When the speaker states, "The host will now pray over the

bread” turn off the audio. Uncover the tray of bread and ask everyone to bow their heads. Proceed to reverently ask God’s blessing on the bread.

After the prayer, break the bread into medium size pieces in the sight of all the guests. Pass the tray to each person, or slowly walk through the room allowing each person to take one piece of bread. When all of the guests have taken a piece of unleavened bread, the host will take one for himself. The tray should be returned to its former location while all remain seated. Then start the audio again.

The Wine

The speaker will explain the symbol and meaning of the wine. When he states, “The host will now pray over the wine,” pause the audio again. The host should then uncover the tray of wine and ask everyone to bow their heads and proceed to pray over the wine. After the prayer, pass the tray so that each person may take one small cup or drink of wine. Return the used glasses of wine to their former location and restart the audio.

The Foot Washing

The audio will proceed with the foot washing. At the point the speaker says, “The host will now direct you to the foot washing service,” pause the audio. The host should then direct guests to their respective places to wash feet in a respectful manner.

The Scripture Reading and the Final Song

The speaker will then proceed to read traditional Passover Scriptures. At the conclusion of the reading, the speaker will ask everyone to rise and sing a song and the music will begin to play. The host should lead the group in the final song if he feels comfortable doing so.

Stop the audio after the music has ended. The host should then conclude with prayer.

Conducting Your Own Service

For those who wish to conduct a Passover service, we have provided guidelines for a traditional ceremony. Read the following carefully and make notes if necessary. Prepare in advance so that the service is performed decently and in order. The Passover ceremony traditionally begins without prayer, but includes prayer over the bread, the wine, and concludes with a hymn and a prayer. There is special music at the beginning of our audio should you choose to use it and there is piano music at the end for the hymn. The service usually starts with comments made by the speaker which connects the Passover to our time. The leader can then read and expound on the script provided. At the end of each section there are instructions regarding the foot washing, the bread, and the wine. Scriptures from the book of John are read and a hymn is sung in conclusion.

The Beginning of the Passover Script

In this world, many of the things of God seem to be bittersweet. There is a bitter side to this evening's service. We gather at this time every year to rehearse and reflect on the suffering and death of our Savior. As we do, we reconfirm our covenant with God.

But there is also a sweet side to Passover. With this ceremony comes a profound realization of the astounding triumph of Christ. His victory brings with it a transcendent hope of inclusion into the Kingdom and Family of God.

In addition, those of us who celebrate the Passover are inextricably linked to a long chain of faithful people who have existed down through the ages. We are a part of all who ever looked to, and trusted in, the redeeming blood of our Savior. We look to Christ to cleanse us from sin and provide a way for us to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

Christ Explained that we Must Eat and Drink of Him

Those who followed Christ witnessed Him perform astounding miracles. They saw Him heal people that were chronically ill, and create food enough to feed more than 5,000 people. They wondered if this man was the Messiah. They wanted proof in the form of manna from heaven. Christ then explained this profound truth. He was the reality of what the manna portrayed. He was the bread from heaven! Before we eat this bread, we must understand and believe the words that He spoke.

John 6:27 ~ “Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him.”

John 6:33-35 ~ “For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” Then they said to Him, “Lord, give us this bread always.” And Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.”

John 6:37-39 ~ “All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day.”

John 6:44 ~ “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.”

John 6:48-58 ~ “I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came

down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.” The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, “How can this Man give us *His* flesh to eat?” Then Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever.”

Christ Instituted the New Covenant Passover

On His last Passover with the disciples, Christ instituted symbols for the New Covenant Passover. Luke wrote:

Luke 22:14-16 ~ When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him. Then He said to them, “With *fervent* desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.”

The Bread

Matthew, Mark, and Luke all recorded the words Christ had said while confirming symbols for the Passover ceremony:

Matthew 26:26 ~ And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed, and broke *it*, and gave *it* to the disciples and said, “Take, eat; this is My body.”

The Apostle Paul was spiritually taught by Christ while in Arabia and Damascus. Christ's divine instructions confirmed details for the Christian Passover ceremony. As Paul explained:

1Corinthians 11:23-24 ~ For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the *same* night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke *it* and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me."

We are to partake of the bread this night as a symbol of Christ's body. As was read earlier, Christ explained this symbolism by stating:

John 6:48-51 ~ I am the bread of life... If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.

Christ was God in the flesh. He dwelt in heaven having enormous majesty and glory long before the creation of Adam and Eve. Christ was the God who said "Let there be light" and there was light (Gen. 1:3). Even though He gloriously ruled as second in command of the entire universe, Christ became flesh that we might become spirit. He became a man that we might become a part of the God family. He took upon himself the form of a servant and willingly suffered by giving His flesh as a sacrifice so that through His death we might live. Christ experienced human nature by feeling all the frailties and pulls of the flesh that we do (Heb. 4:15; Mat. 26:41). He felt sorrow and endured pain in the highest degree.

It is important to remember that both eating His flesh and drinking of His blood are symbolic. They directly portray Him offering us eternal life and our sincere acceptance of these symbols make us all one body. We are all one family. As Paul wrote:

1Corinthians 10:16-17 ~ The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, *though* many, are one bread *and* one body; for we all partake of that one bread.

When we partake of His body symbolized by the bread, we become members of His body found within the Church (Col. 1:18). His body is not limited to a particular organization. The body of Christ is a spiritual organism made up of those who have the Spirit of God. Thus, we confirm our connection to Him by partaking of the bread of life.

The bread we break is unleavened, and this pictures the sinless nature of Christ's body which was broken for our sins. Christ was mercilessly beaten until the flesh was torn off of Him. This torturous punishment was not carried out for any wrong doing on His part. Even the Roman governor Pilate admitted that Christ was a just man who did not deserve torment and death (Mat. 27:11-24). The undignified, violent, and painful treatment inflicted on Him was endured for what humanity deserved.

The Apostle Peter reminded us of the terrible suffering that Christ endured for us and how we are to be willing to suffer for the sake of others:

1Peter 2:20-24 ~ For what credit *is it* if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this *is* commendable before God. For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: "Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth"; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed *Himself* to Him who judges righteously; who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed.

Christ's sacrifice was much more than simply dying to pay the penalty for our sins. The beating inflicted upon the Savior was an intimate part of His total commitment. He suffered tremendous agony in the flesh so that we could be healed from the suffering that comes upon us as a result of sin (Isa. 53:5).

His suffering was also an example of Christian self-sacrifice. His willingness to endure such affliction showed His infinite commitment to us. Because He suffered for every person, we should be willing to suffer for each other.

The offering of Christ's body for our sin was planned before the creation of the world (Rev. 13:8). Isaiah prophesied about His life and sacrifice as well as our need for atonement, writing:

Isaiah 53:1-6 ~ Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; and when we see Him, *there is* no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, *our* faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace *was* upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

All of this was done for each one of us and yet most truly do not value God's sacrifice for mankind. The majority of humanity has refused to recognize the horrible ordeal that Christ endured on our behalf. Still, He did not complain. He simply allowed Himself to suffer at the hands of cruel men:

Isaiah 53:7 ~ He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth.

Isaiah gave details regarding the magnitude of Christ's suffering. This great prophet recorded God's words to say:

Isaiah 52:13-14 ~ Behold, My Servant shall deal prudently; He shall be exalted and extolled and be very high. Just as many were astonished at you, so His visage was marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men:

Christ suffered torturous pain to the point of disfigurement. He accepted this punishment being completely innocent of any wrong doing. The penalty that He took upon Himself is one that we would otherwise deserve. His body was broken for us. Therefore, we break this bread understanding both the commitment He made for us and the commitment we make to Him in deep appreciation.

At this point the host should pray over the bread asking God's blessing on it as a symbol of Christ's body. The prayer should include the fact that Christ suffered enormously for each of us. Therefore, we should be willing to suffer for righteousness' sake. We should also thank God for His love and mercy. We should ask God to help us to have His mindset of service and sacrifice for others. The host should then remove the napkin from the tray and break the bread. Pass the tray until each baptized member has had a chance to take a piece. The host should then take a piece of bread for himself.

The Wine

The wine used during this ceremony is a symbol of Christ's blood. The Evangelist Mark wrote:

Mark 14:23-24 ~ Then He took the cup, and when He had given thanks He gave *it* to them, and they all drank from it. And He said to them, "This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many."

It is written that life is in the blood and that blood makes atonement for the soul (Lev. 17:11). This helps us to understand that Christ's blood cleanses us of sin—making it possible for us to attain eternal life. The author of Hebrews stated:

Hebrews 9:11-15 ~ But Christ came *as* High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

The Apostle Paul also stated that it is Christ's blood that literally redeems us. He wrote:

Ephesians 1:7 ~ In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.

The pouring out of the blood of the Lamb of God resulted in the death of His flesh. It is Christ's blood that justifies us. It is an offering made to God the Father on our behalf:

Colossians 1:19-23 ~ For it pleased *the Father* that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross. And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight—if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast.

Christ's offering gives us the opportunity for salvation, but it does not free us from an obligation to live righteously. We can come before God blameless IF we continue to practice the faith of Christ. Each one of us should partake of this wine in reverential thanksgiving for this hope. It is a renewal of our acceptance of the blood of Christ that was poured out for the remission of our sins. There is no other salvation than that which is found in His sacrifice.

The host should uncover the wine and pray over it thanking God for giving us His Son to die so that we could be reconciled to Him. Thank God for Christ's willingness to submit to the Father's will. Pass the wine to the guests. After the glasses are returned, cover them along with the bread tray with a cloth or napkin.

The Foot Washing Ceremony

Surprisingly, on the very night that Christ was to be taken as the sacrifice for all humanity, there was strife among His followers regarding their future status.

Luke 22:24 ~ Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest.

Christ then taught the disciples the importance of humility. Consider the following words and how they directly apply to us:

Luke 22:25-27 ~ And He said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called ‘benefactors.’ But not so *among* you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves. For who *is* greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? *Is* it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves.”

Christ gave an example of the kind of service His people should provide for others. After hearing the disciples argue about which of them would be the greatest, the Christ gave them an example of how God defines greatness:

John 13:2-17 ~ And supper being ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon’s *son*, to betray Him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel with which He was girded. Then He came to Simon Peter. And *Peter* said to Him, “Lord, are You washing my feet?” Jesus answered and said to him, “What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this.” Peter said to Him, “You shall never wash my feet!” Jesus answered him, “If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me.” Simon Peter said to Him, “Lord, not my feet only, but also *my* hands and *my* head!” Jesus said to him, “He who is bathed needs only to wash *his* feet, but is completely clean; and you

are clean, but not all of you.” For He knew who would betray Him; therefore He said, “You are not all clean.” So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, “Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for *so* I am. If I then, *your* Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.”

The Savior explained that we are not greater than Him. Since He was willing to wash His disciple’s feet, we are to show the same humility by washing one another’s feet. We do this understanding that this act is a reminder of the attitude of service we must have toward one another each day of our lives. As John later wrote:

1John 3:14-16 ~ We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love *his* brother abides in death. Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren.

Paul also described Christ’s humble attitude, stating:

Philippians 2:5-8 ~ Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point of* death, even the death of the cross.

Following the example of Christ, we will now wash each other's feet.

At this point the host should direct the men and women to wash one another's feet in their respective locations.

The Conclusion of Passover

After the meal, Christ spoke to His disciples and delivered a profound message. These words are some of the most beautiful and meaningful ever put to print. The Apostle John wrote:

John 13:33-35 ~ Little children, I shall be with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, 'Where I am going, you cannot come,' so now I say to you. A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

John 14:1-31 ~ "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know." Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him." Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that

I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own *authority*; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. Believe Me that I *am* in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves. “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater *works* than these he will do, because I go to My Father. And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do *it*. If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that it may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees it nor knows it; but you know it, for it dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also. At that day you will know that I *am* in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.” Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, “Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?” Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father’s who sent Me. These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, it will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. You have heard Me say to you, ‘I am going away and coming *back* to you.’ If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said,

‘I am going to the Father,’ for My Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe. I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me. But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do. Arise, let us go from here.”

John 15:1-27 ~ “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every *branch* that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw *them* into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples. As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and *that* your joy may be full. This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My

name He may give you. These things I command you, that you love one another. If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before *it hated* you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do to you for My name’s sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. He who hates Me hates My Father also. If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would have no sin; but now they have seen and also hated both Me and My Father. But *this happened* that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law, ‘They hated Me without a cause.’ But when the Helper comes, that I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, it will testify of Me. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.”

John 16:1-33 ~ “These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble. They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service. And these things they will do to you because they have not known the Father nor Me. But these things I have told you, that when the time comes, you may remember that I told you of them. And these things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you. But now I go away to Him who sent Me, and none of you asks Me, ‘Where are You going?’ But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send it to you.

And when it has come, it will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear *them* now. However, when it, the Spirit of truth, has come, it will guide you into all truth; for it will not speak on its own *authority*, but whatever it hears it will speak; and it will tell you things to come. It will glorify Me, for it will take of what is Mine and declare *it* to you. All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that it will take of Mine and declare *it* to you. A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me, because I go to the Father.” Then *some* of His disciples said among themselves, “What is this that He says to us, ‘A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me’; and, ‘because I go to the Father’?” They said therefore, “What is this that He says, ‘A little while’? We do not know what He is saying.” Now Jesus knew that they desired to ask Him, and He said to them, “Are you inquiring among yourselves about what I said, ‘A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me’? Most assuredly, I say to you that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; and you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy. A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you. And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full. These things I have spoken to you in figurative language; but the time is coming when I

will no longer speak to you in figurative language, but I will tell you plainly about the Father. In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you; for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God. I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father.” His disciples said to Him, “See, now You are speaking plainly, and using no figure of speech! Now we are sure that You know all things, and have no need that anyone should question You. By this we believe that You came forth from God.” Jesus answered them, “Do you now believe? Indeed the hour is coming, yes, has now come, that you will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”

John 17:1-26 ~ Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: “Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was. I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received *them*, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me. I pray for them. I do

not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as *We are*. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth. I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me. Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare *it*, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.”

The Hymn

After supper Christ led the disciples in singing a hymn:

And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the mount of Olives (Mark 14:26).

Following Christ's example, we conclude this service by rising and singing a hymn.

The host should ask everyone to pick up their song sheets and rise. Feel free to use the prerecorded music accompanying this Passover ceremony, or provide appropriate music and lyrics of your choosing.

After the hymn is finished, the host should ask a closing prayer.

God So Loved the World

"...that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" John 3:16

1. God so loved the world that He sent His on - ly Son,
2. God so loved the world that He gave the Bread of Life,
3. God so loved the world that He drew us to the Vine,
4. God so loved the world that He glo - ri - fied His Son,

The first system of music is written on two staves. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The bottom staff is in bass clef with the same key signature and time signature. The melody is primarily in the treble clef, with some accompaniment in the bass clef. The lyrics are placed below the notes.

That who - so - ever be - liev - eth in Him will have life for - ever - more.
That who - so - ever par - takes of His Life is sus - tained for - ever - more.
That who - so - ever a - bid - eth in Him will bear fruit for - ever - more.
That who - so - ever be - liev - eth in Him will be one for - ever - more.

The second system of music continues the melody from the first system. It consists of two staves, treble and bass clef, with a key signature of one sharp and a 3/4 time signature. The lyrics are placed below the notes.

TEXT & MUSIC: Ann Tannert