

Celebration Church of God

Instructions for keeping Passover at Home

The New Testament Passover is the memorial of our Savior's death by which He paid in full the penalty for our sins. Those who have repented and accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Savior participate in this service. It's best to keep Passover with the congregation, but if that's not possible, it may be kept privately or in small groups, following these directions.

Preparation: The Passover is held after sundown, as the 14th day of the first month of the Hebrew calendar begins. This falls in late March or early April by modern calendars. The exact date is announced in church or can be found by checking the Hebrew calendar.

The room should be neat and clean. Unleavened bread and a small glass of red wine should be prepared for each participant. If two or more are participating, also prepare a basin of clean water and towels for footwashing.

The Service: This is the most sober, yet joyful, occasion of the year, because we're reflecting on the suffering and death of Jesus Christ, who gave His life to reconcile us to God. The Passover is about placing our faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

The service should begin with prayer. While the occasion is a sober one, it's also encouraging, because it reveals God's boundless love for His people. We're given this reminder of the glorious victory over sin and death that is ours because of the sacrifice of the Son of God. Those who participate in the service are expressing their faith in Christ's death on their behalf, and participating in the body and blood of our Savior (1 Corinthians 10:16). Read also 1 Corinthians 11:23-30 and John 6:32-58. The eating and drinking of the symbols of Jesus' body and blood are directly associated with eternal life.

Foot Washing: If two or more are participating, they should wash each other's feet (John 13:1-17).

The Bread: Begin by reading Matthew 26:26-30 and 1 Corinthians 10:16-17. The bread symbolizes the body of Christ, the bread of life, broken for us. Christ lives in us, making us part of the unified body of Christ—His church, the family of God made up of all believers everywhere through all time. Eating the bread indicates our commitment to Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:20-24).

Give thanks for the bread, a symbol of Christ's body, given for us. The prayer is one of thanksgiving for God's love and mercy, and for Christ who suffered for us to heal us from all sin (Isaiah 53:5). The bread allows us to share in His suffering that we might also live in His glory (John 6:44-51). Break the bread, then each person should eat a small piece.

The Wine: Each participant take turns reading aloud from Matthew 26:27-28, Hebrews 9:11-15, 1 John 1:7, Ephesians 1:7 and Colossians 1:20-22.

Say a prayer of thanksgiving for the wine, the symbol of Christ's blood, shed for the remission of our sins. Thank God for the sacrifice of His only Son to die for us, washing us clean and reconciling us to Him. After the prayer, each person drinks his or her small glass of wine. Read portions from John 13:18 through chapter 17, and 2 Corinthians 5:16-21.

Conclusion: End the service with a hymn or two, and prayer (Matthew 26:30).

After the service, discard any bread and wine left over that was used in the service, and had been prayed over. None of this bread or wine should be consumed for any other purpose after the service. Dispose of the bread and wine completely to prevent its further use.
