

Maundy Thursday for One

Maundy Thursday is at its core a communal practice. It is hard to practice Maundy Thursday by ourselves, but to honor Maundy Thursday we have prepared a service that you can do on your own. You may honor Maundy Thursday alone this week, but in time we will gather together for a Feast with our community.

For this service, you will need a few things:

- A Bible
- A Candle and Match/Lighter
- A Meal
- A place to wash your hands
- Hand Lotion
- Small piece of bread (or crackers, or chip, etc)
- Small cup of juice (or water, or milk, etc)

Time of Preparation

This Maundy Thursday Celebration begins with a time of reflection. This is a chance for us to prepare our hearts and minds to enter into the sacred rituals of The Last Supper. Tonights' time of preparation invites us to search our hearts and see if there is anything in the way of fully stepping into this time of worship. May these rituals and times of reflection throughout be a blessing to you this evening.

Lighting a Candle: Light a candle and remember this promise from Romans 8:39, *Nothing will be able to separate me from the love of God in Christ Jesus my lord.*

Read Matthew 5:23-24.

Time of Preparation: Our Matthew scripture reminds us that a hard heart or broken relationships can get in the way of worshipping God. Jesus encourages us to leave our time of worship to make things right with brothers or sisters whom we may have wronged. In a similar way, there may be heavy feelings that we carry with us tonight. Perhaps, there is mourning that we need to name because we are unable to practice The Last Supper together.

Here are some suggestions on how to honor this time of preparation:

- Is there someone whom you need to reach out to and ask forgiveness? Find a way to reach out to them.
- Are feelings of disappointment and sadness getting in the way of entering into this time? Ask God to release you from these feelings and hand them over to God to carry for you.
- Spend a moment meditating on your relationships. Is there a friend or relative that you'd like to connect with despite the distance?

Prayer:

Loving God,
Who will not be stopped by life, nor death,
Nor angels, nor demons,

Nor things present, nor things to come,
I offer my heart to this evening.
Make me and mold me in the shape
Of your will and love.
Do not let ill feelings, broken relationship, or sadness,
Hinder me from honoring and remembering the
Sacrifice of Jesus our Lord.
Empower me to right wrongs, release heavy feelings,
And enter this time wholly present, and wholly thine.
In Jesus' name, I pray, Amen.

Handwashing

Handwashing has become a very important practice in this season of protecting ourselves from the spread of the COVID-19. In lieu of washing feet, we will practice handwashing for ourselves and an act of service for another.

Read John 13:1-17

An Act of Forgiveness for You: One significant meaning behind the practice of Love Feast is the symbolic washing away of sin. When we wash feet and have our feet washed, it's a moment to give and receive forgiveness. The waters can remind us of our baptism and the commitments we've made to "forgive others, just as in Christ, God forgives you" (Eph 4:32).

Take a moment and wash your hands. As you soap up your hands and rinse them under the water, pray: "Forgive me of my sins, O Lord."

After washing your hands, apply a bit of hand lotion. As the soft lotion works its way into your skin, may it be a reminder of God's tender care for you and God's wide mercy for you. Pray these words from Psalm 69:16, "Hear me, O Lord, for Your lovingkindness is good; Turn to me according to the multitude of Your tender mercies" (NKJV). Rest assured that the forgiveness you seek has been granted to you by a loving God.

An Act of Service for Another: Jesus modeled care for his friends and his enemies through the washing of his disciples' feet. Service and love for others is another core meaning behind the act of feetwashing. What act of love or service can you do for another even in the midst of physical distancing? Here are some suggested ideas you could do during this time:

- Write an encouraging card to a friend or acquaintance. You could skim the church directory for ideas within our church community.
- Call a friend or family member and check in on them.
- Share a donation to an organization working for good during this time.
- Plan to donate items to the Blessing Box at the church.

Take a moment and practice one of these acts of service or make a plan to fulfill one of them in the days ahead.

A Meal

During the Last Supper, we usually partake in an Agape Meal. For Prince of Peace, this has often meant a bread and broth supper, with grapes and cheese. Your Agape Meal tonight can be whatever you desire. It can be simple like soup and bread, or it could be more complex. You could choose to support a local small business and order take out. However you decide to nourish yourself this evening, you are taking a moment to honor the Holy.

Read Luke 10:38-42

As you sit down to dinner tonight, you have done the holy work of Mary *and* Martha. You have provided a meal for yourself and you are taking a moment to sit at the feet of Jesus. You have nourished your body and are taking time to nourish your soul. You are taking time to honor this holy day and remember the sacrifice of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Prayer for your Meal:

God of the Table,

I thank you for the food that you have provided for me and for it's long journey from the fields to my table. Bless every hand that brought it to me.

May this time of eating be a blessing to the nourishment of my body and my soul.

In the name of Jesus, who ate with friends and sinners, I pray, Amen.

Honoring the Agape Meal: Jesus sat down with his disciples to partake in a final meal together for the events of the Passion would take place. He understood the importance of spiritual and physical nourishment. Remember as you partake, that the physical mattered to Jesus and he sat down to eat with people many, many times. He provided for people when they were hungry and cared for people when they were sick--our bodies and their needs matter to Jesus.

Here are some suggested ways to observe and honor the Agape Meal:

- While you eat dinner, call a friend who may be eating dinner alone too. As you eat, you can fellowship together in spite of the physical distance.
- Take the time to read scripture about other meals in which Jesus partook. Suggested scripture could be: Luke 5:27-32; Luke 7:26-50; Luke 19:1-10.
- Listen to music that honors the moment.
- Enjoy the silence and intentionally savor the food you're eating. Think of the journey this food has taken from the fields to your dinner table and all of the people who have helped bring it to you. Give thanks for them and for your food's journey.
- Set a place setting for Jesus and invite him to be your guest at dinner tonight.

The Bread and the Cup

The practice of partaking in the bread and the cup is a symbolic reminder of the sacrifice of Jesus and our inclusion in the body of Christ. This ritual involves blessing ordinary elements of bread and juice usually done by the Pastors during the Last Supper. Yet, our faith recognizes that we are all ministers and indeed God's holiness

can be found in every moment. May you know that the bread which you eat and the cup which you drink are blessed and holy elements of communion.

Read 1 Corinthians 11: 23-25

The Bread: Bread is an ordinary food item and honestly, may be hard to find on the shelves these days. You may honor this ritual with a small piece of bread, a cracker, goldfish--whatever you may have access to tonight.

Prayer of Blessing: "I offer the bread of remembrance; with joy I eat and remember Christ's body broken for me, the grief of my sin turned to the joy of divine forgiveness."

Take and Eat.

The Cup: Juice is a tart, sweet reminder of the sacrifice of Jesus for the forgiveness of all. You may honor this ritual with a small cup of juice, water, milk--whatever you may have access to tonight.

Prayer of Blessing: I offer the cup of remembrance; with joy I drink and remember Christ's blood poured out for me, the anguish of separation from God turned to the joy of restoration."

Take and Drink.

Closing

"The service isn't over; it is only beginning. What you have practiced tonight is not a series of holy acts, separate from life. Rather these acts have been a reminder that you belong to Christ always and everywhere. You carry the love of Christ in your home, your daily activity, and all your relationships. You are a member of the body of Christ. By God's grace let it be so."

Be reminded of these words from Romans 8: 38-39:

"For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

2020. Pastor Katie Heishman. Created for Prince of Peace Church of the Brethren, Kettering, OH.

Please share and adapt for your context.