

What is ..



Communion

Harlow
Baptist
Church

www.harlowbaptist.org



It was

Instituted by Jesus:

See: (Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:17-20;)

It was also an event which the early church believed should be part of their continuing lives. *“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”* (Acts 2:42)

Similarly it was a practice that the apostle Paul understood to be the will of God. *“and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.”* (1 Cor. 11:24-25)

It is **A MEAL:**

Communion is a symbolic meal which Christians eat with one another as part of their times of worship together:-

It reminds us of our fellowship together.

It reminds us that we are to feed off (rely on) Jesus Christ. (John 6:35)

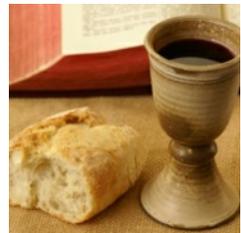
It reminds us of our future celebration, described as a banquet, which we will have with Jesus Christ at his return.

THE BREAD:

Clearly if Jesus was standing in front of his disciples and said "this IS my body" he could not have meant literally his body. Rather, the bread represents his body. Its representation is that it is something that we:-

Share of Christ: and share with one another:

As we receive the bread to ourselves we are reminded that, through confessing our sin and accepting Christ's Lordship over our



lives, we receive Christ into our very lives.

As we share and experience in the same bread together we are reminded that we share and experience in the same Christ. i.e. He who lives in me lives in you (if you are a Christian).

In this we are reminded of both our commitment and union with Christ and our commitment and union with each other.

THE WINE:

Similarly the wine portrays the COST of this new life available to us with Jesus Christ. i.e. Christ's death on a Cross. (Romans 6:23; 5:8)

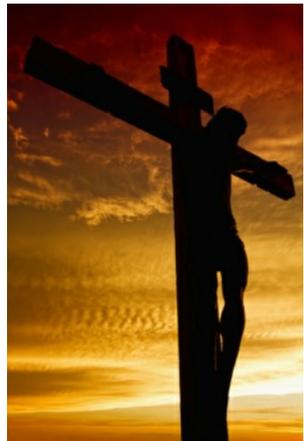
As we take the wine we again accept and confess the conditions of our salvation i.e. only through the death of Jesus. Also, it is opportunity, as we are reminded again of Christ's sacrifice for us, to seek Christ's continued forgiveness and cleansing of our lives.

Also, because we are "one body" it is also an opportunity for the Church Family to reflect upon its corporate sins before God.

It is.....A REMEMBRANCE OF THE PAST:

As we have already noted, Communion is carried out regularly as a reminder. This is because it constantly brings the Christian back to the root reason for his or her salvation i.e. the work of Jesus Christ on the Cross.

This is clearly the reminder that Jesus himself had in mind at the Last Supper. He said of the bread "this is (represents) my body" and "This is (represents) my blood. He was making the disciples aware of the cost he was about to undergo in order for them to be able to 'commune' with him for the whole of eternity.



It is..... **A REMINDER OF THE PRESENT:**

Christ is risen ! (Luke 24:5,6) In his risen state He is with us NOW in Spirit (John 14:16) Our communion is not merely a confirmation of history but also a celebration of God with us now. As such, communion offers a special time for Prayers for healing and blessing as, in faith, we realise again and afresh that the Risen Christ is right with us (a very real presence), and in that risen presence the power of His work on the Cross also applies:-

*But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was upon him,
and by his wounds we are healed. (Isaiah 53:5)*

It is..... **AN ASSURANCE OF THE FUTURE:**



"For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes" (1 Corinethian 11:26). The fact of Christ's saving work on the Cross means that our future is secure in Him. (John 14:1-3). Communion therefore is a celebration of the Christians certainty of being with Christ for all of eternity.

It is.....**OPEN TO ALL WHO KNOW CHRIST AS SAVIOUR:**

It was to his disciples that Jesus gave this command, and it was amongst the Christians in the early church that the command was obeyed.

Therefore our policy here at Harlow Baptist Church is to invite ALL who serve Christ as Lord, and who have received Him as their personal Saviour to share in the Communion. If you would like to explore this further please talk the Pastor (01279 442642 / thepastor@harlowbaptist.org) or one of the church leaders