

DEDICATION: THE TABLE OF COMMUNION

“The Lord Jesus mandated two ordinances, baptism and the Lord’s Supper, which visibly and tangibly express the gospel. Though they are not the means of salvation, when celebrated by the church in genuine faith, these ordinances confirm and nourish the believer.”

Evangelical Free Church of America, Statement of Faith

What is communion?

“For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, 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 also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.”

1 Corinthians 11:23–26 (ESV)

1. It is a meal.
 - a. An _____ meal.
 - b. A _____ meal.
 - c. Jesus is both the _____ and the _____.
2. It is a theological eating.
 - a. It _____ the church.
 - b. It _____ the church.
 - c. It _____ the church.

What is happening at the Table?

“The mental action of the Lord’s Supper is foundationally remembering. Not imagining. Not dreaming. Not channeling. Not listening. Not going into neutral. It is a conscious directing of the mind back into history to Jesus and what we know about him from the Bible. The Lord’s Supper roots us, time after time, in the nitty-gritty of history. Bread and Cup. Body and blood.”

John Piper, *Why and How We Celebrate the Lord's Supper*

1. Past _____.
2. Present _____.
3. Present _____.
4. Future _____.

“How does the holy supper remind and assure you that you share in Christ's one sacrifice on the cross and in all his benefits?”

In this way: Christ has commanded me and all believers to eat this broken bread and to drink this cup in remembrance of him. With this command come these promises:

First, as surely as I see with my eyes the bread of the Lord broken for me and the cup shared with me, so surely his body was offered and broken for me and his blood poured out for me on the cross.

Second, as surely as I receive from the hand of the one who serves, and taste with my mouth the bread and cup of the Lord, given me as sure signs of Christ's body and blood, so surely he nourishes and refreshes my soul for eternal life with his crucified body and poured-out blood.”

Heidelberg Catechism, *Lord's Day 28*, Q&A 75

How do we celebrate?

1. We pass the plates.
 - a. Theological:
 - b. Forming:
2. We practice intinction.
 - a. Theological:
 - b. Forming:
 - c. Issues:
3. Words of institution?
 - a. Theological:
 - b. Forming:

Who can come?

1. All believers, but only believers. All believers, but only together.
2. The children of believers.
3. Unbelievers. How tightly do we fence?
4. Who can serve? *Ordained only?*

How often do we celebrate?

“Each week, at least, the table of the Lord ought to have been spread for the company of Christians, and the promises declared on which we might then spiritually feed.”

Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 4.17.44, 46.

1. Free Church tradition is monthly or less. Why?
2. We celebrate twice a month.
3. What does the Scripture say?
 - a. Do this in remembrance of me. Luke 22:19
 - b. On the first day of the week, when they gathered...Acts 20:7
 - c. As often as you drink it. 1 Cor. 11:25
 - d. When you come together...1 Cor. 11:33
 - e. But it is probably not true to say that it *clearly* teaches weekly.
1. Christ has given His church two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, and the practice of these ordinances is an essential distinguishing mark of a church.
2. These ordinances are signs, that is, visible and tangible expressions, of the gospel, and as such they serve to strengthen our faith—“confirming and nourishing the believer.”
3. The signs (water in baptism, the bread and grape juice or wine in the Lord's Supper) must be distinguished from what they signify (God's saving work in the gospel and Christ's presence with us) [n. 79. Thus we deny baptismal regeneration and the doctrine of transubstantiation].
4. The practice of these ordinances does not save us, and we receive spiritual benefit from them only when they are celebrated in “genuine faith” in Christ.
5. The ordinances serve to separate the believer from the world and to give a visible designation of those who belong to the body of Christ.

Evangelical Convictions: A Theological Exposition of the Statement of Faith of the Evangelical Free Church of America (181-182)