

Getting To Know...



Ashfield
Presbyterian
Church

ashfieldpresbyterian.org.au

Week 1: What is a Christian? Saved by God

Romans 5:8-9 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! (NIV)

1. Try to write out Romans 5:8-9 in your own words

2. What did God show us?

What did Christ do for us?

When did Christ die for us?

What has now happened to us by Jesus' sacrificial death ("his blood")?

Since we are declared right with God when we were his enemies, now that we are right with God, what will happen to us concerning God's wrath?

How can we be sure that we will be saved?



3. How does Jesus dying for us while we were **sinners** demonstrate God's love for us?

What does it mean to be a "sinner"?

What does the phrase "Christ died for us" mean?

What did you do to deserve Jesus dying for you?

Are **you** right with God?

On what basis can **you** be right with God?



On what basis can **you** be saved from God's anger?

How can **you** be sure that you will be saved?

Trusting God

Ephesians 2:8-9 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God- 9 not by works, so that no one can boast. (NIV)

4. Try to write out Ephesians 2:8-9 in your own words

5. What has happened to us by grace?

Is salvation our own work?

In what way does salvation comes to us from God?

What works can we contribute to our salvation?

What credit can we take for our salvation?



6. From what have you been saved?

How have you been saved?

What is the appropriate response to God's grace?

What does it mean to "trust God"?

How good do you have to be in order to be saved?

Can you boast about your salvation? Why?



Living God's Way

Titus 2:11-14 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. 12 It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, 13 while we wait for the blessed hope-the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ (NIV)

7. Try to write out Titus 2:11-14 in your own words

8. What has already appeared?

What has this brought?

What (or who) is yet to appear?

What should we say no to while we wait for the blessed hope?

What will we do instead?

How are we taught or motivated to do this?

9. What does it mean that the grace of God has brought salvation? How has this happened?

How, practically, does the grace of God teach us to live a certain way?

“Hope” in the Bible isn’t wishful thinking, but confident expectation. On what basis can you be confident as you wait for Jesus to appear?

If Jesus is both Saviour and God, what should be your attitude towards him?

How would you answer someone who said, “Once you’ve been saved, it doesn’t really matter how you live”?

Do good deeds and godly living come as a result of God’s grace, or in order to earn it?



Week 2: Living as a Christian

Listening to God

2 Timothy 3:15-17: ...the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (NIV)

Try to write out 2 Timothy 3:15-17 in your own words

1. How much of Scripture is God-breathed?

Who is the ultimate author of the Bible?

What role do the Scriptures play in our salvation?

List four ways the Christian can use the Bible

What is the ultimate purpose for the Christian of these activities?

2. What does it mean that the Bible is God-breathed?

What, then, should be your attitude to the Bible?

How, then, should you use the Bible?

What will it look like for YOU to be thoroughly equipped for every good work?



Talking to God

Philippians 4:5-7 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (NIV)

Try to write out Philippians 4:5-7 in your own words

3. What are we to be anxious about?

What are we to pray about?

To whom are we to present our requests?

In what way should we present our requests?

Does God promise to give us everything we ask for?

What promise DOES he give us in v7?



4. What things concern you at the moment?

Have you raised them with God?

For what can you thank God?

Think back over our last study. Are there other things you can thank God for?

What will it mean to have “the peace of God guarding our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus”?

How can this help when you are anxious or struggling as a Christian?



Notes and Questions:

Meeting with God's people

Hebrews 10:24-25 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. 25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another-and all the more as you see the Day approaching. (NIV)

Try to write out Hebrews 10:24-25 in your own words

1. What are we to consider?

What two things are we to spur one another on to?

What are we to keep doing (without giving up)?

What is to motivate us to meet together?



2. How can YOU spur others on to love and good deeds?

Why do some people fail to meet with other Christians?

How does 'the day' affect your attitude to other Christians?

How do the different aspects of what we do in church help to achieve the goal of this verse?

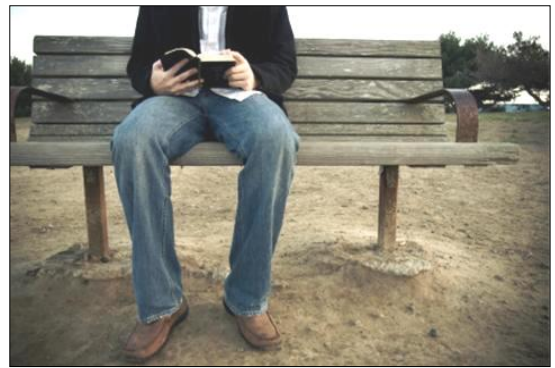
Who are you encouraging towards godliness?

Who is encouraging you towards godliness?



Personal Bible Reading & Prayer

Christians often neglect personal prayer. We make a lot of excuses, but our lack of prayer has more to do with how we (mis)understand God and his world than with our lack of time. We don't just need better methods, we need to know God better. However, praying won't just happen. We need to MAKE it happen. It needs to be a priority. Many Christians find it helpful to set a regular time aside to read their Bibles and pray. Here are some tips:



Select a special time and place

Morning may be best. It shows the priority of meeting with God, committing the day to him. And your mind is probably less distracted.

Aim for a realistic length of time

Start with 15 minutes and let it grow. Don't watch the clock. Be expectant – you're meeting with God. Aim for quality and not just quantity.

Some structure

Relax, read, reflect, record, request

Pray Scripture

Combine prayer and Bible reading. It helps give content to your prayers.

Keep a prayer diary

Make separate lists of prayer points under major headings. Spread the points across your prayer during the week. Review the list each month. Praise God for answered prayer you identify.

It is useful to develop a range of ways of reading the Bible. Variety helps us to concentrate. Also, different parts of the Bible needs a different approach. For example, you can meditate on a Proverb, but meditating on a verse from the life of Jacob may be a waste of time – you really need to read the whole story. Here's a number of ideas and methods for reading the Bible – give them a try:

Repetition:

There's no substitute for just reading the Bible over and over.

Marking the trail

Read with a pencil in hand, writing notes in the margin, or if you prefer a notebook or journal. Keep a record of ideas, thoughts, or questions you might have. This helps you concentrate and dig deeper.

Year-plan

Systematic reading of the whole Bible in a fixed period is really worthwhile. It helps you to be disciplined to be regular, and to read the more difficult bits you're tempted to jump over.

Studying a book for a year

Try focusing in-depth on one book for a whole year. Read and re-read it. Get hold of a good commentary, and use it to work slowly through the book.

Intensive reading

Try reading large slabs of the Bible in one sitting. For example, it takes about two hours to read through Mark. This is a great way to appreciate the big picture of the book. You'll notice certain themes, phrases and ideas being emphasised.

Audio

Listen to an audio version on your personal music player while you do other things.

Week 3: Ashfield Presbyterian Church

What is “Presbyterian”?

The name “Presbyterian” is taken from the Greek word for elder. We are a church whose leadership is based on elders. Each local Presbyterian church is led by a **group of elders**, called the **session**. We believe that this practice of church leadership by elders is biblical. In the Old Testament, Israel appointed elders to lead the nation (Exodus 3:16). Paul and Barnabas continued this practice, appointing elders over each of the Gentile churches they established (Acts 14:23). Acts 20:17 tells us that there were a group of elders in the one church at Ephesus. (See also 1 Tim 4:14; 5:17; Titus 1:5; James 5:14)



Read Acts 20:27-31. What is involved in being an elder over the church?

Acts 20:27-31 For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God. 28 Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. 29 I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. 30 Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. 31 So be on your guard!

History

The denomination had its roots in the Protestant Reformation in Europe in the 1500's and Scotland in the 1600's, reacting against the teaching and misuse of power of the Roman Catholic church. When Scots settled in Australia in the nineteenth century, they brought 'Presbyterianism' with them. In 1901 the various state Presbyterian Churches united into a federal church. In 1977 'continuing' Presbyterians did not join the Uniting Church primarily because of concerns that the Uniting Church did not seem to have commitment to the authority of the Bible.

Theology

Our attitude to the Bible is **Evangelical**. The Bible is God's Word to us. This means our teaching is focused on understanding the Bible – from the small detail, to the broad sweep of how the whole Bible fits together. We are committed to the gospel – the good news about salvation which is only found in Jesus. The gospel is the most important thing we can share with people.

For those who like labels, our theology is **Reformed** and **Calvinistic**. This means we focus on the sovereignty of God in all of life – especially our salvation.

Read Ephesians 1:3-10. List the things God has done for us.

What is his plan for the future for all things in heaven and earth?

Our position is summarised in the **Westminster Confession of Faith**. While this is the official position of the Presbyterian Church, normal members are not required to agree with every detail. If you are a member of God's kingdom, then you can become a member of the Presbyterian Church!

Ephesians 1:3-10 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. 4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love 5 he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will- 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. 7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace 8 that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. 9 And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, 10 to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment-to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.



The Westminster Assembly of Divines (1643-1649)

What is Church Membership?

There are two types of membership in the Presbyterian denomination:

1. A **communicant member** has been baptised, comes to church regularly, and has been admitted to the membership of the church by the session when they are satisfied that he/she is a Christian. (People can also become communicant members by transferring from another Presbyterian church.) They are the only ones who can vote regarding elders and ministers – some of the most important decisions in the spiritual life of a congregation.
2. The other type of members are quaintly termed **adherent members**. The adherents are simply those people who regularly attend but are not communicants. Adherents may vote on all matters except electing elders and calling ministers.

Admission to communicant membership normally happens during a church service with a public profession of faith and baptism (if the new member hasn't been baptised before).

Normally questions like these are asked and answered (with "I do"):

1. *Do you believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit?*
2. *Do you repent of your sin, and with a humble and grateful heart put your trust in the mercy and grace of God and in Jesus Christ whose death takes away your sin?*
3. *Do you promise to share regularly with your fellow Christians in worship when they meet?*

4. *Do you promise to be faithful in reading the Bible, and in prayer?*
5. *Do you promise to love God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind and all your strength and to give a God-honouring proportion of your time, talents and money for the Church's work in the world?*
6. *Do you promise to confess Christ before others, to serve him in your daily work, and to walk in his ways all the days of your life?*
7. *Do you acknowledge your dependence upon the Holy Spirit to equip you and to enable you to be faithful to this your confession?*
8. *Do you promise to submit to the authority of the Session as they exercise pastoral oversight of the congregation?*

What are members promising to do in relation to God?

What are members promising to do in relation to other members of the church?

What are members promising to do in relation to other people?

As well as responsibilities, what benefits of membership are mentioned in these promises?

The Benefits and Responsibilities of Membership

Becoming a member of Ashfield Presbyterian Church expresses publicly your desire to associate with this particular group of God's people. It shows your commitment to Jesus, the head of the body, as well as to his body, the Church. This commitment also expresses a willingness to take on the responsibilities of membership. *1 John 4:19-20 We love because he first loved us. 20 If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen.*

Becoming a member makes you accountable to the other members of the church. It shows that you recognise the responsibility of the session to shepherd you. This involves caring for you, encouraging you, but perhaps also disciplining and correcting you should you stray.

Church Structure

There are four groups who serve and lead our members:

1. **Session:** This group consists of the elders and the minister, and is responsible for the leadership of church. In turn, a regional group of ministers and elders, called the presbytery, oversees the health of a number of churches.
2. **Women's Ministry Leadership Team:** This group of women, appointed by session, and commissioned, are responsible for organising ministry to women, and representing women to the session on leadership issues.
3. **Committee of Management:** This group, elected annually by the congregation, oversees the property and financial concerns of the church.
4. **Pastoral Care Team:** This group is appointed by the Session, and is responsible for caring for those who need practical help, primarily within our church.

Church Vision

Our church vision is:

Building bridges to genuine community around Christ by growing disciples through an emphasis on home groups and bridge-building activities to reach Ashfield.

This is a summary of our strategy for growing disciples of Jesus for the next few years.

Church Motto: Growing Followers of Jesus

This is our church motto. It describes who we are, and what we do. At its simplest, our job as a church is to be making disciples. Our commitment to you is to encourage you to grow as a disciple. However, it is also your responsibility to help others to grow as disciples.

Being a member is not a passive role. A member promises to meet regularly with God's people. Every Christian has been given gifts to build up the body. A member is expected to give a God-honouring proportion of his or her time, talents and money for the Church's work in the world. Serving God's people may involve participation in a formal ministry role or as part of a roster. It may also, just as importantly, involve building-up people through Bible-focussed conversations and prayer in a range of different formal and informal contexts.

Discipleship, from evangelism through conversion and growth to maturity and service, happens by God's Word impacting people in the context of relationships.

Read Colossians 3:16. Whose job is it to teach and admonish?

How, practically, can we let the word of Christ dwell in us richly?

Read Ephesians 4:15-16. Whose job is it to build up the body?

In what direction is the growth? What, practically, does this mean?

The Great Commission

By raising Jesus, God declares him Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36). The appropriate response to Jesus is to submit to his rule and to worship him in obedience and love. Before his ascension, Jesus taught the disciples many things to prepare them for life without his physical presence. He called them together on the mountain near Galilee where they worshipped him (Mt 28:17). He then declared that all authority has been given to him, and that therefore, they are to go and make disciples. At its simplest, Jesus calls us to make disciples. On the basis of all authority having been given to Jesus he commands us;

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. (Matthew 28:19-20)

There is one imperative (make disciples) and three participles (going, baptising, teaching). **Making disciples is our core business.** We do that by "going, baptising and teaching." Each of these three actions is part of the total process of making disciples. The whole Christian life of making disciples is saturated with the attitude of worshipping and honouring the risen Jesus (Mt 28:17).

Colossians 3: 16 *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.*

Ephesians 4:15-16 *Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. 16 From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.*

What things hold us together?

How are we to build up the body?

Each one will bring a different skill-set to that task of building up through speaking God's words to each other. That's the way the body works. No one person can do it on his own. Ministry and evangelism is a team effort.

1 Corinthians 14:26 What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church.

Read Ephesians 4:11-13. What is the job of the pastors and teachers?

Ephesians 4:11-13 It was God who gave some to be ... pastors and teachers, 12 to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

What is the job of the rest of God's people? For what goal?

Home Groups

Participation in a Home Group is one of the key ways in which we can build each other up. These are a crucial part of our life together, not an optional extra. They are more than "just" Bible studies. They are the context for developing meaningful friendships around God's Word that encourage fellowship, prayer, mutual support, encouragement and accountability. They can also serve as a means of providing pastoral care for others in the church not connected with a Home Group. They are an excellent way of welcoming newcomers into the life of the church, and even of evangelising our friends as we include them in the genuine community of the group

Serving

Giving:

One of the ways you serve God's people, and respond to the grace God has shown you is to give of your money, time and talents. In the Old Testament God's people were to give a tenth of all their produce to God in response to his blessings. The tithe was for the priests and Levites and the poor and needy. The New Testament sets us free from fixed percentages, instead establishing principles of generosity, partnership, obligation, love and cheerfulness (2 Corinthians 8-9). If we understand the gospel, we will use our worldly wealth in the light of eternity (Lk 16:1-5) and seek the eternal treasures of God's kingdom rather than earthly riches (Mt 6:19-34). In thinking about how much to give the fundamental question to ponder is: how much have we received from God? How can we show a generous response that flows from God's generosity to us?

You can give by placing cheques or cash in the collection containers passed around during church, by payroll deduction, internet banking, periodical payment, or even by bequest in your will.

For those interested in giving electronically, the church's details are:

Account Name: Ashfield Presbyterian Church.

BSB number: 032 060.

Account Number: 120 342

Working Groups

We have a number of working groups that coordinate different aspects of how we grow followers of Jesus. They identify opportunities to build bridges, and then facilitate and organise the whole church to do ministry.

1. Evangelism: is about scheduling, organising and running a pathway of diverse events and activities that bring the gospel to friends, family and strangers in our community. This includes pre-evangelism and profile-raising activities as well as overt occasions to share the gospel. Their job is not to DO all the evangelism.

2. Justice and mercy: is about ministering to meet the physical, emotional needs of those around us (outside the church). This may include (among other things) practical support to asylum seekers, or homework help for schoolkids, or budgetting help for those in financial hardship, ESL classes, parenting mentoring, nursing home chaplaincy, or advocating for those who need help in the legal/financial/administrative systems etc.

3. Welcoming: is about organising how better to connect with visitors to our church, and then better connect them into our life together. They will think about how all aspects of church are seen by visitors, and how we can decrease the cultural barriers.

4. Fellowship/ Body Life: is about facilitating a healthy church body. This group schedule, organise and run events that foster fellowship,

5. Mission: is about facilitating the support of, and prayer for, our missionaries, and raising awareness of mission.

Other Ministries members are involved in:

Easy English Service, Korean and Chinese Services

ESL Classes

Sunday School

Kids Club - KCentral

Youth group

Scripture teaching in schools

Music

Sound and Data Projection

Morning Tea and Supper

Coffee—making Barista

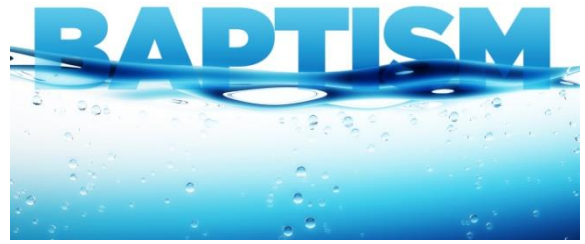
Prayer Meetings

Notes and Questions:

Week 4: Baptism & the Lord's Supper

Baptism

Baptism is a public act of washing with water. The washing with water is a sign of what God has done in a person's life - cleansing from sin, and the beginning of a new life. It is an OUTWARD sign of what God does INWARDLY in those who put their trust in Jesus.



Formally, baptism as an adult also brings you into communicant membership of our church. The Session of elders approves all new members on the basis of seeing evidence for God's work in their lives.

Read Acts 2:36-39. What two things were the people commanded to do?

What two things are promised to them?

To whom do these promises apply?

Acts 2:36-39 "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." 37 When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" 38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off-for all whom the Lord our God will call."

Read Romans 6:3-7. To be baptised is a sign of being connected to Jesus by faith. In what way are we connected to Jesus' **death** – what part of us dies?

In what way are we connected to Jesus' **life**?

Romans 6:3-7 Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. 5 If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. 6 For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin- 7 because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.

The Romans 6 passage talks about living a new life and no longer being a slave to sin. Colossians 3 goes into more detail about this new life.

What sort of new things should we desire? (3:1-2)

Why? (3:3-4)

What old things should we put to death? (3:5-11)

What new things should we be replacing them with (3:12-14)

Colossians 2:10-3:14 *“and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority. ...12 having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead...*

3:1 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. 3 For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

5 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. 7 You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. 8 But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. 9 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. 11 Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13 Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. NIV

These things don't come simply from our own strength. As we trust Jesus, he gives us his Spirit, who makes us a new person, giving us new desires and beginning his work in us to make us like himself. That's the foundation for our new life (2:10-12).

Baptism is a symbol of our dying to our old self, and living a new life for Christ.

Have YOU trusted Jesus with your life?

Have you experienced any of these changes in your life?

The Lord's Supper

We celebrate The Lord's Supper, or Communion, on the second Sunday of alternate months at all three services. We welcome all those who love Jesus to join us. Communicant membership formally qualifies people to participate in communion.



Church members eat some bread and drink some grape juice (representing wine) together. This is in obedience to Jesus who, at the Last Supper, commanded his disciples to repeat the meal in remembrance of Jesus.

At the meal, Jesus broke bread and said, "This is my body" (Matthew 26:26). It is a symbol of his broken body that was lifted up on the cross as an acceptable sacrifice for our sin. Jesus offered the disciples the cup of wine, and said, "This is my blood." It represents his blood that brings forgiveness of sins.

Matthew 26:26-28 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body." 27 Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. 28 This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

The Lord's Supper encourages us, and strengthens our faith in many ways:

We look back

The Lord's Supper is a reminder of what Jesus did in the past, a symbol of our present relationship with him and a promise of what he will do in the future. The Lord's Supper **looks back** to the death of Jesus Christ on the cross (Luke 22:19-20; 1 Cor. 11:26). We gratefully remember his sacrifice for us, and that our present life comes by his death.

1 Cor 11:23-26 The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, 24 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." 25 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."

We look up

The Lord's Supper also pictures our present relationship with Jesus Christ. The crucifixion has a continuing significance to all who have taken up a cross to follow Jesus. We continue to participate in his death (Rom. 6:4; Gal. 2:20; Col. 2:20) because we participate in his life (Gal. 2:20; Eph. 2:6; Col. 2:13; 3:1).

1 Cor 10:16 Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ?

With the Lord's Supper, we show that we *share* in Jesus Christ. We participate with him, commune with him, become united in him. (1 Cor. 10:16). The Lord's Supper helps us **look upward**, to Christ. The Lord's Supper reminds us that real life is found only in Jesus Christ, with him living in us, just as food and drink become one with us.

Knowing that we have Christ in us give us the strength and faith and power to live for him. The Lord's Supper helps us to know these things.

We look inward

When we are aware that Jesus lives in us, we also pause to think what kind of home we are giving him. We allow him to change our lives so that we live the

1 Cor 11:27-29 Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. 28 A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. 29 For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself.

way he wants us to. The Lord's Supper helps us **look inward**, to examine ourselves because of the great meaning in this ceremony (1 Cor. 11:28).

We look around

As we examine ourselves, we need to **look around**, to other people, to see whether we are treating one another in the way that Jesus commanded. If you are united with Christ and I am united with Christ, then we are united to each other, too. The Lord's Supper, by picturing our participation in Christ, also pictures our participation (other translations may say communion or sharing or fellowship) with each other (1 John 1:3, 7). The Lord's Supper pictures the fact that we are one body in Christ, one with each other, with responsibilities toward one another (1 Cor 10:17).

1 Cor 10:17 Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.

We look forward

The Lord's Supper also reminds us of the future, of Jesus' return. Jesus said he would not drink the fruit of the vine again until he came in the fullness of the kingdom (Matt. 26:29; Luke 22:18; Mark 14:25). Whenever we participate, we are reminded of Jesus' promise. Paul wrote that "For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death *until he comes*" (1 Cor. 11:26). The Lord's Supper helps us **look forward**.

1 Cor 11:26 For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Participating in the Lord's Supper, as we prayerfully and gratefully look back, upwards, inwards and around and forward, strengthens our souls to live for Jesus, just as physical food strengthens our bodies.

Notes and Questions: