

WHY WORSHIP?

PAST CONNECTIONS | LEADER'S GUIDE

1

The Lord's Supper | Matthew 26:17-30, Mark 14:12-26,
Luke 22:7-23, 1 Corinthians 11:17-26

Take a new look at a familiar account! Read the whole Biblical account of the Lord's Supper, recorded in four different books. Reread each of the verses as you take a closer look at each of them. Verse highlights are provided below. Suggested guiding thoughts are provided to curb thoughts toward desired goal answers. Support thorough discussion and make use of suggested further discussion topics as desired.

- M.t 26:19, Mk. 14:12,15-16, Lk. 22:8,12-13 | What preparations are made for worship services? How do preparations benefit worship?
 - **Verse Highlights** | The disciples went ahead to make preparations for this celebration.
 - **Guiding Thoughts** | This worship service, a celebration of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, was not a spur of the moment deal. It took thought and time to prepare the celebration. This form of worship was not just a box to cross off the the to-do list for the week. Worship ought not be a simple item on the to-do list for us either. There is much preparation that goes on to perform a worship service- the behind the scenes action if you will. Worshippers too ought to prepare for worship.
 - **Goal** | Behind the scenes: sermon written, liturgy and order of service selected, bulletins made, music prepped

and practiced, church cleaned, church decorated, altar service, etc.

Worshippers: prayer, meditation, Sunday-best attire, examination, etc.

- **Guiding Thoughts** | Preparations are not a have-to. They help to make worship a get-to, in turn making them a get-to as well. The Word of God tells us to worship in an orderly way. Preparations takes into account the sinful nature's impatient and easily distracted nature. Purposeful thought highlights importance and engages the mind in the upcoming task.
- **Goal** | Preparations provide order. Preparations keep worship flowing smoothly, keeping the focus on God, not various distractions. Preparations focus a believer's heart and mind on the importance and blessings belonging to worship. (Answers may vary beyond suggested goal).
- **Mk. 14:1, Lk. 22:14** | Consider Psalm 122:1. What blessings come from meeting together with believers for worship? How does this deepen connections to past believers?
 - **Verse Highlights** | Jesus and his disciples met and celebrated the feast together.
 - **Guiding Thoughts** | Neither Jesus nor his disciples celebrated the feast in solitude. There is great importance in worshipping together with fellow

believers. Connecting both spiritually and personally with fellow believers are immense blessings of public worship.

- **Goal** | Encouragement in the faith, spiritual support, personal relationships, public confession and absolution, confessing common faith, etc.
- **Guiding Thoughts** | Worshipping side by side with fellow believers reminds us we are not alone in our conviction. Worship services, rooted in the history of the Church of God, encourages us as we recall God's faithfulness to our past brothers and sisters in Christ. We are reminded that the family of God does not end at the back pew of our church or any church of the modern day. God's faithfulness to his people is nothing new or changing.
- **Goal** | We are reminded that we are connected by a shared faith. We are reminded that the plan of salvation God carried out through past believers- and for them- is the same plan of salvation that saves us. We are reminded that we are connected by the same faithful and unchanging God.
- **Mt. 26:26-28, Mk. 14:22-24, Lk. 22:17-20, 1 Cor. 11:23-25** | What does it mean to you that you hear the very words of God? Where else do you hear the very words of God during worship?

- **Verse Highlights** | Jesus said these words. (Very words spoken during the service of Word and Sacrament).
- **Guiding Thoughts** | All scripture is God-breathed. Every Word included in the Bible was purposely done so by the all-knowing God. There are specific recordings of God's direct words to his people. God specifically spoke these words, and he had them recorded as so for you that he might bless you through them.
- **Goal** | Personal answers will vary.
- **Guiding Thoughts** | God provides various biblical accounts that include his direct words. Each one serves as an encouragement to us as God talks to us through his written Word. Throughout worship services, God speaks to us through his Word as his own dearly loved children.
- **Goal** | | The blessing, the Lord's prayer, the lessons, hymns, prayers, etc.
- **Mt 26:28, Mk 14:24, 1 Cor. 11:26** | How does each part of the worship service serve as a log, adding light to the fire of salvation?
 - **Verse Highlights** | Of the covenant, poured out for you- points to Jesus' suffering and death on the cross.
 - **Guiding Thoughts** | The scarlet thread that runs through all of scripture refocuses us on the fact that the purpose of the Bible and all the accounts is to point us to Jesus.

Worship services too must point us to salvation. Each aspect of worship is to point to God. In doing so, these “logs” add fuel to the fire of salvation which burns brightly in a God-centered worship service.

- **Goal** | Each part of the service connects to God’s plan of salvation. Each aspect focuses worshippers on the sacrifice made for them- their need for it, the sacrifice itself and their response because of it.
- **Mt. 26:29, Mk. 14:25, Lk 22:16,18** | How does each worship service serve as a small taste of heaven?
 - **Verse Highlights** | Until you drink it anew in the kingdom of heaven.
 - **Guiding Thoughts** | Not only do worship services point to the faithfulness of God in the promises he has kept, they also point to the promises God will keep. Heaven will be the ultimate form of connection to the past as we are with Jesus and all the Old Testament and New Testament believers. God has promised that he has a place prepared for us in heaven. Each time we gather for worship we are reminded of this promise as we have a mini gathering of the great multitudes that will make up heaven.
 - **Goal** | Worship reminds us of the great Church of God that will make up heaven, it points us heavenward as we

look to join Jesus as God calls us home to him, we join in the singing of God's praises etc.

- **Mt. 26:30, Mk 14:26** | Why is it significant that worship services include prayers and songs as a response to God's Word? What does your response to God's faithfulness look like outside of a worship service?
 - **Verse Highlights** | They sang a hymn.
 - **Guiding Thoughts** | Take a peek at some of the years that your favorite or familiar hymns were written in. Consider that the psalms we use each worship service built the hymnbook of the Old Testament. Responding to God's word musically is an age old response. And as every generation adds their voice to the choir, God is praised. At their core, musical responses have not gone away. The responses remain the same because the Word of God remains the same, unchanged through all time. The use of prayers too has been present as a response to God ever since Adam and Eve talked with God in the garden of Eden.
 - **Goal** | Prayers and songs are significant because their timeless use as a response to God's Word reminds us of the unchanging nature of God's Word and his ever present and ever faithful presence in his plan of salvation.

- **Guiding Thoughts** | People in the Bible responded to God's Word by bursting forth with songs. They danced and brought offerings to the LORD. They lifted their prayers to God. We believers, of the same faith today, respond in similar ways. After all, it is the same unchanging, efficacious Word of God that was heard by believers of all time that reaches our ears now. We may not pen the *Magnificat*, yet our hearts and mouths offer songs of praise, our thoughts flood with prayers. Responding to God's Word has remained relatively unchanged at its core due to the never changing Word of God.
- **Goal** | Personal answers will vary.
- **Further Discussion** | Engage in a discussion based on what has changed (actions) about believers' responses and what has not (motivation, purpose).