

TIME AT THE TABLE

A GUIDE FOR IN-HOME GATHERINGS

MAUNDY THURSDAY is a special Communion gathering on the Thursday evening before Good Friday. This is a great opportunity to share in the Lord's Supper with a small community of family and friends as you prepare to celebrate Easter.

In the Bible, we read that followers of Jesus "devoted themselves...to the breaking of bread" (Acts 2:42). They often "broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts" (Acts 2:47). We read in other historical documents that the early church regularly gathered together in their homes to remember and celebrate the life, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. They would eat a meal together and, at some point, they would break bread and pass the cup, remembering the broken body of Christ and his shed blood.

We encourage you to celebrate Maundy Thursday in this way and to consider hosting an in-home celebration of the Lord's Supper that night. If you would like to host a Maundy Thursday celebration, the rest of this guide will help you prepare. Feel free to adapt it according to your needs and the needs of the group you host.

INVITE

We suggest inviting 8-12 people, but it's up to you to determine how many you can comfortably host in your home. Maundy Thursday is a great opportunity to help new people get connected. Consider making room for a few people who aren't part of a group yet.

The time and length of the gathering is up to you; just make sure to communicate the plan to everyone you invite. We suggest planning on enough time to hang out and eat dinner, leaving plenty of time for the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

We encourage groups with young children present to adapt the gathering so that the kids can participate in a meaningful way. What a great way to teach the younger generation! If you'd rather have your gathering be adults only, keep that in mind as you make invitations.

PREPARE

Pray over this special gathering as you prepare for it. Pray that God would use this time to draw everyone present closer to Jesus. Pray that it would also draw you closer to one another as believers.

Don't feel like you have to do everything on your own because you are hosting! Feel free to let others bring something to the meal. Just make sure that someone brings the bread and juice for communion!

The meal can be as fancy or as casual as you would like. We have groups that break out the steaks and fine dinnerware, and others who order pizza and eat on paper plates. The important part is the meaningful time you share celebrating what Jesus has done for us!

ENJOY

We recommend you celebrate the Lord's Supper after the meal. You, or someone else you ask, can lead the group into that time of communion. If you're not sure what to say or do, don't stress! You can follow these steps:

READ - Matthew 26:26-28

PRAY - A prayer of thanks for the life and sacrificial death of Jesus.

READ- 1 Corinthians 11:23-24

EAT - Eat the bread together, remembering his broken body.

READ - 1 Corinthians 11:25

DRINK - Drink the juice together, remembering his shed blood.

PRAY - A prayer of thanks for the resurrection of Jesus and the hope we have in him.

AFTER your time at the table

Follow up with those who attended your gathering to thank them for sharing in that time with the group. Ask if they have found a group to participate in. If they have not, invite them into the next group you participate in, or help them find another group to join.

If you have any questions about Maundy Thursday gatherings, or would like suggestions for who to invite to your group that night, contact Ryan Wiemelt at 217.222.2529 x115 or email: ryanw@madisonparkchurch.com

