



An Invitation to:
the **Table**

*You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
You have anointed my head with oil;
My cup overflows.*

*Surely goodness and lovingkindness
will follow me all the days of my life,
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.*

Psalm 23:5-6

week 07

welcome

An Invitation to Communion

When we come to the table of Christ, we are confronted by mystery — by difficult truths — for we sit at the table of a host who offers himself as the feast.

Jesus explained to the religious leaders: “Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day; for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever” (John 6:53-58).

This was no simple truth even for those who walked in the physical footsteps of Jesus. The scriptures tell us, “When many of his disciples heard it, they said, ‘This teaching is difficult; who can accept it?’” (John 6:60). Jesus reimagined the traditions of God’s people and marked his followers with a new practice at his table: a sharing of sacrificial love.

When we want a savior to rescue us from all suffering, we are handed broken bread. When we want a victor to give us the kingdoms of the world, we are offered a glass of wine. We are asked to embrace a love we could never deserve. We are called to surrender — to trust our belovedness and belonging at the table of Christ.

We are invited to the deepest of communion: to find ourselves abiding in the bread of life at the table of his people. We receive of his flesh and blood; then we, like him, are taken, blessed, broken, and given infinitely.

Meditation

We encourage you to start or end your days this week by spending a few slow, quiet moments reading this verse. Invite the Lord to speak to you anew each day through this scripture, and allow your heart and mind to rest in the faithfulness of his word.

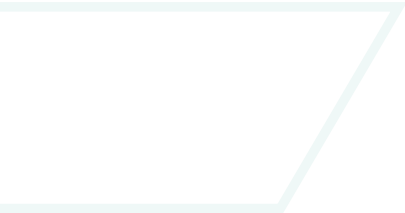
**“Jesus said to them,
‘I am the bread of life.
Whoever comes to me will
never be hungry,
and whoever believes in me
will never be thirsty.’”
John 6:35 (NRSV)**

the gospels

In the Word

As you contemplate the idea of communion this week, spend time reading each of the gospel accounts of Jesus' last supper:

- Matthew 26:26-30
- Mark 14:22-26
- Luke 22:14-23
- John 13:1-38



As you read, pay attention to the details that stand out to you. What brings this scene to life in your imagination? In turn, focus on each of the characters. What are they feeling? What choices do they face and make? What motivations might they have for their choices? Consider what truth each gospel account speaks to you about the communion we are invited into with Jesus and with his people. Listen prayerfully to anything the Lord might speak to you about your life, heart, and circumstances today in communion with him.

For Further Reading: Exodus 12:1-13,
1 Corinthians 11:23-26, Acts 2:43-47



In Your Journal

As you feel led, engage this prompt in your journal this week. If you are able, discuss the questions with your spouse or a trusted friend.

Spend time dwelling on the word communion this week. What does it mean for you to have communion with other people? What does it mean for you to have communion with Christ? What desires rise in your heart at the thought of communion? Do you experience any resistance to the idea of communion? As you feel led, write a prayer that expresses your desires and resistance to the Lord. If you are comfortable, sit in stillness before the Lord with your prayer for a minute or two.

At Your Table

Practice communion with family or friends around your table this week. Choose good bread and a drink everyone can enjoy together. Serve one another. Read one of the gospel accounts aloud together. Discuss what it means to be invited to communion with Christ. Ask each other what it means for Jesus to be the bread and wine. What does the practice of communion tell us about Jesus's heart for his people in community?

*May the Lord restore your soul
as you spend time at his table
this week.*

