

## At the Table with Jesus

September 10, 2017

Thank you so much for choosing to worship with us today. We are thrilled that you are here!

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The church has a sacred meal that has been provided by the Lord. It doesn't involve enough food or drink to keep a starving person from dying. Much less would it be enough to fill a hungry man's stomach. It is an experience — an experience of joy in the presence of God. It is also a family gathering time. The meal is not only an experience of God's joy but of his other children. People with separate houses, separate careers, separate temperaments come to the table of our Father, and his table lets us affirm that we are a family — brothers and sisters together in Christ.

Without getting lost in either the ancient or modern cultural settings for the defining meal of the family of God, we must learn to discern and experience its true nature.

We call the sharing of bread and wine by different names: Holy Communion, Lord's Supper, or Eucharist. Each name is taken from the Word of God and stresses a different facet of this multipurpose event. Calling it *Holy Communion* suggests that it is an act of intimacy in which we share both the fellowship of Jesus Christ and his spiritual body, the church. Referring to it as the *Lord's*

*Supper* affirms that it is hosted by the Lord Jesus Christ himself; he instituted it, assigned its meaning, and grants us the right to participate in it by his grace. Identifying it as the *Eucharist* reminds us that giving thanks to God for pursuing and saving us is an essential part of the meal. By these different names applied to it, we confess that no single term or line of sight can capture everything involved in this sacred event.

No matter whether you call it Eucharist, Lord's Supper, or Holy Communion, this meal hosted for us by Jesus isn't about grape juice versus wine or quarterly versus weekly observance. It is about the grace that has invited us into God's house and to his table. It is about our ability to recognize the ongoing presence of our Savior in one another. It is about a finished redemptive work at Calvary and an unfinished work of maturing and gentling, reassuring and refining our lives. And it is about proclaiming him to the world through this meal we eat with our Lord Jesus until he comes back and brings that unfinished work to completion.

Until then, this meal nourishes our spirits and keeps us alive.

(Borrowed from Rubel Shelly, 2000)

All Things for Christ,  
Michael