



Part 2 (Lesson 1)

Water Baptism, Communion & Worship

In this lesson we will examine the scriptural reasons as to why we practice certain things as a congregation. These ordinances and practices are important to each believer for reasons which we will learn in this lesson.

I. Water Baptism

In the most Evangelical Churches infant baptism is not practiced (although most Evangelical Churches do believe in dedicating babies to the Lord). Infant Baptism is not taught in Scripture. Baptism involves a decision by an individual after they have personally asked Jesus Christ into their life and repented of sin. The Christian is to be baptized in water in obedience to Jesus' commandment and as a testimony of what took place in their life when they accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior.

- A. In Acts 2:38 what are we commanded to do? **(Repent and be baptized in the Name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sin)**
- B. Although we are commanded to be baptized in water it is not water baptism that saves us. Only inviting Christ into our hearts can save us. Read Luke 23:39-43. How is this truth illustrated? **(The thief on the cross beside Jesus was saved by putting his faith in Jesus though he obviously was not baptized in water)**
- C. In Romans 6:3-6 we find a guide to the symbolic meaning of water baptism. What do you think the symbolism is? **(Baptism is a picture of burial. When we in faith turn to Jesus we die to our old life. Baptism pictures that we are dead to the old life and resurrected unto a new life in Christ.)**

D. The word baptize means “to dip” or “to immerse” and therefore would indicate we should be immersed in water rather than merely sprinkled with water when we are baptized. How does Acts 8:35-39 and Matthew 3:13-16 illustrate this truth?

(In both cases we see that people went down into a river or body of water to be baptized. This would not be necessary if they were merely sprinkled with water.)

*Note – The full significance of water baptism is difficult for us to see and understand in America. Water baptism is like signing our name on the dotted line. **It is, to the world, the official declaration that we are a follower of Jesus Christ.** In America we usually celebrate with the individual being baptized. There are usually no difficult consequences for the person as a result of their being baptized. In many other nations however, being baptized as a Christian may cost the individual their job, their family, or even their life. When we remember this we can begin to understand the significance of being baptized publicly in water after we come to know Jesus Christ as our Savior.*

II. Communion - (The Lord's Supper)

A. In Matthew 26:26-28 what did Jesus say about the bread and the cup they were partaking of together? **(He said that the bread was His body (a representation of His body) and the cup was His blood that was shed for us (a representation of His blood))**

B. Read 1 Corinthians 11:23-33.

1. What is the reason for eating the bread and drinking the cup? **(We proclaim the Lord's death to one another in this way, remembering the sacrifice of Jesus)**
2. What does the bread represent? **(The broken body of Jesus)**
3. What does the cup of juice represent? **(The shed blood of Jesus)**
4. What should we do before receiving communion? **(Examine our hearts)**
5. What kinds of things should not be in our hearts as we take communion? **(Bitterness, anger and judgments against other Christians) (Sin that we have not repented of)**

(In most cases, a person does not need to be a member of a particular church to take communion but does need to be a part of the body of Christ. We take communion together to remember Jesus' suffering for us on the cross. Communion can be taken in different places in different ways and should not just be a ritual, but should be a very meaningful time.)

It should be noted that Evangelical Churches do not believe in "transubstantiation", the belief that at the time of communion (or the celebration of the Eucharist) the bread literally becomes the body of Christ and the wine (or juice) literally becomes the blood of Christ. When Jesus spoke of eating His body and drinking His blood in John 6:53-58 He was speaking of something in the spiritual realm. This is clear from John 6:63 where He says "the words that I have spoken to you are spirit, and are life". Certainly the bread is a symbol and reminder to us of the body of Christ but it is just bread. In the same way the juice is just a symbol and reminder to us of the shed blood of Christ. Communion is a spiritual experience and what is happening in our heart and mind between us and God as we partake of the elements is the important thing.

III. Worship and Praise

When we come together in God's house, it is very important that we bring our praise and worship to give to the Lord. We do this by singing and speaking praises to Him, by lifting our hands, by giving offerings, by acts of service and by meditating on who God is.

- A. How should we praise God? (Psalm 150) **(Inside the church and outside in God's creation) (Honoring God for His mighty deeds and excellent greatness) (With all types of instruments) (With dancing) (Loudly at times)**
- B. What does 1 Timothy 2:8 say we should do? **(Lift up our hands unto God) (In unity)**
- C. What does Psalm 22:3 tell us about praise? **(God is enthroned upon our praises)**

D. What is God worthy of and why is He worthy of it? (Revelation 4:11)

(God is worthy to receive glory, honor and power because He created all things)

To worship and praise God we sing and say who He is (e.g. – holy, righteous, all-mighty, all-knowing, etc.) and what He has done (e.g. – He saved us, has given us life, protects us, created the world, etc.). Also, in worship and praise we thank the Lord and shower love upon Him. To help you in worship and praise, take a separate sheet of paper or use the back of this sheet and list as many things as you can about Who God is and about what He has done. (Also, note how Romans 1:20 shows us something that can enhance our ability to worship God.)

IV. Foot Washing

A. In John 13:5-17 what did Jesus do? **(He clothed Himself as a servant and He washed the feet of His disciples)**

B. Why do you think He did this? (Also read Luke 22:24-27) **(He was teaching them by example to humbly love and serve one another. The greater will serve the lesser.)**

C. He said we should do as we saw Him do. What do you think He was meaning at this point? **(In general terms to humble ourselves and to serve one another. Following His example of literally washing the feet of others is not mandatory but is a good thing)**

Foot washing is not considered a standard ordinance in most Evangelical churches and is not literally practiced in most. Many believe that we fulfill Jesus' instructions to wash one another's feet by serving one in practical ways. Though foot washing does not have to be practiced literally, it can be literally practiced and has great value and meaning when the act is led by the Spirit of God. One great example of this value was observed late in the 20th Century at a "Promise Keepers" meeting for pastors all across America. During this meeting white pastors literally washed the feet of black pastors on stage in front of thousands of other pastors. The results were tremendous and the moment impacted hearts in a powerful way.