

Second Finger—Bread and Wine

Read Matthew 26:26–28.

A symbol is an object that makes us think of something else. Jesus gave us two symbols the night he shared this special meal with his disciples to help us remember his life, death, and resurrection. Jesus tells us that the bread is his body and the cup is his blood. When we take communion, the bread reminds us of Jesus' body and the cup represents Jesus' blood. Jesus offered his body and blood for us. When we eat the bread and drink the cup we remember and give thanks for the gift of God's love and grace in Jesus Christ.

Just as we need to eat physical food regularly to keep physically healthy, we need to have the symbols of our faith regularly to remain spiritually healthy.

Third Finger—Weekly Practice

Read Acts 2:42–47.

This passage tells us that the early followers of Jesus gathered frequently, perhaps even daily, to worship and have fellowship together. Included in this practice was the breaking of bread. Over the years, Christians began to gather on the Lord's Day, or Sunday, to remember the event of the resurrection. They set this day aside for worship and included a communion service.

Communion reminds us of who we are. We are God's children. When we take communion we remember Christ and how he gave his life for us. It is a time for us to ask God's forgiveness for those things we have done which are not right. Also, communion is a sign to us of God's forgiveness; and in response to God's grace we renew our promise to be followers of Christ and serve as Christ served.

Fourth Finger—Open Communion

Read 1 Corinthians 10:16–17.

Paul tells us that we are one body. In another place he says there is one body, one faith, one Lord. The early founders of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) believed that there should be no divisions among Christians. They chose to say this clearly by declaring that the communion table should be open to all people. All who believe in Christ should be allowed to share together at the Lord's table.

Communion gives us the opportunity to minister to one another. In the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), elders and deacons participate with clergy at the table, or prepare the Lord's supper themselves. We believe it is not necessary for a minister to be present to observe the Lord's supper. God has called us to serve each other. Some churches invite all members to an altar rail for communion, to receive the symbols from the minister or priest. In the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), we usually pass the symbols to each other. When we pass the bread and cup, each of us becomes a minister to another person. In response to God's love we know in Christ, we can offer gifts of love, concern, forgiveness, and support to others.

Fifth Finger—Proclamation

Read 1 Corinthians 11:26.

The Lord's supper reminds us of the event of Jesus' death. In proclaiming or telling of his life, death, and resurrection, we share the news of hope, love, and forgiveness God has given us in Christ. We also proclaim Christ's living presence with us as we work in partnership with the risen Christ. Christians continue to work with the risen Christ until that time when Christ comes again to complete his work to bring the fulfillment of the reign of God on earth.