

An Agape Meal

An Introduction

The Love Feast, or Agape Meal, is a Christian fellowship meal recalling the meals Jesus shared with disciples during his ministry and expressing the koinonia (community, sharing, fellowship) enjoyed by the family of Christ. It is not the same as Holy Communion or the Eucharist.

The Love Feast has often been held on occasions when the celebration of the Lord's Supper would be inappropriate—where there is no one present authorized to administer the Sacrament, when persons of different denominations are present who do not feel free to take Holy Communion together, when there is a desire for a service more informal and spontaneous than the communion ritual, or at a full meal or some other setting to which it would be difficult to adapt the Lord's Supper.

One of the advantages of the Love Feast is that any Christian may conduct it. Congregational participation and leadership are usually extensive and important, especially involving children.

From Discipleship Ministries, the United Methodist Church
<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/the-love-feast>



CALL TO THE LOVE FEAST (AGAPE MEAL)

Speaker I: Out of darkness came light

All: And the power of God was revealed
in the running wave and the flowing air,
in the quiet earth and the shining stars.

Speaker I: Out of the dust came life;

All: And the image of God was revealed
in the human face and the gentle heart,
in the warmth of flesh and the depth of soul

Speaker I: Out of justice came freedom;

All: And the wisdom of God was revealed
in the need to grow and the will to love,
in the chance to know and the power to choose.

Speaker I: And God looked at the creation,

All: And Behold, it was very good.

SCRIPTURE: PS 34:1

'I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth.'

PRAYER OF ADORATION

All: I will keep on thanking God
With constant words of prayer.
I will glory in the living God:
The humble will hear and be glad.

Speaker I: Let us pray.

Living God, our loving parent; you cherish your creation and We praise you
With earth, air, water, fire: in our element as your children, We praise you..
With our lips, with our lives, in all our diversity, each one made in your image, We praise you.
Because, in Jesus, you came to share our human lives, our sorrow and joy, We praise you.
Because your Spirit is at work today: encouraging, enabling, surprising us, We praise you.
Poor as we are, you give us hope:
Salt of the earth, you give us meaning and purpose and We praise you.

All: Amen.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (cf. Mark 9.50)

Reader: Salt is good, but if salt has lost its saltiness, how can you season it?

All: Giving God, you blessed us with saltiness,
But we became bland.

Reader: You trusted us with your Word,

All: But we did not keep it.

Reader: You lit a flame in our midst,

All: But we hid it under formality,
Smothered it with our fears.

Reader: God, in your mercy:

All: Forgive us.

(silence)

Reader: Forgiving God, we believe that you have called us

All: To be salt and light;

Reader: That you offer us time and space and strength

All: To begin again.

(silence)

Reader: Giving and forgiving God,

All. We thank you.

Reader: Have salt in yourself and be at peace with one another. AMEN

GIVING THANKS FOR THE WEEK

People are invited to call out single words or brief phrases of thanks for something that happened during the week. A simple response may be used such as "Generous God, we thank you."

SCRIPTURE: PSALM 34:8

'O taste and see that the Lord is good; happy are they who take refuge in him'.

INTRODUCTION TO SHARING THE FEAST

Reader: We are all invited to the common table to share in an Agape Feast. At this table we come as brothers and sisters in the Holy Family of God. Taste and see that God is good.

The feast can be a loaf of bread (or oatcakes, or a sweet bread) and a chalice of wine (or cider, or grape juice). The bread and the wine are passed to one another. Each person serving the individual next to him or her.

PRAYER

(at the conclusion of each one drinking and eating)

Reader: As we share this bread, as we pour out this water, we thank you, God, for our daily bread for the food which delights and nourishes us and for the companionship that sustains us.

We thank you, too, for wine (or “drink”) to quench our thirst and for the Living Water with which you surprise and enrich and transform our lives.

We give thanks for this feast at which we can share, a foretaste of the Holy Realm.

Amen.

Followed by the Lord’s Prayer.

BLESSING

Reader: Giving God,
bless all who have gathered round this table
May we know the fullness of your presence
at every meal and in all our sharing.

All: Amen.

Liturgy adapted from the SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER USA ECUMENICAL / INTERFAITH NETWORK

<https://www.ofsusaecumenicalinterfaith.org/prayer-resources>

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Image: Imogen Nay