

Icebreaker:

What are some things you have collected on your travels or from important events that are symbols or remembrances of something meaningful for you or your family?

Read: 1 Corinthians 11:17-26; 12:12-13.

Discuss:

1. 1 Corinthians 11 points out the division that was already occurring in the early church. Where do you see division in our churches today? What might we do to help bring unity in such divisive times?
2. When we baptize individuals, we as a congregation are asked whether we will: tell these new disciples the good news of the gospel; help them know all that Christ commands; support them as needed; and, by our fellowship, strengthen their ties to the church? In what ways are we as a church doing these things? In what ways are you as an individual doing them?
3. Were you baptized as an infant or an adult? What is the significance of each?
4. For many Christians, baptism is an outward sign of an inward decision. So what does baptism mean to you?
5. When you take communion, what do you think of when you hold the bread and the cup before you eat and drink? What do these elements mean to you?
6. In the Early Church, the Lord's Supper was often served in people's homes. We don't tend to do that today, but do you still see a connection between hospitality and communion? In what ways do you see communion connecting with how you live daily?

As your group closes, please keep the following prayer requests in mind:

- > Prayers of healing for Wanda Baker.
- > We celebrate with Betsy and Michal Howden in the birth of their grandson Graham Harrison.
- > Prayers of comfort for Kelly and Jim Wendt and family in the death of Kelly's sister.

Reminders for your group:

> We need volunteers for ZPC's Fall Celebration on October 30...especially families to decorate their cars and participate in trunk or treat! Go to zpc.org for more information.

Leader's Notes:

While some churches celebrate several sacraments, we celebrate two—communion and baptism. We receive guidance on the sacraments in the Bible, especially from Paul in 1 Corinthians. God tells us that the sacraments are to be both communal and personal. We are to share our baptism when the church is gathered and to take communion together as the church. Also, our own baptism and when we take communion is very personal because our faith is personal. As we remind each other of the importance of the sacraments, may we remember that God shows grace for each of us and for the whole body of Christ in these meaningful, sacred moments.

[Question 1] The church in Corinth saw division as told in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34, in that some were getting drunk, while others remained hungry as some went ahead and ate without waiting. We have experienced division in our own churches too. Even today, we find division on cultural hot topics. As a leader, please steer clear of a discussion on political hot topics, but have an awareness that we often disagree even as faithful Christians.

[Question 2] Leaders please remind your groups that this quote is from the question that the congregation answers when we have a baptism. So how are we as a church doing in helping kids and adults to know the good news, follow Jesus' commands, and to strengthen fellowship? How are you personally doing in this call?

[Question 3] Encourage your group members to share their baptism experience. For some, it may have been very meaningful. For others, who were baptized as infants, they won't remember. Ask why both baptism for infants and adults is important. For infants, it is the realization that God is taking the first step, the initiative in our faith. The parents express their faith and are in effect asking God's great blessing upon their children. God calls children to express faith later when they are able. For adults, it is an affirmation that you are repenting, and turning your face toward God and expressing your faith in him.

[Question 4] Baptism is personal. Baptism is also a celebration of God's grace. It is a sign and symbol of participating in the death and resurrection of Christ. It is a public affirmation of faith in Christ. It is a joining together with the body of Christ, the church.

[Question 5] The bread represents the body of Christ, broken for you. The cup represents the blood of Christ, spilled for you. Another way to celebrate the meaning of communion is past, present, future. Past – what Jesus did for us on the cross and his initiating the first Lord's Supper with his disciples. Present – we get to share this meal and remember Jesus right now with the church. Future – we look forward to a heavenly feast with God and all others who trust in him someday!

[Question 6] When we take communion there is an invitation from the Lord to share in his supper and it is also a reminder of the sacrifice Christ made for us. This is similar to when we open our homes and eat with others...we invite them and there is a sense of sacrifice as we share what we have. Additionally, when we eat, we are reenacting the Lord's Supper in this everyday, normal ritual and reminds us that we need to be living a life full of sacrifice and also thanksgiving (which is what eucharisteo means in Greek).