

## **Administering Communion**

**By Bill Scheidler**

### **I. What guidelines should govern the practice of communion in the local church?**

- A. The right foundation should be laid in the congregation (See notes titled *Communion* available on site).

This foundation should include:

1. Occasional teaching on communion.
  2. Frequent exhortations during the celebration of communion itself.
  3. The service attendants being well schooled on their responsibilities and procedures.
    - a. The service attendants should always pass the bread first down row followed by the cups (Note: This is a practical consideration because it is easier to maneuver the next move with bread in ones hand than the cup).
    - b. The service attendants should respond immediately when they see the leadership move the service to this experience.
- B. Distribution should be made while one or more of the following take place:
1. The leader gives a scripture exhortation (Common passages include: I Corinthians 11:23-26; Matthew 26:26-30).
  2. Special music is sung.
  3. The congregation sings.
  4. Special music is played.
- C. Prayer should be offered as blessing over each of the elements before they are partaken.
- D. The congregation should partake together, following Jesus' pattern of the bread first and the cup second. The phrase "Let us eat together" or "Let us drink together" will signal to the congregation when to partake.
- E. Communion should be followed by another song and some worship led by the worship leader.
- F. Collection of cups should be done in an orderly way while the congregation sings.

## **II. What is a possible variation on this theme?**

### **The Bread Breaking Service**

1. A large piece of bread is distributed to all.
2. People are encouraged to share a piece of their bread with others.
3. At the same time they are encouraged to give a word of encouragement to the other person.
4. They are also encouraged to mend any strained relationships.
5. Ample time is given for people to circulate freely.
6. The congregation is reassembled for the distribution of the cup.
7. The congregation partakes of the cup focusing on their relationship to God.

## **III. What are some additional communion considerations?**

### **A. The Age of the Children**

Parents should determine when it is proper for their own children to partake of communion. They should give their children some private instruction as to the meaning of what is taking place. The main thing is that parents ensure that their children do not play with the bread and the juice and cause a distraction to others. It is best when the children are very young for the parents to administer the bread and the cup to their children at the appropriate times.

### **B. The Control of the Children**

Again, parents need to be in control of their children during this time to avoid distraction. Parents need to be sure that their children understand that this is a time to be under control.

### **C. Communion Ministry to the Shut-ins**

The Table of the Lord is a significant part of our experience as believers. Pastors and leaders should consider taking communion to those who, by virtue of causes beyond their control, cannot participate in communion in the corporate assembly for a long season of time.

## **IV. What are the specific procedures at City Life Church?**

#### A. Time in Service

Normally the Communion time will take place sometime during the worship portion of the service. Always check with the Senior Pastor or the elder in charge prior to the service for the exact time. This must be coordinated with the worship team.

#### B. Announcing Communion

1. Go to the pulpit with microphone in hand (or receive it from the worship leader as you near the pulpit).
2. Ask the ushers to come to distribute the elements to the congregation.
3. Invite the congregation to be seated during the distribution.
4. Share an exhortation while the elements are being distributed (Note: In the event of no exhortation the worship team may continue with an appropriate song or a special number may be sung).

#### C. The Exhortation

1. The exhortation should be brief. It should only take as long as it takes to distribute the elements.
2. The exhortation should focus on our relationship to the Lord and tie into other communion scriptures.
3. Keep an eye on the ushers to see how the distribution is going.
4. At some point before partaking, it is good to read I Corinthians 11:23-26.
5. Ask the congregation "Is there anyone who has not been served the communion?"

#### D. The Partaking

Have the people stand at this point.

1. Always start with the bread and focus on the broken body of our Lord.
  - a. Hold the bread up in your hand.
  - b. Pray in relation to the bread.
  - c. Invite the people to partake together, "Let us eat together."
  - d. Partake of the bread with the congregation.
2. Proceed to the cup.

- a. Hold up the cup in your hand.
- b. Pray in relation to the cup.
- c. Invite the people to drink together, "Let us drink together."
- d. Drink the cup with the congregation.

E. The Conclusion

1. Invite the people to thank the Lord for His goodness.
2. Turn the microphone back to the worship leader for another song.
3. Exit the platform.
4. The ushers will collect the cups as the song is being sung.