

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 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—when we cannot gather, 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. We encourage the participation of the whole household.

GATHERING

Psalm 34:1

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

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.

Living God, our loving Father; you cherish your creation and we praise you.

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, transforming us, we praise you.

Poor as we are, you give us hope:

Light of the world, you give us meaning and purpose and we praise you.

Amen.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of mercy,

we acknowledge that we are all sinners.

**We turn from the wrong that we have thought and said and done,
and are mindful of all that we have failed to do.**

For the sake of Jesus, who died for us,

forgive us for all that is past,

and help us to live each day

in the light of Christ our Lord. Amen.

May God our Father forgive us our sins
and bring us to the eternal joy of his kingdom,
where dust and ashes have no dominion. **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."

INTRODUCTION TO SHARING THE FEAST

Psalm 34:8

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

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 God's family. Taste and see that God is good.

The feast can be a loaf of bread and a chalice of wine (or cider, or grapejuice), or any other type of meal that is meaningful to you. The bread and the wine are passed to one another, each person serving the individual next to him or her. You may eat and drink on your own and hold others in our community in your thoughts and prayers as you do so.

PRAYERS

(at the conclusion of everyone drinking and eating)

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 drinks to quench our thirst and for the Living Water with which you fill and enrich and transform our lives.

We give thanks for this feast at which we can share, a foretaste of the Kingdom of God.
Amen.

We lift up to you today, Lord, all the needs and pains of our world.

[spend some time in quiet or shared prayer]

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come, your will be done

On earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.
For the Kingdom, the power and the glory are yours.
Now and for ever. Amen.

BLESSING

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.
Amen.

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

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

and from Discipleship Ministries, the United Methodist Church

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/the-love-feas>CALL TO THE LOVE FEAST (AGAPE MEAL)