

## Communion Devotions A Guide

### The Goal of Communion Devotions:

1 Corinthians 11:27-29 (ESV) - "Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself."

In 1 Corinthians, Paul charges a church that had become too casual in its practices of communion, using the feast as an occasion for getting drunk and for the wealthy to feast before the poor had arrived. To answer this, Paul charges them to take the meal from a posture of self-examination and discern "the body," a wordplay alluding both to the body of Christ and to the body of the church. In taking communion, we should both look up to Christ and towards each other as the body of Christ.

Our devotional practice is a space to encourage this kind of self-examination and aid in discerning the body of Christ (in both of the implications of that phrase).

### Guiding principles for our communion devotions:

These guidelines are meant to help bring consistent theological direction and focus to our shared time. Consider both common traps to avoid falling into and healthy practices to pursue as you develop your devotions.

#### Things to avoid

1. **Don't preach** - These devotions aren't second sermons. The practice itself is formative beyond our words to explain it. Keep it simple, and keep the practice at the center.
2. **Don't get sidetracked** - Don't chase rabbits, and avoid long stories and paths that take too long to explain. Simpler is better.
3. **Don't forget the diversity of the audience** - All ages are in the room, and there are both non-believers and believers present. Don't use stories or make references that aren't appropriate to say in front of small children.

#### Things to pursue

1. **Be brief** - Aim for 2-4 minutes for the devotion. Follow the "Rule of 1's": Give one verse reference, use at most one brief illustration, and make one point. Remember, reading a verse and offering a short prayer can be very appropriate and effective.
2. **Be Christ-centered** - Focus on the Bible not an illustration. Use the references listed below for ideas to consider in Scripture.
3. **Be Church-centered** - Communion is not a private, devotional affair. It is a communal experience, as we come as a church to the Lord's table to dine with Him as the bride. Help us consider one another as we consider Jesus together.

### Resources:

1. [Here](#) is a copy of John Piper's **50 Reasons Why Jesus Came to Die**. Each chapter has a short reflection on one dimension of the cross, with verses that demonstrate that idea. Any chapter can offer fodder for your own reflection, and if you wanted to go through the book systematically for your next 50 devotions, the church would likely be well-served.
2. [Here](#) is an example of a church that largely organized Piper's structure into a year's worth of communion texts. Again, you could use each of these texts and titles as space for your own devotion, or simply read one of these texts and offer a prayer
3. [Here](#) is a short blog post that has 12 different ideas to reflect on about communion. Any one of these ideas could serve the church well in a short reading and devotion.