

Chapter 3

THE LORD'S SUPPER

A. General Directions

5600. The Lord's Supper shall be observed in each local Wesleyan church at least once each three months (cf. 293; 725:6).

5605. It is expected that Wesleyan ministers shall carefully admonish the people that only those who are in right relations with God and with their neighbors should come to the Lord's table, and that others should come only if in so doing they are expressing repentance and seeking forgiveness.

5610. Only unfermented grape juice shall be used in observing the Lord's Supper.

5611. The officiating minister may enlist the assistance of other ministers, persons preparing for the ministry or laypersons for the distribution of the elements.

B. Order of the Lord's Supper—as Part of a Service

5615. *(The elements of the Lord's Supper shall be placed upon a table and covered with a white linen cloth. The minister shall read a Scripture lesson, such as one of the following: Isa. 53; Matt. 26:26-29; Luke 22:14-20; Rom. 5:1-2, 6-12, 18-21; 1 Cor. 10:16-17; 11:23-29; Eph. 1:3-12; 2:1-10, 12-22; Heb. 9:11-17, 22-28; 1 Peter 1:18-23; 2:21-25.)*

(Then the congregation shall sing a hymn, such as one of the following: "Alas! and Did My Saviour Bleed," "Man of Sorrows, What a Name," "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross," "Arise, My Soul, Arise," "My Faith Looks Up to Thee," "Rock of Ages," "There Is a Fountain Filled with Blood.")

(Then the minister may preach a sermon on some phase of the Lord's Supper. Afterwards the congregation may sing another hymn such as one of those listed above. Then the minister shall direct the people as to the plan for distribution of the elements of the Supper, either directing them to come and kneel at the altar or to be served while seated, in either instance using this invitation:)

You who are walking in fellowship with God, and are in love and harmony with your neighbors; and you who do truly and earnestly repent of your sin and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from this time in His holy ways, draw near with faith, and take

this holy sacrament to your comfort; and meekly make your humble confession to Almighty God.

(Then the minister shall remove the cloth, folding it neatly, and laying it to one side. Then the minister shall pray the prayer of consecration:)

O God of grace and mercy, we thank You that You ever loved us and provided for our redemption. We thank You for Your Son who died to save us, and for Your Spirit who invites us to draw near. Guide us now as we commemorate the suffering of our Lord. Help us to remember the cost of our salvation. Help us to commune with You and with each other. And so consecrate the bread and wine which are here prepared, that as we partake of them we may receive the spiritual benefits of Christ's broken body and shed blood. In His name we pray. Amen.

(Then the minister shall first partake of the bread, and then distribute it to the people, saying:)

The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for you, preserve your soul and body unto everlasting life. Take and eat this remembering that Christ died for you, and feed on Him in your heart, by faith, with thanksgiving.

(Then the minister shall partake of the wine, and then distribute it to the people, saying:)

The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for you, preserve your soul and body unto everlasting life. Drink this remembering that Christ's blood was shed for you, and be thankful.

(After all have partaken, let that which remains of the consecrated elements be returned to the table, and covered with the white linen cloth. Then let the minister pronounce the benediction:)

May the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord; and the blessings of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always. Amen.

C. Order of the Lord's Supper—as an Entire Service

5635. *(The elements of the Lord's Supper shall be placed upon a table and covered with a white linen cloth. The minister shall address the congregation saying:)*

Call to Worship

The Lord Jesus himself instituted the holy sacrament we call the Lord's Supper, giving it to the disciples as a means of remembering Him until He

comes again, and as a seal of the new covenant between God and man. This service is therefore a time of special sacredness and we can only be properly prepared by giving our hearts and minds to reverent worship, and by being freed of all things contrary to the divine nature and purpose. Therefore let us bow in a period of silent prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to search our hearts and to bring us into conformity with the holiness of the God we serve.

(The minister shall allow sufficient time for each person to prepare for the service, and then shall pray:)

Invocation

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are opened, all desires known and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts, through the presence of the Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love You, and worthily magnify Your holy name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hymns

(Then the congregation shall sing a hymn, such as one of the following: "Alas! and Did My Saviour Bleed," "Man of Sorrows, What a Name," "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross," "Arise, My Soul, Arise," "My Faith Looks Up to Thee," "Rock of Ages," "There Is a Fountain Filled with Blood.")

Scripture Readings

(Then the minister shall read a Scripture lesson, such as one of the following: Isa. 53; Matt. 26:26-29; Luke 22:14-20; Rom. 5:1-2, 6-12, 18-21; 1 Cor. 10:16-17; 11:23-29; Eph. 1:3-12; 2:1-10, 12-22; Heb. 9:11-17, 22-28; 1 Peter 1:18-23; 2:21-25.)

Prayer

(Then the minister shall pray an extemporaneous prayer or use the following:)

Almighty God, father of our Lord Jesus Christ, maker of all things, judge of all persons, we acknowledge that in Your sight all our righteous acts are like filthy rags. Outside of Christ we are sinners, and it is only through His atonement that we are forgiven and cleansed. Whatever there is of purity and virtue in our hearts or in our lives is the product of Your grace. We come today to remember once again how Christ obtained our salvation.

And as we do, we ask that the Holy Spirit shall search our hearts. If we have committed any act which is displeasing to You, or neglected any duty which would have honored You, reveal it and forgive, we pray. Or if there is any tendency to disobedience, to the love of the world, or to the exaltation of self, reveal it and purge it from our hearts, we pray. You have told us that if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. Our hope, our trust, our righteousness are in Him alone. Have mercy upon us for His sake, and grant that we may serve and please You in newness of life and purity of heart, world without end, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sermon, Hymn, Instructions

(Then the minister may preach a sermon on some phase of the Lord's Supper. Afterwards the congregation may sing another hymn such as one of those listed above. Then the minister shall direct the people as to the plan for distribution of the elements of the Supper, either directing them to come and kneel at the altar or to be served while seated, in either instance using this invitation:)

Invitation

You who are walking in fellowship with God, and are in love and harmony with your neighbors; and you who do truly and earnestly repent of your sin and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from this time in His holy ways, draw near with faith, and take this holy sacrament to your comfort; and meekly (kneeling) make your humble confession to Almighty God.

(When all are in place, the minister shall remove the cloth, folding it neatly, and laying it to one side. Then the minister shall pray the prayer of consecration:)

Consecration of Bread and Wine

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who in mercy gave Your only Son, Jesus Christ, to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption: accept our praise, we beseech You. We thank You for Your love, for the gift of Your Son, for the sacrifice He made in our behalf, for the forgiveness of our sins and the cleansing of our hearts, for the present witness of Your Holy Spirit to our hearts that we are Your children. Grant that, as we receive this bread and wine, in memory of Christ's death and suffering, in communion with You and

with Your children, we may be made partakers of His body and blood; who, on the night He was betrayed, took bread,

(Here the minister may take the plate of bread in hand.)

and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you: do this in memory of me. In the same way, after supper He took the cup,

(Here the minister may take in hand the vessel from which the wine is to be poured, or the tray of individual cups.)

and gave it to them, saying, Drink from it, all of you, for this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many, for the forgiveness of sins; do this, whenever you drink it, in memory of me. Amen.

Distribution of Bread and Wine

(Then the minister shall direct the distribution of the elements, either first kneeling at the table and partaking, then serving others who may be assisting, and then serving the people; or directing first the distribution of the bread with all holding their portion until the time for simultaneous participation, and then the distribution of the wine in the same manner.)

(In either instance, either before or during the distribution, or immediately before the simultaneous partaking of the bread, the following shall be read:)

The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for you, preserve your soul and body unto everlasting life. Take and eat this remembering that Christ died for you, and feed on Him in your heart, by faith, with thanksgiving.

(And in like manner, either before or during the distribution, or immediately before the simultaneous partaking of the wine, the following shall be read:)

The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for you, preserve your soul and body unto everlasting life. Drink this remembering that Christ's blood was shed for you, and be thankful.

(After all have partaken, let that which remains of the consecrated elements be returned to the table, and covered with the white linen cloth. Then let the minister and congregation join in praying:)

Lord's Prayer

Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead

us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: for Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Benediction

(Then the minister shall conclude the service with the benediction:)

May the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord; and the blessings of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. Amen.