

A Service of the Breaking of Bread

Introduction

(Gather your family together, whether it's a physical gathering or one enabled by the computer. This is a service that reminds us that we are not alone.)

Read

Given our current situation, Pastor is trying to make Maundy Thursday a meaningful experience. Pastor thought of a hero of his, Athanasius, who was exiled for defending the Nicene Creed in the 4th century. He was disappointed because he was unable to be there for their Easter celebration with them. Below is how he got through this difficult time.

2. While I then committed all my affairs to God, I was anxious to celebrate the feast with you, not taking into account the distance between us. For although place separates us, yet the Lord the Giver of the feast, and Who is Himself our feast, Who is also the Bestower of the Spirit, brings us together in mind, in harmony, and in the bond of peace. For when we mind and think the same things, and offer up the same prayers on behalf of each other, no place can separate us, but the Lord gathers and unites us together. For if He promises, that "when two or three are gathered together in His name, He is in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:2) It is plain that being in the midst of those who in every place are gathered together, He unites them, and receives the prayers of all of them, as if they were near, and listens to all of them, as they cry out the same Amen. I have borne affliction like this, and all those trials which I mentioned, my brethren, when I wrote to you. (Athanasius' 10th letter)

This helps us understand that though we are isolated, we are always connected to one another in Christ. So, let us break bread together and offer up prayers to God together not just with those in this house but everywhere around the world.

Read: Luke 22:14-16

¹⁴When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. ¹⁵And he said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. ¹⁶For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God."

Prayer

O Lord, bless this gathering this evening, that as we break bread together in prayer that we are united in faith with the Body of Christ. For like Your Son, we have desired to break bread together so we may laugh, cry and learn with each other, focusing on the blessings we do have and look forward to the blessing You will give us in the future. Amen.

Part 1: Video

(Watch the video Pastor has provided for this serve of the breaking of the bread. You can access it on FB, YouTube, or St. Paul's website: stpaulseden.com.)

Part 2: The Breaking of the bread

(Bread is placed before the leader of this service. The type of bread should be one that is special to those who gather, the important thing is that everyone find enjoyment in the selection. It also makes sense to have a salad at this part of the meal as well.)

The Leader shall read: Acts 4:46-47

⁴⁶Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

The Leader shall pray:

Lord, as you gathered the new church together in the wake of the Day of Pentecost, You now gather us together. We gather at a time where the whole church should not and cannot gather physically. As we break this bread together, may we know that Your body cannot be broken; may we know that we are still connected to all of the others who believe in You. So, we thank You that we do not break this bread only with those sitting around this table, but we also break it with Your Church around the world and in heaven. So, we ask that You bless this bread and all of the bread broken everywhere that we may all know we are never alone. Amen.

(At this time the bread and salad are shared with all of those at the table. The leader should encourage everyone around the table to remember those they have worshiped with in the past. The stories shared should be wide open, funny, touching and reverent, it is a time to share the importance of gathering the body of Christ together.)

Part 3: The main course

(The main course is placed upon the table. Once again what is there should be something that celebrates those gathered there at this meal.)

Read: John 13:12-17

¹²When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. ¹³"You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. ¹⁴Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. ¹⁵I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. ¹⁶Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

Prayer (could be led by anyone)

O, Lord we thank You that Your Son came and demonstrated what it means to serve others. He is God, yet He dies for our sins. This is a level of service that changed the world. Lord, lead us to serve one another especially in this time of great need. May we seek what is best for our neighbor, thus following Your example the night in which You were betrayed. So Lord, bless this food we are about to receive, as we celebrate all who have served us in our lives.)

(The main course is served, and the leader should encourage a discussion of the many times we benefited from someone serving us. Once again, the tone of the stories can be lighthearted, heartwarming, etc.)

Part 4: Dessert

(Once again the dessert should be set before the one leading this section of the service.)

Read: Psalm 23

¹The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.

²He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters,

³he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake.

⁴Even though I walk through the darkest valley,^[a] I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

⁵You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

⁶Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Prayer

Lord, as you have led us beside quiet waters, through the valley of the shadow of death, and made our cups overflow with blessings, lead us through this time of uncertainty to know that we all shall one day be in your presence. Bless this dessert so that while it is sweet upon our tongues, we see this as a foretaste of the feast to come in Your presence. Amen.

(The leader should now begin a discussion of the future. This should be a positive conversation about things to look forward to. This should be a reminder that this too shall pass. We shall gather together with joy and a new appreciation for gathering together.)

Closing Prayer

Lord God, be with us in these days. Remind us that these troubles are temporary and You will shepherd us through this time. Be with those who are suffering the most during this pandemic, heal them and the wounds inflicted on their bodies, minds, and souls.