

The Bread of Fellowship

Who was the last person you invited to dinner? Perhaps it was family for a Thanksgiving feast? Or, a friend for lunch.

It was someone you cared about.

For people eat -- they break bread -- with those they care about. And, the ones we eat with the most are our families. Who we love. Families where we smirk as uncle Joe tells his stories a third time. Families where we cry as a cousin's marriage breaks up. Families where we reach out when a sister or brother is stricken by a broken marriage, a job that is lost, or as a sickness threatens the life of a brother and a friend.

That's probably part of why Jesus used the meal as a method of remembering him. For we, as a Church, are part of his family.

A family of love. In instituting the Lord's supper Jesus also instituted a New Commandment -- that we love one another. His New Commandment did not come down from Sinai -- it came down from the Cross. Where he showed us what real love is -- for the Good Shepherd lays down his life for His sheep. His Commandment was not cut upon stone; but was cut upon his flesh and dug into his forehead and cut all the way to our hearts.

For God loves. And shows us his love in this: That Jesus laid down his life for us. No one could take it from him. He willingly laid it down. To demonstrate his love. To set us an example.

And we should lay down our lives for each other. Caring. Listening. Praying. Making time. Contributing from our goods. Opening our hearts.

There are several ways to tell if you've opened your heart to Jesus:

The assurance given you by the Holy Spirit.

Real changes in your life -- repentance that is not just in words but in deeds.

A heart that grieves and reaches out to others.

A hand that helps.

Too often, it is too easy to assume the worst of our Christian brothers. Too often, I am filled with a sense of resentment or grumbling or jealousy. "What about me?", I think.

And then I turn to the cross. What about Him? What about his command to forgive? What about his command to love? What about the gospel of the second chance.

Take the cup. Take the bread. And enjoy the fellowship of believers. A fellowship of love. Taught by our Master. Who loved us. Who laid down his life for us. Who directs us to lay down our lives for others.