

Love Feast for Covenant Discipleship Groups

Introduction

The United Methodist Book of Worship contains historical information, suggestions for the use of the Love Feast, appropriate hymns and Scriptures, as well as the service, itself (pages 581-4). Given the time constraints of the Covenant Discipleship group meeting, it is impossible for us to use a full service. What follows is an abbreviated order, which preserves the form of the *Book of Worship* service while making use of some elements of other forms of the Love Feast.

The group may include the reading of its group covenant within the Love Feast, followed by each person in turn sharing his or her acts of compassion, justice, devotion and worship. The reading of the covenant and each person's time of accountability serve to replace the ADDRESS OR PERSONAL WITNESS TO THE SCRIPTURE and the TESTIMONIES, PRAYERS, SINGING portions of the Love Feast in the *Book of Worship*. Following the passing of the bread and cup, we conclude with a verse of a hymn or doxology and prayer.

When using the Love Feast as part of meeting, the leader should distribute copies to each member present. Permission is hereby given for you to use and adapt the order below in your Covenant Discipleship group, inserting your group's covenant.

Since some people may see similarities between the Love Feast and Holy Communion, it is good to make clear to the group that this is not the sacrament at which an ordained elder presides, but is a simple sharing of food and drink led by a lay person.

This introduction was adapted from an article by Dean McIntyre, Music Resources Director, The General Board of Discipleship.

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BRIEF ORDER FOR A LOVE FEAST FOR COVENANT DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

HYMN (sing to, TERRA BEATA (#144) or DIADEMATA (#327), *The United Methodist Hymnal*)

Father of earth and heaven,
Thy hungry children feed,
Thy grace be to our spirits given,
That true immortal bread.
Grant us and all our race
In Jesus Christ to prove
The sweetness of thy pardoning grace,
The manna of your love.

Charles Wesley

SCRIPTURE

Suggested lessons:

Psalm 145:8-21	1 Corinthians 13
2 Corinthians 9:6-15	Philippians 2:5-11
1 John 4:7-21	Matthew 22:34-40
Luke 9:12-17	Luke 10:25-37
Luke 14:16-24	John 6:25-35
John 15:1-17	

PRAYERS *may be said by the leader or in unison*

Loving God,
We thank you for your abundant grace.
We give thanks that you teach us to love one another.
We rejoice in the beginnings of your loving life that we feel in our hearts.
We have tasted the comfort of your love in the fellowship of the Spirit;
this makes us sensitive to the needs of others.

We sincerely desire that your love come to completion
in us so that more and more the smallness of our spirits
may change to a larger and larger outlook on all human beings.
Especially empower us with eager love as we have been loved by you.
We want to love our brothers and sisters
and show your love through our lives in your world.

Amen.

OUR COVENANT

Here the group reads its covenant together and, beginning with the leader, each give account of her or his discipleship.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

FELLOWSHIP OF SHARING

The bread (cookies, crackers, or cake) is passed from person to person. Each person may be invited in passing the bread to quote a scripture verse. The leader may receive last and close with a few words, a short prayer, or an invitation to new commitment in Christ and to holy life. After the bread has been served, cups of water (lemonade, tea, or coffee) are passed among the group.

HYMN or Doxology

UMH 186 Alleluia	TFWS 2223 They'll Know We Are Christians
UMH 659 Jesus Our Friend and Brother	TFWS 2222 The Servant Song
UMH 665 Go Now in Peace	TFWS 2226 Bind Us Together
UMH 432 Jesu, Jesu	TFWS 2224 Make Us One
UMH 583 Sois la Semilla (You Are the Seed)	TFWS 2233 Where Children Belong
UMH 572 Pass It On	TFWS 2168 Love the Lord Your God
UMH 566 Blest Be the Dear Uniting Love	TFWS 2167 More Like You
UMH 560 Help Us Accept Each Other	TFWS 2171 Make Me a Channel of Your Peace
UMH 389 Freely, Freely	TFWS 2175 Together We Serve
UMH 402 Lord, I Want to Be a Christian	TFWS 2176 Make Me a Servant
UMH 422 Jesus, Thine All-Victorious Love	TFWS 2179 Live in Charity
UMH 94 Praise God ...	TFWS 2040 Awesome God

DISMISSAL

Go forth to love God and your neighbor in all that you do.
Go to live as witnesses to Jesus Christ in the world and to follow his teachings through
acts of kindness, justice, worship, and devotion
under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
In the name of God,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
go in peace to bear the light of God's love to the world.
Amen.

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Sources: *UM Book of Worship, UM Hymnal, Methodism and the Love-Feast* (by Frank Baker. New York: Macmillan, 1957).