

Maundy Thursday & Good Friday

WHAT IS MAUNDY THURSDAY?

Maundy Thursday is the Thursday before Good Friday. It marks the night that Jesus gathered with His disciples to institute the Lord's Supper, to give some of His final instructions, and to wash the disciples' feet.

Traditionally, the Western church has gathered on this night for food, prayer, and to remember Jesus' command to "love one another." It is a night of preparation. We do not want to arrive unprepared on Good Friday and rush to remember the particulars of Jesus' death. Rather, we slow down on Thursday night, eat together, pray together, and prepare for the mourning and remembering of Good Friday.

HOW DO WE ENGAGE IN THIS DURING THE PANDEMIC?

In a season where our normal relational rhythms for gathering and celebrating together continue to be affected, our encouragement is to persevere in thinking intentionally and creatively about how to best engage with Jesus and others. We know it has been hard!

Here are a few suggestions for how this could look for your whole Gospel Community, smaller subgroups, or a hybrid of in-person and Zoom:

- Try to work through this entire document (including the meal portion) with your group and/or family. Do your best with Zoom or another video conference platform to include those not comfortable gathering in-person.

- Gather in smaller subgroups from within your Gospel Community, but start on Zoom with the entire Gospel Community before the meal for the prayer section.
- Be sure to incorporate kids. For those not gathering in-person, take 15 minutes or so for kids to connect virtually before mealtime. After the kids are in bed, reconnect virtually and work through the rest of the components.
- Celebrate purely as a household or family. This can be a sweet time together.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

1. PRAY TOGETHER

Prior to the meal, **read aloud John 13:1-20 and John 17**. Then **take a few minutes to pray**. Pray specifically along these themes:

- Give thanks for the death and resurrection of Jesus and the life giving community we experience because of Jesus—even though gathering in this season looks and feels different.
- Be honest with God and others about the brokenness, sin, difficulty, heartache, loss, frustration, and/or grief you and others are experiencing, especially during this season.
- Ask for help to remember and give weight to the events of Good Friday (and Easter on the other side!).
- Ask for help to believe that the death and resurrection of Jesus really delivers all of the promises the New Testament claims (forgiveness, adoption, union with Jesus, new life, etc.).
- Pray that God would move through our times on Good Friday and Easter Sunday to help us believe and celebrate all that God has given us in the death and resurrection of Jesus.

2. EAT & DISCUSS

Share a meal together (if desired, have attendees bring their own meals) and discuss the importance of Holy Week. Here are some questions that may help spur on conversation:

- What is the significance of Jesus' triumphal entry (Palm Sunday)? How was the way in which Jesus the king presented Himself surprising to people? How is it surprising and/or difficult for you to accept?
- What took place during the Last Supper? What do we learn about the character of Jesus from that evening? How does this bring joy to you? How is it challenging?
- Why were the events of Good Friday necessary? For what reasons is hard for us to consider sin and its consequences? How do we see the glory of God in the crucifixion?
- What might prevent us from a deep, full celebration on Easter Sunday? In what ways does Easter inspire joy, comfort, and hope? What are ways you can prepare your heart for Good Friday and Easter Sunday?

3. SHARE THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Lord's Supper was instituted at the Passover meal, so communion is taken together on Maundy Thursday. Here are some suggestions for how to do this:

- Integrate the Lord's Supper into your mealtime, sharing bread and wine/juice together around the table.
- Read 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 aloud.
- If some are joining virtually for only a part of the evening, take communion while together online, having one person lead the meal with the 1 Corinthians passage.
- Take more time than usual to sit and meditate on the significance and beauty of Christ's broken body and shed blood on your behalf.
- Talk with your kids about the significance of communion.

4. FINISH UP

Talk with others about how you will engage with Good Friday. Here are some ideas for how this could look:

- Plan to read and reflect on Matthew 27 on both Good Friday and Holy Saturday.
- Give each other the freedom to linger in the weight and darkness of Good Friday and Holy Saturday.
- If more than one family or individual is planning on attending the Good Friday service through the live stream, place to connect virtually to “attend” the service together.
- Talk with your children about why Jesus was crucified, including what we see in Matthew 27 and what we know about our own sin and guilt.
- Create space to pray on your own, with people in your home, and/or with others virtually.

