



# Holy Communion

## Fact Sheet 4, The Elements of Worship Series



**In the last video, we looked at the Word as the first high point of the worship service. Now we move on to the second climax – as God comes to us through the sacrament of Holy Communion or The Meal.**

- We begin the ascent to communion with the **Preface and Thanksgiving**, which declares our thanks to God for the salvation he brought about in Jesus and draws us into the thanksgiving Jesus gave when he himself took bread. The prefaces, which change according to the propers, are succinct summaries of faith and hope.
- This is followed by the **Holy, Holy, Holy**, the heavenly song of the angels. We join with heaven in adoring God, who in Christ Jesus and by the Holy Spirit is sharing his holiness with us, as enters the 'temple' of our bodies in the sacrament.
- We then pray with Jesus **the Lord's Prayer**. Christ gave us this prayer and also prays it with us. God answers this prayer in Holy Communion as His kingdom comes.
- **The Words of Institution** are Christ's words which enact his promises. They powerfully make present the body and blood of Christ in the bread and wine, now present on the altar. These words are given in the Gospels, and also handed on to us by St Paul (1 Corinthians 11).
- **The Peace** can then be shared, between pastor and congregation and also among the congregation, sharing what we have first received from God. The peace also fulfils Christ's command that we make peace with each other before approaching the altar (Matthew 5:23).
- **The Lamb of God** may then be sung or spoken. These are the words John the Baptist exclaimed when he saw Christ coming to him, and so we share in this biblical exclamation: "O Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world! Have mercy on us!"

**The Distribution** then takes place. The ordained servant, the pastor, brings the body and blood down from the altar, as Christ comes down to be with us. At the same time, the people come forward, accepting the invitation of Christ the host. As the distribution occurs, the Gospel is proclaimed ("Take and eat...").

- **Hymns or songs** may be sung during distribution, with the focus on communion and adoring the presence of Christ.

After the distribution, the congregation responds to the sacrament with thanksgiving:

- Usually it will include **the Song of Simeon** ("Now let your servant depart in peace..."). Simeon sang this song while holding the infant Christ in his arms, telling God that he is now prepared even to die, for salvation had come to him, heaven has come to earth, as it has for us. This may be followed by a **Prayer of Thanksgiving**.
- OR **the Greeting** may be used here, followed by a **Thanksgiving Verse**, and a **Post-communion Prayer**. Options for these may be found in the Liturgy and Prayers section of the Worship Planning Page.

**We have experienced the two main high points of divine service, the Word and the Holy Communion. All that remains is the Sending, which we will explore in the next video.**

## Preface and Thanksgiving

- Always** The prefaces, which change according to the propers, are succinct summaries of faith and hope.

## Holy, Holy, Holy

- Often.** We join with heaven in adoring God, who in Christ Jesus and by the Holy Spirit is sharing his holiness with us, as enters the 'temple' of our bodies in the sacrament.

## The Lord's Prayer

- Essential.** Christ gave us this prayer and also prays it with us. God answers this prayer in Holy Communion as His kingdom comes.

## The Words of Institution

- Essential.** Christ's words powerfully make present the body and blood of Christ in the bread and wine, now present on the altar.

## The Peace

- Often used.** Can be shared between pastor and congregation and also among the congregation, sharing what we have first received from God.

## The Lamb of God

- Sometimes used.** These are the words John the Baptist exclaimed when he saw Christ coming to him

## The Distribution

- Essential.** The ordained servant, the pastor, brings the body and blood down from the altar, as Christ comes down to be with us. At the same time, the people come forward, accepting the invitation of Christ the host.

## Distribution Hymn

- Usually.** Hymn or song may be sung during distribution, with the focus on communion and adoring the presence of Christ.

## The Song of Simeon followed by a Prayer of Thanksgiving.

- Sometimes.**

## OR The Greeting followed by a Thanksgiving Verse and a Post-communion Prayer.

- Sometimes**