



**KING'S
CHURCH** (<http://kingschurchedinburgh.org/>)
EDINBURGH

Communion

Read 1 Corinthians 11:17-34

1. Look back (*verse 26*)

Look back at the cross, where Jesus died for us. His body was given for us, His blood was shed for us. He took our place, our punishment, and brought us into an unbreakable covenant with God. The Lord's Supper is an act of remembrance, recalling a past event that has a present effect on us.

As we consider church as family, this reminds us that every Christian needed Jesus to die for their sins and bring them into a covenant of grace. Kneeling before the cross, we're all the same height. There's no scope for feeling superior or inferior to anyone else. Moreover, Jesus's death models the character that God wants to grow in us: humble, loving, focused on others, self-sacrificial.

2. Look forward (*verse 26*)

The only happy ending that the New Testament has in view is the return of Jesus. Anything sooner than that is partial, at best a glimpse of what is to come. Only then will justice be done and peace fill the earth and everything be made new and those who have loved Him will be with Him in joy forever. If you die before this happens, that's the happy ending, that you die trusting in Him and go to be with Him.

Repeating this meal again and again until He stops us through our death or His return, reminds us that we're waiting. The bread and wine themselves are an anticipation of what is to come (*Isaiah 25:9, Matthew 26:29, Revelation 19:9*).

This future will be shared by all God's people together, one crowd before one throne, in one city with the one God. We won't have individual rooms where we meet with God,

we will be feasting together. We display that future reality now, we anticipate it and get a taste of it, when we eat this meal in unity and love and joy.

3. Look in (*verse 28*)

This is a meal which is meant to do us good, which gives us spiritual nourishment similar to how other food and drink give us physical nourishment but Paul warns us that doing it wrong can have deadly consequences (*verses 29-30 especially but also 17, 20, 22, 27, 34*). God warns us of our sin in ways of increasing severity (*2 Chronicles 33:10-13*), always wanting us to turn back to Him and receive His grace.

Eating in an “unworthy manner” (*27*) means being divisive (*18*), selfish (*21-22*), not “discerning the body” (*29, meaning the church as Christ’s body, 10:17, 12:27*) How Christians treat others in the church is how we treat Jesus (*Matthew 25:40*). We must consider how we’re relating to other people – are they enemies, inconveniences, or simply invisible to us? We shouldn’t take communion until we’ve repented of this and made all the effort we can to restore the relationship.

4. Look out (*verse 29*)

You can’t take this meal by yourself, it is a family event. Jesus gave His body for all of us, His blood made one covenant with many people. We should celebrate God’s saving power in so many different lives and make every effort to serve and bless and care for and encourage and smile at and sing with – and put up with – those in the same family as us.

Questions:

- How will thinking about and participating in the Lord’s Supper help us to function as a church family?
- Which of the four directions that Luke encouraged us to look in did you find most surprising? Which do you find most challenging?
- Why did Paul make such a big deal about the state of our relationships with each other? Do your church relationships feel as significant to you as he thinks they are? What can you do to change this?
- In what ways are you seeing communion differently now?

- What do you think makes us act strangely when we're having communion?
- What ways have you celebrated the Lord's Supper that have helped you to focus on what God wants us to focus on?
- What could you do as a group to be reverently rejoicing as you eat and drink together?



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