



A Household Feast for God's People

GREETING

The warm embrace of the Great and Gracious Host,
the wildly generous mercy of the Life of the party,
the attentive care of the faithful Helper,
and the raucous delight of the members of God's household be with you all.

INTRODUCTION

If you've listened to the opening comments that provide explanation and overview of this Household Feast, you can skip ahead to the prayers. **Instructions can be found at the 5:25 mark**, and the **prayers begin at the 8:10 mark** of the recording.

INSTRUCTIONS & REMINDERS

1. This liturgy is designed to be used at a meal time. That could be with family around the dinner table or with friends around a picnic blanket at lunchtime. However, you can also use this liturgy to simply break bread and share a cup of wine in the morning by yourself in your living room, or with a small group out on the back deck in the evening.

In other words, **you have permission to be creative; use these prayers whenever and where ever it suits best.**

NOTE: if you want to eat your food while it's hot, you might want to begin the liturgy 15-20 minutes or so before you plan to pull things out of the oven.

2. If you're on your own, please keep in mind that while you may be by yourself, you're not alone. There are other people in other locations eating with you. Furthermore, you are participating in a bigger story; thousands of Christians over thousands of years have celebrated the heavenly banquet. As you eat, remember: you are taking part in the great communion of saints in a very real sense.
3. The recording and the accompanying liturgy include some songs for singing. If you're feasting at the beach and don't have access to an audio device, feel free to sing different songs, or don't sing at all. On that note, if you're in a place where you might not have wifi access, you may want to download the liturgy to your mobile device, or print off a few paper copies. Likewise, there's a suggestion that a candle be lit, but if you're outdoors you might want to leave that aside.

Again: use these resources as necessary.

4. Please read the words in **bold**. If you are not using the recording, have someone else, or a variety of people, take the lead in reading those parts in normal font.

INVITATION TO THE FEAST

Jesus said: "A landowner was preparing a great banquet and sent out many invitations. At dinner time, he sent his servant with a message for the guests: 'Please come; everything is now ready.'" —Luke 14:16-17

As we sing this next song, you may wish to light a candle.

SINGING ~ *Come to the Table*

Come. Come to the table.
Come to the table of rest.
Come. Come to the table.
Come to the table of peace.
Come. Come to the table.
Come to the table of trust.

We will know mercy. We will know grace.
We will know endless love in this place.
We will know mercy. We will know grace.
We will know endless love in this place.

Come. Come to the table.
Come to the table of hope.
Come. Come to the table.
Come to the table of joy.
Come. Come to the table.
Come to the table of truth.

Come. Come to the table.
Come to the table of love.

—Cathy Hardy

GREETING PRAYERS

Blessed are those who are invited to the supper of the Lamb!

**All glory, honour and power be unto the Holy One, Sacred Three—
Almighty God, Jesus Christ, Holy Spirit!**

To gather joyfully is a serious affair,

for feasting and all enjoyments gratefully taken are, at their heart, acts of resistance.

In celebrating this feast we declare that evil and death, suffering and loss,
sorrow and tears, will not have the final word.

But the joy of fellowship, and the welcome and comfort of friends new and old,
and the celebration of these blessings of food and drink
and conversation and laughter are the true evidences of things eternal,
and are the first fruits of that great, glad joy that is to come
and that will be unending.

**So let our feast this day be joined to those sure victories secured by Christ,
let it be to us now a glad foretaste of his eternal kingdom.**

Bless us, O Lord,

**as we linger over our cups, and over this table laden with good things,
as we relish the delights of varied texture and flavour,
of aromas and savoury spices,
of servings prepared as acts of love and blessing,
of sweet dishes made sweeter by the communion of saints.**

May this shared meal, and our pleasure in it,

**bear witness against the artifice and deceptions of the prince of the darkness
that would blind this world to hope.**

**May it strike at the root of the lie that would drain life of meaning,
and the world of joy, and suffering of redemption.**

**May this our feast fall like a great hammer blow against that brittle night,
shattering the gloom, reawakening our hearts, stirring our imaginations,
focusing our vision on the kingdom of heaven that is to come,**

**on the kingdom that is promised,
on the kingdom that is already, indeed, among us,
for the resurrection of all good things has already joyfully begun.**

Pause your playback device so that all guests can fill their cups.

Raise your glass as the following words are said.

May this feast be an appetizer of the Supper of the Lamb,
the great celebration that waits the children of God.

**Where two or more of us are gathered, O Lord, there you have promised to be.
And here we are.
And so, here are you.
Take joy, O King, in this our feast.**

*Pause your playback device to
toast the King and savour a drink with these words:*

Take joy!

Response: All will be well!

God welcomes us, and so we greet one another.

*Take a few moments to pause your playback device and find your place at the table.
Greet each person with these words:*

Together: [Name], you are welcome at this table in the name of Christ.

Response: Amen. It's good to be here.

(Remember to pause your playback device.)

CONFESSION

Let us confess the excuses we have made for not living in the reality of the kingdom of God.

Quiet stillness for listening.

(Pause your playback device.)

**For neglecting your offer of love and ignoring the cries of the poor,
Lord, have mercy.**

**For speaking harsh words to our friends and failing to love our enemies,
Lord, have mercy.**

**For evading our responsibilities to care for the earth
and resist injustice as your peacemakers,
Lord, have mercy.**

**For confusing our priorities and seeking success instead of faithfulness,
or prayer without action,
Lord, have mercy.**

Quiet stillness for listening.

(Pause your playback device.)

THE GIFT OF GOD FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD

On one occasion, Jesus took five barley loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to the five thousand as much as they wanted. When they had all had enough to eat, he told his disciples to gather up the leftover pieces. They filled twelve baskets. When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, "This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world." —John 6

Brothers and sisters, Jesus says, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry." Take joy! In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!

Raise your cup and toast the king with the words:

Amen! Hallelujah! To the Giver!

*Glasses are clinked with celebratory chime,
and participants in the feast savour a drink.*

(Feel free to pause your playback device.)

SINGING ~ *Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow*

Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise Him all creatures here below,
Praise Him all creatures here below!
Praise Him above, praise Him above,
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host!
Praise Him above, praise Him above,
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host!
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost,
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost,
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, amen!
Amen, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah!
Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, amen, amen!
Hallelujah, amen, hallelujah, amen!

—*Thomas Ken (1695); Boston Handel and Haydn Society Collection (1830)*

THANKSGIVING

**O Lord, our King,
through seed-bearing plants and life-giving rains,
you faithfully provide food to sustain us.
As the grain once scattered in the fields is now reunited on this table
in bread which human hands have made,
reintegrate us with ourselves, our neighbours, and You
as we joyfully receive these gifts.
May we know your presence in the sharing of this food,
so that we may know your touch and presence in all things.
We celebrate the life that Jesus has shared among his community
through the centuries, and shares with us now.
Through bread broken in love, strengthen us to follow your Way
of sacrificial, generous love,
for the sake of your kingdom, your power, and your glory.**

Now you who are loved by the Father, prepare your hearts and give yourselves wholly
to this celebration of joy,
to the glad company of saints,
to the comforting fellowship of the Spirit,
and to the abiding presence of Christ
who is seated among us both as our host and as our honored guest,
and still yet as our victorious king.

Amen.

BREAKING BREAD

Holy food for holy people:
in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
take seat, take feast, take delight!

The meal is served.

*As you eat, you may wish to read one or both of the following texts
and discuss or ponder your reactions, thoughts, questions and insights:*

Ephesians 1:3-14
Ephesians 2:11-22

Or you may wish to reflect on one of the following stories:

Abraham's lunch with 3 visitors ~ Genesis 18
The Passover ~ Exodus 12
The Covenant Meal ~ Exodus 24 (see also Numbers 11)
The Wedding at Cana ~ John 2
The Feast for the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32)
Jesus feeds 5000 (Matt. 14:13-22; Mark 6:32-45; Luke 9:10-17; John 6)
The Last Supper (Matthew 26:17-30; Mark 14:12-26; Luke 22:7-39; John 13:1-17:26)
Jesus breaks bread at Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35)
The Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:7-10)

*Another alternative is to tell stories of God's faithfulness in the week that was,
also of moments you have enjoyed or that were significant to you.
Where have guests experienced the Holy Spirit in their lives or in the community?*



BLESSING THE CUP

As the meal draws to a close, invite everyone to fill their cup.

After supper, Jesus took a cup and said, “This is the new covenant in my blood. Do this in remembrance of me.”

Guests raise their glasses.

Jesus says, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me. Those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.”

—John 4:14, 7:37-39

There is so much life in water—

springing, gushing, flowing, living, cleansing, healing.

God gave it.

The Spirit hovered over it.

Christ transformed it.

**Father, we give you thanks for the holy vine of your servant David,
which you made known to us through Jesus your servant.**

**Through a simple cup of grace, remake us into your new creation,
that rivers of living water might flow from within us,
to the glory of your name!**

Toast the King and savour a drink with these words:

Amen! Hallelujah! To the Giver!

(Feel free to pause your playback device.)

PETITION & INTERCESSION

**God of all places and *this* place:
you promised a new earth where the hungry are satisfied
and the oppressed go free.
Come, Lord, build that place among us.**

**God of all times and *this* time:
you promised a new day when the sick are healed
and the fearful receive good news and laugh and rejoice.
Come, Lord, speed that time among us.**

**God of all people, *our* God:
take what we have and what we hope for to remake all creation new.
We come, Lord, to share in the work of your kingdom,
until the new earth is created among us.**

**Generous God,
we bring our prayers trusting that you want your house to be full,
so we are bold to bring to you those who, like us,
need your love and transformation.**

Candles may be lit as people or situations are named aloud or silently.

(Pause your playback device.)

**Thank you, Lord, for this meal.
But we cannot live by bread alone.
And so through Jesus, who taught us to do so, we pray:
Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever.
Amen.**

*Everyone cleans up together—clearing up dishes, putting away chairs, etc.
When finished, gather back around the table in a circle.
You may wish to keep your glasses out and full for a departing blessing.*

(Pause your playback device.)

BLESSING

*Guests lift their glasses or raise their hands in blessing.
Guests may choose to hold each other's hands instead.*

**As we leave this table, take joy
knowing that the Blessed Trinity goes with you every step you take
until that day when all will be well.
As you journey home, may
the warm embrace of the Great and Gracious Host comfort and sustain you;
the wildly generous mercy of the Life of the party
lead you further along the Way and deeper into Truth;
the attentive care of the faithful Helper make you
more fully whole and human,
and the raucous delight of the company of God's household encourage you
until we eat again!**

Guests toast the King and bless one another with these departing words:

Until we eat again!

SINGING ~ *Mighty God, We Thank and Praise You*

Mighty God, we thank and praise you
For this meal, this Bread of Life;
Precious blood and body, broken,
From your Son our Saviour, Christ.
In these mysteries you assure us
We are members of your Son;
Heirs of your eternal Kingdom,
With all faithful people, One.

Humbly now we ask you, Father,
In your grace, to make us strong,
That, with all the saints before us,
In good works we may press on!
Send us out to love and serve you!
Send us out to sing your praise!
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
Power and glory to your name!

Amen! Amen! Amen! Amen!

—Wendell Kimbrough

RESOURCES

The liturgy is based on, adapted from, inspired by the following resources:

“A Mealtime Liturgy,” by Rachel Miller Jacobs,
<https://www.leaderonline.org/worship/supplements/spring17/AMealtimeLiturgy.pdf>

Every Moment Holy: New Liturgies for Daily Life, by Douglas Kaine McKelvey

St. Lydia’s Church, <http://stlydias.org>

“Table Liturgy for Pentecost,” by Rev. Dr. Sally Douglas, from the Uniting Church in Australia, https://docs.google.com/viewer?url=https%3A%2F%2Fvictas.uca.org.au%2Fwp-admin%2Fadmin-ajax.php%3Fjuwpfisadmin%3Dfalse%26action%3Dwpfd%26task%3Dfile.download%26wpfd_category_id%3D656%26wpfd_file_id%3D8663%26token%3Dffa30fa24519f4768c687b8eef7c4e27%26preview%3D1&embedded=true

