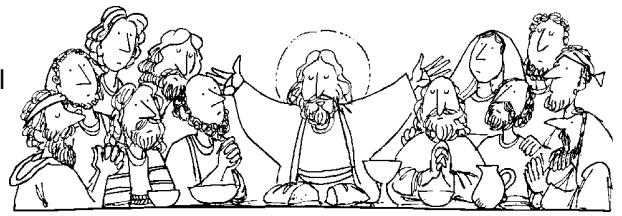


A SIMPLE FAMILY PRAYER MEAL.

This is a chance to deeper our awareness that when we are together sharing a meal as a family, God is present with us in our little Church of the home. This format is based on the weekly Jewish Sabbath meal and can be used at different times of the year. It could be at the end a family fast day or with a simple soup and bread meal as a sacrifice. Money saved can be donated to the poor. Around Holy Week it can be related to the Jewish Passover meal with some special symbols.



REQUIREMENTS:

For the prayer part: a Bible, bread or matzos, glasses with wine or grape juice, a candle, writing material.
For the meal: Family's choice. Simple or more elaborate depending on the occasion.

THE PRAYER TIME:

Begin by making the sign of the Cross and reading Luke 22:19 - 20. The leader holds up the bread and says:

BLESSED ARE YOU LORD, GOD OF THE UNIVERSE. THANKS TO YOUR GOODNESS WE ARE GATHERED HERE AND HAVE THIS BREAD TO SHARE. BY SHARING THIS MEAL MAY WE BE UNITED IN LOVE AND READY TO SHARE WITH OTHERS.

The leader breaks the bread and shares it with all.

The leader then continues, holding up the wine or grapejuice:

BLESSED ARE YOUR LORD, GOD OF THE UNIVERSE. THANKS TO YOUR GOODNESS WE ARE GATHERED HERE AND HAVE THIS FRUIT OF THE VINE TO SHARE. MAY WE WHO SHARE KNOW THE JOY OF YOUR PRESENCE AND SHARE THIS JOY WITH OTHERS.

Everyone has a sip. A family member then lights the candle and all are invited to offer a short prayer. These may be prayers of praise, thanksgiving or intercession for a special need for the person or the family.

After the prayers the leader continues:

AT THE LAST SUPPER OF JESUS WITH HIS FRIENDS HE WASHED THEIR FEET AS A SIGN OF SERVICE. WE ARE ASKED TO SHOW A SIGN OF OUR WILLINGNESS TO SERVE EACH OTHER IN MEMORY OF HIM. LET EACH PERSON THINK OF A PARTICULAR COMMITMENT THEY WISH TO MAKE TO SERVE THE FAMILY AT THIS TIME. WRITE IT ON THE PREPARED PAPERS AND SHARE WITH ONE ANOTHER.

To conclude all join hands and the leader prays:

GOD OUR FATHER, BLESS US AND LOOK KINDLY ON OUR FAMILY. MAY WE WHO ARE GATHERED TOGETHER HERE AT THIS TABLE ONE DAY BE REUNITED WITH THOSE FAMILY MEMBERS WHO HAVE DIED AND GONE BEFORE US, WHEN WE GATHER TOGETHER IN THE JOY OF YOUR KINGDOM. AMEN.

End with any prayers of choice, a hug and enjoy the prepared meal together.

If this Prayer meal is being held close to Holy Week a dish with PASSOVER SYMBOLS can be included.

- * a lamb bone - reminder of the animal sacrifices they offered to God,
- * an egg - a reminder of rebirth, * bitter herbs - a reminder of the suffering in Egypt,
- * a mixture of fruit and nuts - a reminder of beauty and joy, * lettuce - a reminder of fresh green growth.
- * matzos – a reminder of the unleavened bread eaten in haste.