

THE AGAPE LOVE FEAST

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Summary:

This is an outline of an intimate Agapé meal/service. This service was used with a small group of Briercrest Seminary students in a home setting. Please use songs according to CCLI and other copyright guidelines.

Length: 7 pages

THE AGAPE LOVE FEAST

Agape - the Greek word for love.
An Agape meal - a love feast of the early Christians
A time for sharing nourishment of food for the body,
A time for thanking God,
A time for prayers, songs, and scripture for the soul
and a time for an offering of money for God's mission in the world.¹

The Agape Feast was the Love Feast in apostolic times and was often celebrated daily. This simple meal was observed in connection with the Eucharist, the two being spoken as the Lord's Supper. It was a simple meal and a public banquet like thanksgiving every day except the poor were invited and not just family. By ignoring all distinctions of economic and social status they all met as members of one family. This act of unity and brotherly love was common to all Christians who chose to come, whether rich or poor. The rich brought food for the poor who brought nothing. It symbolized the community of goods. Portions were also sent to the sick and absent members and intended as an example of mutual Christian love for each other.²

The food was prepared from home or at the place of meeting, usually in private residences. The bishop or presiding presbyter would preside, prayers of thanksgiving were offered and the Scriptures were read. After everyone had their fill, a collection was taken for the widows and orphans, a holy kiss of charity was given, and correspondence from other churches were read and answered.³

Many 21st-century Christians have come to realize that the "joyful feast of the people of God" takes on special meaning when celebrated intimately, around the table of fellowship following an ordinary meal.⁴

With the Agape Meal, the Eucharist returns to the dining table where it began and becomes a radical, re-membering and community-building meal. Christ becomes the Host and all gathered at Table become the Guests at the joyful feast of the people of God!⁵

¹ http://www.synodresourcecenter.org/wma/worship/occasional/other/0016/agape_feast.html

² <http://latter-rain.com/ltrain/agape.html>

³ <http://latter-rain.com/ltrain/agape.html>

⁴ http://amistad-vacaville.org/agape_meal.htm

⁵ http://amistad-vacaville.org/agape_meal.htm

AN ORDER FOR THE MEAL

Gathering

- Hand Washing
- Song – Ancient of Days (Gary Sadler, Jamie Harvill © Integrity's Hosanna! Music)
- Doxology
- Gather around the Table

Meal

- Prayer
- Serve Meal
- Share (thanksgiving, home community)

Eucharist

- Song – You Are My King (Billy Foote, ©1996, Worshiptogether.com Songs)
- Reading Luke 24:28-35
- Share about Jesus in the ordinary
- Bread and Cup

Offering

- Prayer
- Offering
- Song – Beautiful One (Tim Hughes, ©2002 Thankyou Music)

GATHERING

- Song – Ancient of Days
- Gather around the table
- Doxology
- Hand Washing

MEAL

Prayer

Come, Holy Spirit, come!
Bless this bread, and bless this fruit of the vine.
Bless all of us in our eating and drinking at this table
that our eyes may be opened, and we may recognize the risen Christ in our midst,
in each other, in all for whom Jesus died,
and especially in our enemies.

Amen!

This is the bread of life....

This is the cup of blessing..

Sharing of Meal /Fellowship / Small Talk (share about the joy of serving in your community)

LEADER:

We have been strengthened with food for our bodies for our journey.
A miracle of abundance....
of abundant food ...
of abundant grace in ordinary food....
We hear a story of Jesus sharing a meal and opening the eyes of the one with whom he shared the bread.

EUCCHARIST

SCRIPTURE: Luke 24: 28-35 (share the setting of the story before reading)

READER #1

The Emmaus story reminds us that Christ is seen in the ordinary....
in the breaking of the bread....
in sharing...
in listening...
in caring...
in risking...
ordinary daily events in all our ordinary daily lives.

READER #2

Two ordinary people, receiving great joy in really seeing Jesus, hasten on the journey to share the Good News.
Their eyes were opened - BUT -they couldn't clearly see UNTIL they shared the joy with someone else.
Your eyes...my eyes...have been opened.... we want to see clearly, really see Jesus.

SONG: Amazing Love

Lift up your heart(s) and give thanks to the Lord our God.
Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, you made us in your image, to love and to be loved. When we turned away, and our love failed, your love remained steadfast.

By the suffering, death, and resurrection of your only Son Jesus Christ you delivered us from slavery to sin and death and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit. On the night in which Jesus gave himself up for us he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

When the supper was over he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said:

"Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us, and on these gifts of bread and wine.

Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood.

By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet.

Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church, all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father, now and for ever. Amen.

(Share in the Eucharistic meal)

OFFERING

LEADER

WE CAN INDEED SHARE CHRIST WITH OUR SISTERS, BROTHERS, AND CHILDREN IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD, IN OUR CHURCHES, IN THE WORLD!

We can share out of what we have....

abundant food....

abundant worldly goods....

abundant grace among us.

Out of our abundance we share in faith that even our abundance will be multiplied as loaves and fishes in the world.

As the disciples gathered the abundance after the meal, we will gather the abundance of our offerings.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING *(each paragraph read by another voice, dispersed around the circle)*

#1 God of miracles and wonderful surprises, we give thanks that we may come together in this circle of life to share in the abundance of your good earth.

#2 We acknowledge we have not always shared out of our abundance. We have had so many loaves that we have had to freeze some while our neighbors had none. We have hoarded our bread and fish while your children have starved. Forgive us, O' God.

#3 Often our eyes have been closed to the miracles in our midst. Forgive us when we fail to see Christ in the ordinary and in our extraordinary neighbor.

#4 As living beings we recognize that we are a part of one another, freed by you to share in love with all your children everywhere.

#5 May we be responsible in our stewardship, joyous in our giving and loving in all that we do.

#6 Continue to surprise us with your miracles, God. Multiply our work, our energy, our offerings and our sharing that we might be as loaves and fishes throughout the land.

#7 Continue to prepare us for our journeys into the world.... help us to be miracles to ALL your children. In the name of the miracle in us all, let the people say AMEN!

(Put donations in a basket)

Lords Prayer

(Say out loud, standing, eyes open, looking into each others eyes)

Song – Beautiful One

RESOURCES

http://www.synodresourcecenter.org/wma/worship/occasional/other/0016/agape_feast.html

<http://latter-rain.com/ltrain/agape.html>

http://amistad-vacaville.org/agape_meal.htm

<http://www.techshopministry.org/interior.asp?ptid=1&mid=3096>