

What's a Love Feast?



by:
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A Christian!

A Love Feast

You may or may not have heard about love feasts. No, they have nothing to do with the so-called love-ins of the nineteen sixties. Love feasts are sometimes referred to as **Agapes** by some Christians. **The essence of the faith** of biblical Christians is love for God and love for others.

Love among believers includes:

- **Phileo** – to be fond of; example: *Brotherly love*.
- **Agapao (agape)** – to love deeply; *God's love for us*.

A love feast is an ancient practice that began in the early days when Christians were still meeting together in each other's homes. Vestiges of this early Christian practice have popped up in one way or another through the centuries.

The pre-Reformation group of Christians now known as the Moravians revived love feasts in their early meetings. This practice continues among them to this day. However, it has now been reduced to a mere symbolism. During the time of the Wesleyan Revivals the practice was introduced into the Methodist Societies. It, however, has been dropped and is continued by few Methodists in our day. A few other groups of Christians have continued this ancient practice including some Anabaptists: Brethren and Mennonites, a few independent churches as well as many house churches such as ours.

That it was practiced by Christians during New Testament days we know from history. It is mentioned in the letter of Jude verse 12, ". . . **at your love feasts.**" The **original love feasts** were a meal that was shared in the homes of believers as they met together for "church." Note what is recorded in the account of **the very first company** of believers shortly after the Pentecost experience in Jerusalem,

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. . . They broke bread in their homes and ate together with joy and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved." (Acts 2:42, 46b-47)

What is a Love Feast?

A Love Feast is a service. *What is a service?* To Protestants a service is preaching and singing, to Charismatics it's a blending of praise, worship and spiritual gifts, to Roman Catholics and Anglicans it is celebration of the Eucharist. It needs to be noted that a **dominant part of apostolic worship was centered around a meal.** This originated with Jesus at a table eating the Seder with His disciples "*while they were eating.*" The earliest believers continued this practice.

The expression "**breaking bread**" is undoubtedly referring to the love feast. i.e., **a meal with communion.** Note Paul's description in 1 Cor. 11:23-32. Note also Acts 20:11.

Love Feasts can be abused by overeating, drinking to excess and/or permitting false prophets/teachers to share – 1 Corinthians 11:17-22 and Jude 12

Instructions for a Love Feast

(these suggestions come from a house group of Christians based in Australia. They can be altered.)

1. Someone at the table is requested to pray, **celebrating the Presence of Christ** into the midst of the group.
2. Someone reads 1 Corinthians 11:28-31,

*"Everyone ought to examine themselves **before** they eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. But if we were more discerning with regard to ourselves, we would not come under such judgment."*

3. A time to share **any grievances** between body members can be shared. This is specifically mentioned by Paul in the above passage. See **what Jesus taught** in Matthew 18:15-16. If any wish to speak privately to another, they may leave the table to talk while the rest

of the group intercedes in prayer for them. If it cannot be resolved, those involved may then ask the group to pray with them until the problem is settled.

4. **Time of praise, worship and sharing** following the example set forth in 1 Corinthians 14:26 & 27,

*"When you come together, **each of you** has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. Everything must be done so **that the church may be built up.**"*

From the Message: "So here's what I want you to do. **When you gather for worship, each one of you be prepared with something that will be useful for all: Sing a hymn, teach a lesson, tell a story, lead a prayer, provide an insight.**"

5. The **bread is broken** as the one breaking the bread quotes the words of Jesus: "**This is my body, broken for you.**" The bread plate is passed, when all have a piece of the broken bread all eat together. After which a prayer of thanksgiving is offered.
6. **The meal is now eaten**; during the meal we may want to **share** some of our **recent experiences** on how the Lord has been ministering to us in our prayer life and/or in our study of the Word.
7. We are encouraged to save "**small talk**" for later on. **A Love Feast should focus on Christ.** At the close of the meal **Matthew 26:27-29** is read. The wine is poured and we all partake together.
8. **The group sings** a worship or praise song. **Closing prayer** may be offered.
9. Time may now be spent together **fellowshipping** before leaving for our individual homes.

Our Love Feasts

Normally the Love Feast in our house group is held each first Saturday evening of the month at 6:00 p.m. with our regular house group meetings every Saturday evening.