

**Maundy Thursday Devotional**  
**by Rev. Jason Smith, Arkadelphia, Ark.**

The following devotional is divided into seven sections of scripture and exercises and is intended for a supper at home on Thursday night of Maundy Thursday. It incorporates elements from each of the gospels from the night Jesus was betrayed. You will need the following items: supper, a candle (or seven if you have them), a bowl half-filled with water, and a hand towel. I encourage you to “strip the altar”—your table—of linens, flowers, and ornaments, leaving it bare. This ancient custom of the church symbolizes the bareness of existence when facing death, before resurrection. May this devotional help you to feel a communion of love this Maundy Thursday.

**I. We Gather Together**

*Luke 22:7-8*

As you sit down for supper, read the following

*Then came the day of Unleavened Bread,  
on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed.  
So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying,  
'Go and prepare the Passover meal for us  
that we may eat it.'*

**II. We Light Candles**

*John 13:34*

On the last three days before Easter, many Christians hold “Tenebrae” (Latin for “darkness”) services and light seven candles which are extinguished throughout the service. Light a candle (or seven) to symbolize the seven last sayings of Jesus on the cross. We will extinguish the light at the end of this devotional.

*Jesus said:  
I give you a new commandment,  
that you love one another.  
Just as I have loved you,  
you also should love one another.*

**III. We Give Thanks**

*1 Corinthians 11:23-24*

Read the following and offer a short prayer of thanksgiving before breaking bread.

*The Lord Jesus  
on the night when he was betrayed  
took a loaf of bread,  
and when he had given thanks,  
he broke it [...].*

**IV. We Share Supper**

*Mark 14:22-24*

As you begin supper, read and consider: What does “communion” mean to you? What is your most memorable experience of communion? What stands out in Mark 14?

*Jesus took a loaf of bread,  
and after blessing it he broke it, [...] and said,  
‘Take, eat; this is my body.’  
Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying,  
‘Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant,  
which is poured out for many.*

**V. Washing Our Feet**

*John 13:5-7*

After supper, if comfortable, you are invited to wash one another’s feet or hands, pouring water over them and drying them with the towel.

*Then [Jesus] poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet [...].  
He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, ‘Lord, are you going to wash my feet?’  
Jesus answered, ‘You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand.’*

**VI. We Ask Forgiveness**

*Mark 14:18a-19*

Read the text and offer a short prayer of confession.

*Jesus said, ‘Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me,  
one who is eating with me.’ The disciples began to be distressed  
and to say to him one after another, ‘Surely, not I?’*

**VII. Stepping into Good Friday**

*Psalms 22:1-2, 11*

Psalm 22:1 was one of Jesus’ last sayings according to Matthew. Read aloud and extinguish candle(s) at the end of each verse or at the end of the passage.

*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?  
Why are you so far from helping me,  
from the words of my groaning?  
O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer.  
Do not be far from me,  
for trouble is near  
and there is no one to help.*

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*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. - John 13:27*

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