



LIVE the **WORD**

IT'S EVERYTHING!

SMALL GROUP LEADER

Bread

Bread

SCRIPTURE READING: John 6:35

Group leaders should:

- "Set the table" for interaction and group discussion by (4 minutes):
 - explaining the idea of the week's theme
 - explaining the context of the main passage(s) to be discussed
- Debrief from weekly reading (8-10 minutes)
- Facilitating, Discipling, Guiding, Shepherding (30 minutes)

Small Group Questions:

1. In the Middle East bread equals life. With that in mind, why do you think God made bread a part of the curse?
2. The manna in the wilderness, like the fruit in the garden, was provided freely by God and it saved the lives of the Hebrews in the wilderness. When the Jews first ate the manna, how do you think they must have felt?
3. Why is bread a fitting symbol for the body of Jesus? How does taking the Lord's Supper relate to the manna in the wilderness? How does that make you feel?
4. In Acts 2 the breaking of bread in daily meals and in the Lord's Supper pointed to and reinforced the unity of the church. What does the Holy Spirit want you to do when you take the Lord's Supper so that WBC is built up in unity and love?

SET THE TABLE

Bread = life. It is the substance of life. In Bible times bread was included in every meal. People could not live without bread.

In the fall man was cursed to eat bread by the sweat of his brow. Sin caused bread to be a matter of hard labor.

Bread became a gift of God in His unfolding plan of salvation. The bread He gives is for spiritual life. The bread God provides points to Jesus the Bread of Life.

The Bread of Redemption, Deuteronomy 16:3

When God redeemed the children of Israel from the bondage of Egypt, He gave them two feasts, Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The Feast of Unleavened Bread reminded Israel of the haste of their departure from Egypt and what God had redeemed them from.

The Bread of Heaven, Exodus 16:4

When the children of Israel were halfway between the Red Sea and Sinai, they ran out of food. They murmured that they were better off in Egypt. God told Moses that He would rain down bread from Heaven each day.

The Bread of Presence, Exodus 25:30

In the Holy Place of the Tabernacle and Temple was the Table of show-bread. There were twelve loaves, one for each of the tribes of Israel. It was called the bread of the presence, representing God's covenant and presence with Israel.

The Bread of Prayer, Matthew 6:11

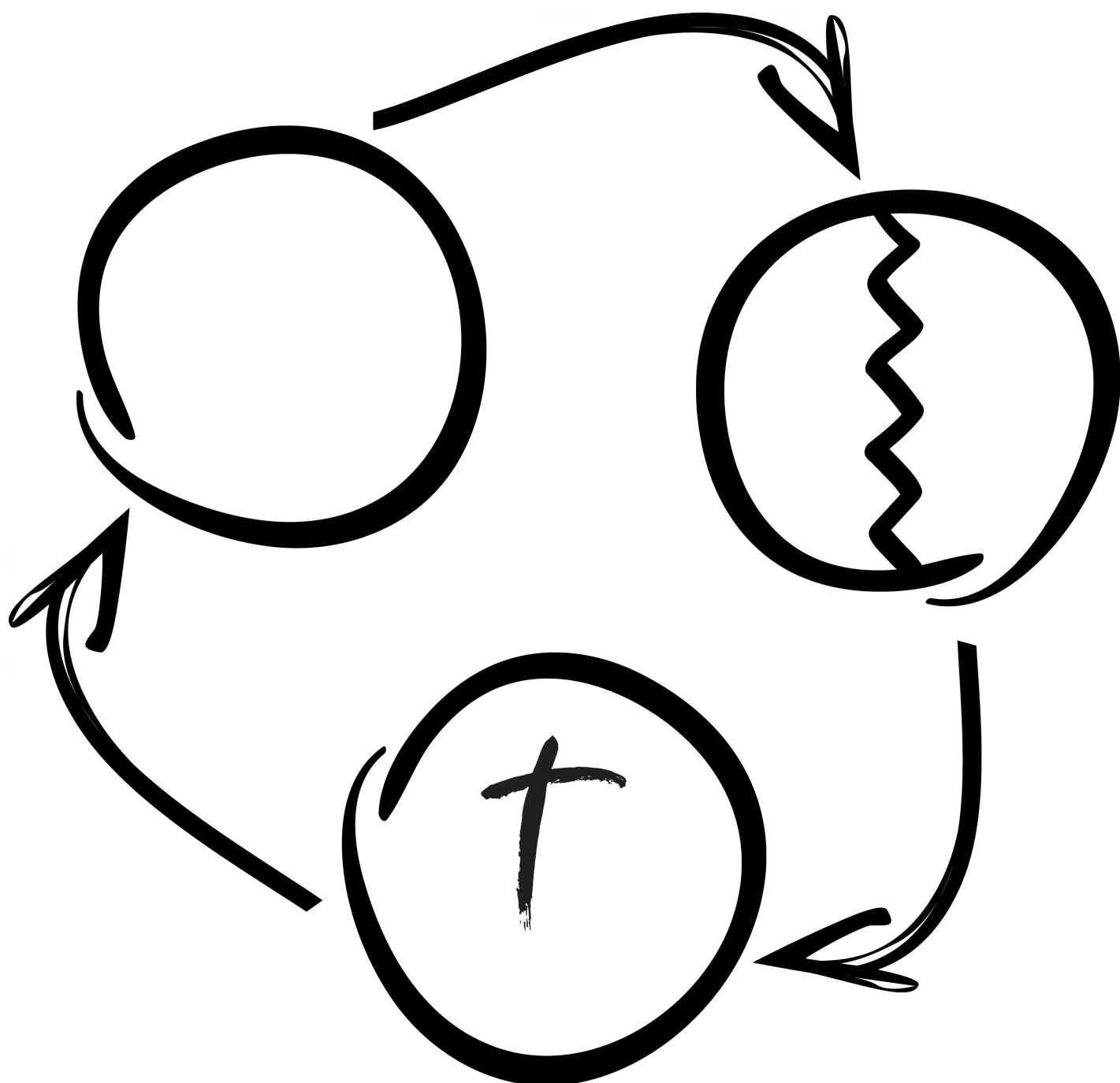
This does not come first in the model prayer. It follows hallowing God's name and praying for the kingdom to come. Then the request for God's daily provision.

The Bread of Life, John 6:35

Jesus is the Bread of Life. He is the true bread from Heaven. He is the only source of eternal life. He alone can satisfy. In Matthew 26:26 Jesus made clear the meaning of him being the bread of life. After the Passover meal, Jesus used the broken bread to point to the Cross and His broken Body. He bore our sins and our judgment in His body.

The Bread of Fellowship, Acts 2:42 & 46

The "breaking of bread" is fellowship in worship. The "breaking of bread" is a picture of eating together, the joy of being together, and sharing life with one another.



Bread - Commentary

Bread is life. If you go to a restaurant, often they will bring bread to eat while you wait for your entrée. In the biblical day bread was a main course of the meal along with vegetables, fruit, and olives. They would eat fish or meat only on special occasions. Bread was the daily substance of life. Bread is essential for physical life. Bread is essential for spiritual life.

When Adam and Eve rebelled against God and ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in Genesis 3, God pronounced curses on them because of their sin. Among the curses on Adam in Genesis 3:19 God said, "By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground." Eating bread became hard labor and every bite a reminder of sin and the penalty of death.

But God is full of grace. He uses the picture of bread as His gift in His unfolding plan of salvation. Bread that spoke of death is transformed to speak of life, spiritual life that comes only from the LORD. And all the bread that God provides points to Jesus, the Bread of Life.

The Bread of Redemption

When the LORD redeemed Israel from the bondage of Egypt, the last plague that resulted in their salvation. The death angel passed through Egypt slaying the first born of every house and herd. But the LORD provided for salvation for the children of Israel by the offering of a lamb without spot or blemish and applying the blood of the lamb to their doorpost, God said when I see the blood I will passover you. That night, in obedience the households of Israel with the blood on their doorpost ate a roasted leg of the lamb (an appropriation of sacrifice, of bitter herd (the bitterness of their bondage), and unleavened bread (the purging of sin). They didn't know what would happen the next day. But Pharaoh set them free. They were redeemed. But they had to leave quickly and did not have time to bake bread, so they packed the unleavened bread and carried it with them for food.

God gave Israel two feasts to yearly celebrate their redemption from slavery, the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. They were separate feasts but linked together. On the 14th of the Jewish month of Nissan they were to celebrate the Passover remembering and teaching their children the greatness of the LORD's redemption. Then on the 15th day of Nissan they started the Feast of the Unleavened Bread. For seven days they would eat unleavened bread. No leaven was allowed in the house for those seven days. As they ate the bread they were reminded of the haste of their departure from Egypt. It was also called the bread of affliction to ever remind them of the terrible slavery from which God redeemed them.

The Bread from Heaven

When the children of Israel were two and a half months in their journey from Egypt, halfway between the Red Sea and Mt. Sinai, they ran out of bread. They murmured and grumbled against Moses in Exodus 16:3, "Would that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land Egypt, when we sat by the meat pot and ate bread to the full, but you have brought us out to this wilderness to kill the whole assembly with hunger." How quickly they forgot God's great redemption and faithfulness.

Bread - Commentary

The LORD responded to Moses in verse 5, “Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven for you, and the people are to go out and gather a day’s portion every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in my law or not.” He, thus, demonstrated His faithfulness to provide for their every need to teach them faith. It was a daily provision. If they people lack faith or were greedy and tried to collect more bread one day to keep it for the next day, the bread would mold and become full of maggots. Faith trusts God day to day.

The Bread of Presence

In both the tabernacle and the temple was the Table of Show Bread in the Holy Place where the priest ministered before the LORD. It was a gold overlaid table on which were placed twelve loaves of bread representing the twelve tribes of Israel. They were placed in two stacks of six. The bread was changed every seven days. They were an act of thanksgiving. The loaves were a symbolic acknowledgement that God was the source of Israel’s life and nourishment.

The bread was called the Bread of Presence, Exodus 25:20. It represented both God’s covenant and presence with His people.

The Bread of Prayer

In Sermon on the Mount Jesus gives the model prayer. Matthew 6:11 says “Give us this day our daily bread.” It is a prayer of dependence on the Father’s provisions. But it is important that this is not the first request Jesus teaches. It comes after the two priorities of prayer. One, praying the Father’s name would be hallowed, made holy, exalted, and worshipped. Two, praying the his kingdom would come on earth as it is in heaven. Then comes the prayer for daily bread.

Later in 6:33 Jesus emphasizes the same truth, “Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Another illustration is in the book of Philippians. It was to the church that gave sacrificially to support Paul’s missionary work and the expansion of the kingdom that Paul wrote Philippians 4:19, “But my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

It is no wonder then that David said in Psalm 37:25, “I have been young, and now I am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or his children begging for bread.”

The Bread of Life, John 6:35, Matthew 26:26-23

John 6 starts with the Jesus’ second feeding of a large crowd. This happened in Decapolis where Jesus had healed the demonic. The crowd stayed all day listening to Jesus. Then Jesus took five loave of bread and three fish, blessed and fed a multitude of 4,000. Afterward the disciples took up twelve baskets of bread.

Bread - Commentary

The next day when the crowd realized that Jesus had crossed the Sea of Galilee back to Capernaum, they got in boats and crossed over seek Jesus. When they came to Jesus, He told them that they came because “they were filled with the loaves.” Then He said to them, “Do not work for good that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you.” There were Pharisees there who started to argue with Jesus talking a Moses and the bread from Heaven. Jesus corrected them that it was not Moses who gave the bread but God.

Then Jesus made the first of seven “I am” statements in John. “I am the bread of life.” He alone can satisfy the deep need of the people, “whoever comes to me will not hunger.” He is the true bread from heaven.

Then Jesus said in verse 56, “Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks by blood abides in me, and I in him.” Neither the Pharisees or the crowd could understand.

But the meaning becomes abundantly clear in Matthew 26:26-28. On the evening before His crucifixion, in the upper room Jesus ate the Passover meal with the disciple. “Now as they were eating, Jesus took the bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take eat, this is my body. And then he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them saying, ‘Drink all of it, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sin.”

The Bread of Fellowship, Acts 2:42, 46

The breaking of bread in verse 42 is the Lord’s Super. The church devoted themselves to worshipping together.

The breaking of bread in verse 46 is eating together. They loved one another, they enjoyed being together, and sharing life with one another.