

Agape Meal for Maundy Thursday



Agape is the New Testament Greek work for “self-giving love”. In the Christian tradition an *Agape* is also the name for informal meals and times of togetherness and mutual sharing which remind us of all those meals Jesus shared with his friends and the unity that his Spirit continues to give us.

The modern history of the Agape Meal or Love Feast began when Count Zinzendorf and the Moravians in Germany introduced a service of sharing food, prayer, religious conversation, and hymns in 1727. John Wesley first experienced it among the Moravians in Savannah, Georgia, ten years later. His diary notes: “After evening prayers, we joined with the Germans in one of their love-feasts. It was begun and ended with thanksgiving and prayer, and celebrated in so decent and solemn a manner as a Christian of the apostolic age would have allowed to be worthy of Christ.”

Agape Meals have often been held on occasions when the celebration of Holy Communion is not possible—where there is no minister present to administer the Sacrament, when persons of different denominations are together who do not feel free to take Holy Communion together, or at the present time, when we are isolated in our homes.

This simple outline can be used for a meal at home around the dinner table. We also invite you to a joint celebration on Zoom on Thursday 9th April, 7.30pm.

Download the Zoom App and use **Meeting ID 159 503 090**
or use the following URL in any internet browser:
<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/159503090>

(Prepare some nibbles, bread and drinks before the meal. Designate one person who will lead you through the meal. Join in with the words in bold. Assign different members of the group for readings and prayers.)

Welcome

The host / leader welcomes the group and explains the nature of this meal (you can read parts or all of page 2).

(A group member reads)

When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. And he said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. *(Luke 22:14-15)*

**Lord, we welcome your presence with us.
May the food and companionship we share
Nourish our bodies, hearts and minds.
And may our spirits be refreshed
As we live in the light of your presence
With us now, and at all times and places. Amen.**

We share some nibbles as we talk informally to catch up.

(A group member reads)

Scripture Reading: 1 Corinthians 13

¹ If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ² And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. ³ If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

⁴ Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant ⁵ or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; ⁶ it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. ⁷ It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

⁸ Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end.

⁹ For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; ¹⁰ but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. ¹¹ When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. ¹² For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. ¹³ And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

Song

(Instead of singing you can also read the words of songs together.)

**A new commandment I give unto you
that you love one another as I have loved you,
that you love one another as I have loved you.
By this shall all know that you are my disciples
if you have love one for another;
by this shall all know that you are my disciples
if you have love one for another.**

Prayers of Penitence

Our Lord Jesus Christ says: "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you for ever." *(John 14.15-16)*

Let us confess our sins.

Lord God,

we have sinned against you;

we have done evil in your sight.

We are sorry and repent.

Have mercy on us according to your love.

Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us from our sin.

Renew a right spirit within us

and restore to us the joy of your salvation,

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

May the Father forgive us by the death of his Son and strengthen us to live in the power of the Spirit all our days. **Amen.**

(A group member prays)

God our Father, your Son Jesus Christ was obedient to the end and drank the cup prepared for him: may we who share this meal watch with him through the night of suffering and be faithful.

(A group member reads)

Scripture Reading Luke 22: 7-13

⁷ Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. ⁸ So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover meal for us that we may eat it." ⁹ They asked him, "Where do you want us to make preparations for it?" ¹⁰ "Listen," he said to them, "when you have entered the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him into the house he enters ¹¹ and say to the owner of the house, 'The teacher asks you, "Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?"' ¹² He will show you a large room upstairs, already furnished. Make preparations for us there." ¹³ So they went and found everything as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover meal.

We share a simple meal and everyone is invited to share something that they are grateful for or a short testimony ("How has the good news of Jesus made a difference in my life?").

Song

Be still for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One is here;
Come bow before him now with reverence and fear.
In him no sin is found, we stand on holy ground;
Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One is here.

Be still, for the glory of the Lord is shining all around;
He burns with holy fire, with splendour he is crowned.
How awesome is the sight, our radiant King of light!
Be still, for the glory of the Lord is shining all around.

Be still, for the power of the Lord is moving in this place;
He comes to cleanse and heal, to minister his grace.
No work too hard for him, in faith receive from him;
Be still, for the power of the Lord is moving in this place.

(A group member reads)

Scripture Reading: John 13: 1-15

¹ Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.² The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper³ Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God,⁴ got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself.⁵ Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him.⁶ He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"⁷ Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand."⁸ Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me."⁹ Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!"¹⁰ Jesus said to him, "One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you."¹¹ For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, "Not all of you are clean."¹² After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you?"¹³ You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am.¹⁴ So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.¹⁵ For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you.

Intercession

(Group members are invited to pray one of these five prayers of intercession each.)

Father, on this, the night he was betrayed,
your Son Jesus Christ washed his disciples' feet.
We commit ourselves to follow his example of love and service.
Lord, hear us
and humble us.

On this night, he prayed for his disciples to be one.
We pray for the unity of the church.
Lord, hear us
and unite us.

On this night,
he prayed for those who were to believe through their message.
We pray for the mission of your church.
Lord, hear us
and renew our zeal.

On this night he commanded them to love,
but suffered rejection himself.
We pray for the rejected and unloved.
Lord, hear us
and fill us with your love.

On this night he faced the pain and suffering of the cross.
We pray for the suffering and the bereaved.
Lord, hear us
and fill us with your love.

(The leader can add other prayer requests or the group members may share spontaneous prayers of intercession.)

As our Saviour has taught us, so we pray
**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

Song

Father, we adore you, lay our lives before you; how we love you.
Jesus, we adore you.....
Spirit, we adore you.....

When the disciples had sung a hymn they went out to the Mount of Olives. Jesus prayed to the Father, 'If it is possible let this cup pass from me.' He said to his disciples, 'How is it that you were not able to keep watch with me for one hour? The hour has come for the Son of Man to be handed over to sinful people. Come let us go.'

We keep a minute of silence. Our Agape Meal ends in silence.

*Please join us tomorrow for **Morning Prayer** (video available from 7am) and for **Prayer at the Cross at 2.30pm** (and available afterwards) - both on our Youtube channel: tinyurl.com/youtube-denham*

