

*The Church of God*  
(La Iglesia de Dios)

Instruction for Keeping Passover at Home – By Don Roth

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR KEEPING THE PASSOVER AT HOME**

If you are eligible to take the PASSOVER, but unable to meet with one of God's congregations at the prescribed time you should keep it in your own home alone or with other eligible members of your family. The Passover should be kept at home only when it is not possible for a member to observe it in a formal church ceremony with an ordained minister officiating. If extenuating circumstances occur, such as illness, etc. A second Passover is permitted 30 days later. (Numbers 9:11).

In advance of the Passover purchase or prepare a small amount of unleavened bread. Jewish Matzoth or Matzos may be purchased at a grocery store. Rye Krisp is unleavened and may be used – look for the word unleavened on the package. Or make some flat cakes without a leavening agent. Have ready a small amount of natural red wine. Grape juice was never used at Passover by Jesus, ancient Israel or the original pure New Testament Church. Try to obtain a natural, unfortified wine. The alcoholic content will be between 10 and 13 percent. Wines containing 19-20 percent are fortified with grape brandy and should not be used. For the foot washing have pans and towels ready.

Be prepared to observe the sacred ordinance in the early evening soon after sunset in a clean room. Have a small amount of unleavened bread and a small glass of wine prepared on a tray or table, and covered with a white cloth.

When the time has arrived for the ordinance, come into the room quietly and solemnly. Have the head of the house conduct a brief and solemn service. No unconverted or unbaptized children should participate but may observe. The Passover is the most solemn and serious occasion of the entire year, and all should come reverently.

The service begins without prayer, and is a sobering occasion because we are reflecting on the suffering and death of Jesus Christ. Also it is a most encouraging service because it reveals the love of God for His people. This is an annual reminder of the glorious victory over sin that is ours because of the sacrifice of the only begotten Son of God. Those who participate in the service are expressing their faith in Christ's death on their behalf, and renewing their commitment to have Christ live His life in them.

The following scriptures should be read: I Cor. 11:23-30. The Revised Standard Version translates verse 30: "That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died." Note: They were not relying on the living Christ for their healing and failed to realize that Jesus Himself paid the penalty for

physical transgressions of the laws governing the functions of the human body by allowing His body to be broken open by many stripes. Psalms 22:14-15 & 17. Read John 6:32-58.

If two or more persons are participating, wash one another's feet. If four or more people the men may retire to a different room. Each person should wash at least one other person's feet. If one person is alone this part of the ordinance is omitted.

### **THE BREAD**

Read Matthew 26:26-30. Read I Cor. 10:16-17. We become one body by all partaking of the bread of life, Jesus Christ. He lives His life in us through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, making us part of the ONE BODY OF CHRIST – HIS CHURCH – THE BEGOTTEN FAMILY OF GOD. The small piece of unleavened bread we eat symbolizes Jesus' body broken for our sins.

Read Isaiah 52:14-15 and 53:3-6. Notice the tremendous price God Himself, through Christ, paid in order that He might perform the miracle of healing. The Revised Standard version says, "As many were astonished at Him – His appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and His form beyond that of the sons of men – to shall He startle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths at Him; for that which has not been told them they shall see, and that which they have not heard they shall understand."

Then in Isaiah 53: "He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief....Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities (transgressions of the law); upon Him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Eternal has laid on Him the iniquity of us all". This is affirmed in the New Testament: "Who did no sin....by whose stripes you were healed". I Peter 2:22, 24.

Remove the cloth from the bread and pray over it, asking God to bless it as a symbol of Christ's body, broken for us. This prayer should include the fact that Christ suffered for us and we must be willing to suffer as He did for righteousness sake. Thank God for His love and all His mercies and benefits toward us and that He has promised to heal all our diseases. Psalms 103:2-3. Ask God to give us His mind and attitude of service as members of the Body of Christ. Then break the bread into small pieces and each person should quietly and solemnly eat the bread.

### **THE WINE**

Read Matthew 26:27-28, Hebrews 9:11-15, I John 1:7, Eph. 1:7, and Col. 1:20-22 (if desired)

These scriptures remind us of the two-part sacrifice of Christ for us. I John 3:4 says, "Sin is the transgression of the law." Physical sin is the transgression of the physical law which operates in the human body. To pay this penalty in our stead Jesus was scourged, chastised and beaten with stripes that tore His flesh from His body.

On the other hand, spiritual sin, which imposes the penalty of the second death – eternal death – is the transgression of the spiritual law as shown in Romans 7:13-14. The law is summed up by the Ten Commandments. Jesus paid the penalty for both.

Now uncover the wine and pray over it, giving thanks and asking God to bless it to this sacred use as the symbol of Christ's blood, shed for the remission of our sins. Thank God for giving us His only Son to die for our sins, washing us clean that we might be reconciled to God. Thank Him for Christ's willingness to submit to His Father's will, even unto death.

Each participant should quietly and reverently take a glass and drink the wine. Replace the empty glass on the tray or table and cover them and the bread with the cloth used.

Then read portions of John 13:18 through chapter 17 which has been previously marked to read just the portions desired. After reading this, sing a hymn and dismiss, quietly leaving the room without conversation.

Note: This service may be observed by one person alone, either man or woman, or by two or more which would then include the foot washing.

After everyone has left the room discard any left-over wine or any left-over unleavened bread that has been blessed. Only the wine and bread that has been brought into the room for the service needs to be discarded to prevent any further use.

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