



# MAUNDY THURSDAY AT HOME EXPERIENCE GUIDE: SIMPLE SEDER MEAL

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The following was adapted from several online resources that were intended for a family or small group to participate in person. Obviously, with the social distancing guidelines in place, if you are not home with a family or roommates with other believers, you will need to use some creativity in celebrating this symbolic meal.

If you are connecting virtually with a small group, I would encourage each of you to set up your elements as if you were doing the meal together in person.

If you are going to experience this alone – you can simply take the role of questioner and leader – asking the questions thoughtfully and then reading and reflecting on the response included.

## **PREPARATION:**

### **Ingredients List:**

- Matzah or Pita bread
- Wine, grape juice (or water)
- Applesauce
- Cinnamon
- Honey
- Chopped walnuts
- Sprigs of fresh parsley (or celery if no parsley available)
- Horseradish
- Lamb (or chicken if no lamb available)

### **The Setup:**

The room is prepared for a truly festive occasion. The table or tables are set with the best silver, dishes, linen and flowers. Children (or adults) may make large banners on shelf paper of the Paschal lamb, breads on a platter, the Last Supper, phrases from the scriptures, chalices, loaves and fishes, brick walls to symbolize the slavery of the Jews, and marked doorposts, etc. In this way the children can enjoy a creative experience, decorate the home or hall and learn through symbolism. A wine glass (or grape juice for the young children) is set before each place. A candle is placed at the head of the table.

Set the table with candles and include a small dish of water and a hand towel, as well as another bowl

with salt water. Set out a plate with several pieces of the bread, with the top 3 wrapped in a white napkin.

At each place setting, there should be a glass of white grape juice or a glass of water. On each plate, there should be: a sprig of parsley, 1 t. of horseradish, 1 t. of "Haroset", a small piece of lamb (or chicken).

To make the "Haroset" you take 3 cups of applesauce, 1 T cinnamon, 2 T honey, 1 cup chopped walnuts, ¼ cup wine or grape juice and mix it together. Chill.



## **THE MEAL:**

### **Part One – Opening Blessing and Explanation**

All gather around the table and stand quietly. The mother, or chosen host or hostess, lights a candle, since it is the Jewish mother's privilege to light the Sabbath candles. Words to be read/said aloud are *italicized*.

HOST/HOSTESS: The traditional prayer of the mother in the Jewish family as she lights the feast day candle before the meal is this:

*Blessed are you, O Lord God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us by your commandments and has commanded us to kindle the festival lights. Blessed are you, O Lord God, King of the universe, who has kept us alive and sustained us and brought us to this season. May our home be consecrated O God, by the light of your glory shining upon us in the blessing and bringing us peace.*

DESIGNATED LEADER:

*This is Holy Week, a time that joins for us the Old and the New Covenant. At this season the Jewish people celebrate the feast of the Passover or Pasch. More than 1,400 years before the time of Christ, the chosen people were suffering in slavery in Egypt. God raised up Moses as their leader and Moses tried to secure their release from captivity. Despite the hardships of nine successive plagues which God sent to them, the Egyptians still refused the pleas of Moses. Then an angel of the Lord was sent to strike down the first born son of every family; but at God's command, each Jewish family had sacrificed a lamb and sprinkled its blood on the doorposts. And the angel, seeing the blood, passed over their homes and their children were spared.*

*After this plague, Pharaoh finally permitted the Jews to leave. They fled in haste, to wander amid the hardships in the desert for forty years before coming to the promised land. And God commanded Moses that the Jews should make a remembrance of their day of deliverance (Exodus 12:14-28). Thus the Passover became the great feast of sacrifice, of deliverance and of thanksgiving. Each Passover meal revolves around the retelling of this amazing story.*

*We who are the followers of Christ see the work of God in the world for His people. As God sent Moses to rescue the Israelites from captivity in Egypt, so He lovingly sent His Son to redeem fallen man from slavery to sin. By the sacrifice of Himself, the perfect lamb, Christ opened the gates of heaven to us.*

*At this time Christians and Jews celebrate their own feasts in their own ways and we can see in these celebrations the common bond of the symbolism of the Exodus. Jesus was a Jew and today we wish to draw upon the traditional Jewish Seder and the words of the New Testament to help us more fully appreciate Jesus' observance of His Jewish heritage, whose laws He kept.*

*Matthew's, Mark's and Luke's accounts of Christ's sacrifice for us each begin with His celebration of the paschal meal: "Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus to say, 'Where do you want us to make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?'" (Matthew 26:17)*

## Part Two – Traditional Passover Prayers

The first act of the Jewish Passover is a benediction, called the Kiddush. The leader takes up the cup of juice (or water) and recites this blessing:



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LEADER:

*Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine. Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the universe who has chosen us among all peoples and sanctified us with your commandments. In love have you given us, O Lord our God, solemn days of joy and festive seasons of gladness, even this day of the feast of the unleavened bread, a holy ceremony for us, a memorial of the departure from Egypt. You have chosen us for your service and have made us sharers in the blessing of these holy festivals. Blessed are you, O Lord our God, Who has preserved us, sustained us, and brought us to this season.*

All present take up their cups.

*We who are Christians know, as Luke writes (22:18), that on the night our Lord celebrated the Pasch with His disciples, He said: "From now on, I tell you I shall not drink wine until the kingdom of God comes."*

All present drink from their cups.

LEADER:

*The next traditional act of the Jewish Passover meal is eating the greens. The greens are a symbol that nature comes to life in Spring-time. Following the Jewish custom, we dip the greens in salt water to remind us of the salty tears the Jews shed while in slavery in Egypt and pray:  
Blessed are you, O Lord our God King of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the earth.*

All present take their parsley, dip it in salt water and eat.

LEADER: *Another action of the Jewish Passover meal is breaking the bread.*

The leader lifts up the bread and says:

*This is the bread of affliction which our fathers ate in the land of Egypt. Let all who are hungry come and eat. Let all who are in need come and celebrate the Passover with us. May it be God's will to redeem us from all trouble and from all servitude.*

The leader passes the bread around for each person to tear off pieces for the following ceremony.

## Part Three – The Traditional Questions

LEADER:

*At the ancient Passover meal the youngest son asked the father four traditional questions about the Passover. In time, in order to carry on a discussion about the symbolic foods, other questions were also asked about their meanings. The father replied "according to the understanding of the son."*

*In more recent times the same four questions have been asked at the Seder. The questions we ask tonight are similar but have been added to and adapted to bring to mind the relationships between the Old and the New Testament.*

**Question #1: Why is this night different from all other nights?**

LEADER:

*In the book of Exodus (13:3-10) we find the ancient teaching of the Jews concerning the meaning of the Passover meal:*

*“Then Moses said to the people, “Commemorate this day, the day you came out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery, because the LORD brought you out of it with a mighty hand. Eat nothing containing yeast. Today, in the month of Aviv, you are leaving. When the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Hivites and Jebusites—the land he swore to your ancestors to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey—you are to observe this ceremony in this month: For seven days eat bread made without yeast and on the seventh day hold a festival to the LORD. Eat unleavened bread during those seven days; nothing with yeast in it is to be seen among you, nor shall any yeast be seen anywhere within your borders. On that day tell your son, ‘I do this because of what the LORD did for me when I came out of Egypt.’ This observance will be for you like a sign on your hand and a reminder on your forehead that this law of the LORD is to be on your lips. For the LORD brought you out of Egypt with his mighty hand. You must keep this ordinance at the appointed time year after year.”*

*Therefore are we bound to give thanks, to praise, and to bless Him who worked all these wonders for our fathers and for us. He brought us out from bondage to freedom, from sorrow to gladness, and from mourning to a festival day, and from darkness to great light, and from servitude to redemption.*

*We who are followers of Christ know that as God rescued the Israelites through Moses from the slavery of Egypt, so He redeemed us through Christ from our slavery to sin. Christ passed from this world to His Father, showing us the way and preparing a place for us, as He said: “No one can come to the Father except through me” (John 14: 6).*

*Paul tells us, “Now, however, you have been set free from sin, you have been made slaves of God, and you get a reward leading to your sanctification and ending in eternal life. For the wage paid by sin is death; the present given by God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:22-23).*

### **Question #2: Why do we eat bitter herbs tonight at this special meal?**

LEADER:

*The Jews of old ate bitter herbs on Passover night, as do the Jews today, because their fathers were slaves in Egypt and their lives were made bitter.*

*We who are followers of Christ do not hesitate to taste of this bitterness as a reminder of His passion and death or to recall that He said, “Anyone who does not carry his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:27).*

Take a piece of bread, dip it in the horseradish and take a bite.

### **Question #3: Why do we eat herbs tonight, and this time with the Haroset?**

LEADER:

*We dip the bitter herbs into the Haroset, sweet jam, as did the Jews of old, as a sign of hope. Their fathers were able to withstand the bitterness of slavery because it was sweetened by the hope of freedom. We who are the followers of Christ are reminded that by sharing in the bitterness of Christ's sufferings we strengthen our hope.*



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As Paul says: "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us." (Romans 5:1-5)



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Christ and His disciples—and all Jews who celebrate the Passover—tell the Haggadah during the meal. Haggadah means "retelling." It is the retelling of the Israelites' salvation from the tenth plague because the frames of their doors had been marked with the blood of the lamb sacrificed at God's command and of the story of the Exodus of the Jews from Egypt.

The yearly retelling of the deliverance of the Jews is an essential act in the Passover meal. As the evidence of God's loving care is refreshed in the minds of each individual each year, so is the renewal of our dependency upon God for all things, particularly our freedom from slavery, even slavery to sin.

This time, dip your bread into the Horseradish and Haroset and then take a bite.

**Question #4: Why did the Jews at the time of Christ eat the Paschal lamb when they celebrated the Passover meal?**

LEADER:

*At the time of the Liberation from Egypt, at God's command each family took a lamb, sacrificed it, ate it, and sprinkled its blood on the doorpost and lintel. And on that night, seeing the blood, the angel of the Lord passed over them, killing the Egyptians and sparing the Israelites (see Exodus 12:26-27).*

*The Jews continued a memorial sacrifice in the Temple of a lamb for each family in Jerusalem at the time of the Passover. The lamb was brought home, roasted and eaten in a memorial meal. Since the destruction of the Temple there is no longer sacrifice, but the meaning of the Paschal Lamb is retold by Jewish people today.*

*Followers of Christ know that Christ is our Lamb, who sacrificed Himself for us, and by His death and resurrection, enabled us to merit passing into eternal life with God.*

*As Paul says: "Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed" (1 Corinthians 5:7).*

Take a piece of the meat and eat it.

**Question #5: Why did Christ and His disciples eat unleavened bread at the Passover table?**

LEADER:

*The blessing and the breaking of the bread is one of the important parts of the feast of the Pasch. The origin of the bread was this:*

*When Pharaoh let our forefathers go from Egypt, they were forced to flee in great haste. They had not time to bake their bread; they could not wait for the yeast to rise. So the sun beating down on the dough as they carried it along baked it into a flat unleavened bread.*

*The matzah was the "bread of affliction" which enabled the Chosen People to be delivered from slavery. On this night the followers of Christ recall that before our Lord distributed the bread to all the disciples He added the significant words of the Lord's Supper. Through this action all men are able to become one in Christ, as*

Paul says: "The fact that there is only one loaf means that, though there are many of us, we form a single body because we all share in this one loaf" (1 Corinthians 10:17).



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The Leader takes one of the pieces of bread, tears a piece off and eats it, then passes it around the table for each person to do as well.

### **Question #6: Why did Christ and His disciples drink wine at the Last Supper?**

LEADER:

*The feast of the Passover begins and ends with the drinking of a cup of wine. It is both a blessing and a thanksgiving expressed in this benediction prayer:*

*"Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the universe, creator of the fruit of the vine."*

*On this night the followers of Christ read in the gospel of Luke: "And he said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God." After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, "Take this and divide it among you. For I tell you I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."*

*"In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you" (Luke 22:15-18, 20).*

All take a sip from their cups.

### **Part Four – Psalm of Praise**

LEADER:

*Let's close our seder ceremony by reciting the concluding Psalm of the Hallel, keeping in mind that Matthew tells us: "When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives." (Matthew 26:30).*

All recite Psalm 118 (you can take turns reading parts of it, or read the entire 29 verses together).

LEADER: *Amen*

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