

Devotion to the Breaking of Bread

Luke says the early Church was devoted to “the breaking of bread” (Luke 2:42). Why? Because disciples recognize the risen Jesus in the “breaking of the bread” (Luke 24:30-35). Christians are as much devoted to breaking bread as they are to praying, reading the Bible (“the apostles’ teaching”) and fellowship, because Jesus took bread and said “this is my body” and he took wine and said “this is my blood.” Whenever we break bread together in his name we are recognizing the Son of God in the flesh as Jesus.

The bread points us to more than just Jesus’ death. It also points us to the incarnation (the Word became flesh, symbolized by bread), and the resurrection (we recognize the risen Jesus in the breaking of the bread), and his second coming (it proclaims the Lord’s death *until he comes*, 1 Cor. 11:26). If we only interpret the breaking of bread in the light of Jesus’ death, then we won’t be very devoted to it because, after all, who wants to have a funeral for Jesus every Sunday? The early Church was devoted to it because they saw that it points us to the totality of who the Son of God is in flesh and blood as the man Jesus Christ—his incarnation, his life, his death, his resurrection, and his ascension. Communion can communicate the entire gospel of Jesus in one simple moment of everyone eating together. It’s also worth noting that Luke doesn’t say they worried it wouldn’t be “special” if they were devoted to it every time they came together. They realized that every aspect of worship (prayer, sermons, songs, etc.) feels more special some times than other times, but we still do them every time because we’re devoted to them.

The Good Shepherd Jesus told Peter, “feed my sheep” (John 21:17). Feed them what? Feed them Jesus. The early Church was devoted to feeding people Jesus—through the Bible, through prayer, through fellowship, and through the breaking of the bread that is his body.

~ *Jonathan Stepp*