

The Passover meal, known as Seder (meaning “order” in reference to the liturgy of eating the foods in a specific order) in Hebrew, will be held across the UK on April 6th 2023. Jesus followers celebrate this meal which changed in 70AD after the destruction of the temple as they moved from temple-focused to home-focused, keeping the Jewish tradition of the passover meal - celebrating Jesus’ death and resurrection as the new “Exodus” for all.

For us as a church family, the week leading up to Easter weekend is an opportunity to gather in connect groups and reflect together in an intentional way; remembering and celebrating who we are because of Jesus. The guidelines below is a simplified version of this meal and will set you up to facilitate an evening around the table modelling what Jesus would have done 2000 years ago shortly before his arrest.

We utilise and acknowledge the methods adopted by Jews for thousands of years and remember that God’s story started with one nation and has now become the story for all nations. *“...every generation...should see themselves as though they personally had been liberated from Egypt.”* (Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson).

Acknowledgements:

FFALD Y BRENIN, Daily Prayer, Gweddi Ddyddiol (2021)
Celebrating the Lord’s Day, Servant Books (1986)
The Haggadah, Chabad.org (2021)

What you will need:

Set the table for all who are joining your connect group. The meal will be the centrepiece of the night and will facilitate a prayerful reflection of the past year, anticipating the year ahead and worship of Jesus.

The main items you will need are:

- x2 candles
- Wine / juice
- A starter - preferably bread
- A main meal - usually meat but can be dietary and vegetarian suitable

How to use the resource:

You may want to lead the group yourself or have different people lead different parts. You may also wish to add or take away certain elements to suit your group. Feel free to use this in the best way that suits you and your connect group.

Opening blessing:

Heavenly Father, in honour of your Son, Light of the World and Author of Life, we are about to light this candle as a reminder of the light you brought into the world. We acknowledge that you raised your Son Jesus from the dead and began the new creation. May our celebration of his resurrection this day be filled with your peace and heavenly blessing. Be gracious to us and cause your Holy Spirit to dwell more richly among us.

Blessed are you , Lord our God, who created light on the first day and raised your Son, the Light of the World, to begin the new creation.

Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who gives us joy as we kindle the light for the Lord's Day

The Lighting of the candles

- *Light the candles and recite the following blessing:*

Read: John 1:1-5

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

Share together:

Prayers of Petition:

In the year ahead, where do you want to see "light" in your own circumstances, or in the lives of others?

Blessing:

Brothers and sisters, as we expectantly prepare our hearts during this Holy week, let us welcome the presence of Jesus in joy and peace.

Today, we honour the Lord and celebrate his resurrection. We cease from work in order to worship God and remember the eternal life to which he has called us.

The blessing of the wine

- *Pour wine/juice into everyone's cups and then raise your own cup, and recite the following prayer:*

Let us praise God with this symbol of joy and thank him for the blessings of the past year - for health, strength, and wisdom, for our life together, for the discipline of our trials and temptations, for his comfort through pain and challenges and for the happiness that has come to us.

*On this mountain the Lord Almighty will prepare
a feast of rich food for all peoples,
a banquet of aged wine—
the best of meats and the finest of wines. Isaiah 25:6*

Let us thank him this day especially for the great victory he has won for us in Christ. By his resurrection he has triumphed over sin, conquered death, defeated Satan, and won for us the riches of an eternal inheritance. We have been brought to life together with Christ and raised up with Him and made to sit in heavenly places. Lord our God, you have given us a new birth through the resurrection of Christ.

Share together:

Prayers of Praise and thanksgiving:

Where have you seen “victory” in your life this past year?

Blessing:

We thank you Lord, that as each day unfolds, you continually desire to speak to us, to speak a new word to us; to clear out the stale bread from yesterday, to give us fresh bread for today, to nourish and sustain us.

Jesus, you declared,

"I am the bread of life, whoever comes to me will never go hungry." John 6:35

The breaking of bread

- *Serve the starter or bread to everyone around the table and symbolically break the bread for all to see*

Our Good Shepherd, calling and guiding us, comforting and reassuring us, encouraging and strengthening us; for this day, for this time, we seek your presence, the presence of your spirit to empower us and enlighten us.

Lord Jesus, Lamb of God, you took up our pain and sorrows. You bore our sin and brought us peace, and by your wounds we are made whole. Isaiah 53:4-5

Father we still ourselves now with the knowledge that we are loved by you.

Lord, you go before us and follow us; you place your hand of blessing on our heads.

Lord, you have examined our hearts and know everything about us.

How precious are your thoughts about us, O God.

They cannot be numbered; they outnumber the grains of sand.

You formed our inward parts; you knitted us together in our mother's womb.

We praise you, for we are fearfully and wonderfully made.

Share together:

Prayers of Lament:

Looking back over this past year, where have you experienced brokenness?

After everyone has shared:

Lord, we have come to you. We have laid down our burdens; and we receive your rest.

We will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O Lord, make us dwell in safety.

Blessing:

Lord, help us walk slowly and deeply with you, through the hours and minutes of each day that we may find all of you that is to be found.

Allow us not to miss you because of hurry and busyness but let us sense the fullness of your presence in each moment.

Slow down both our feet and our hearts that we might be more present to you as we go about our day.

The provision of the feast

- *Serve the main meal to everyone and allow everyone to continue connecting*

When everyone is finished:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

As we look back on this past year together,

We declare that you, God, provided for us our daily bread.

We thank you Jesus that because of your death and resurrection we can celebrate in joy the forgiveness of our sins

We thank you for, Father, for the moments of courage where we were able to forgive those who sinned against us

We thank you Holy Spirit for the moments of wisdom and guidance where you led us away from temptation and delivered us from evil

We declare together that the Kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever.

Amen.

Share together:

Prayers of Acknowledgement and Declaration:

As you look back on your past year; where did you experience provision?