

Suggested Outline for a Love Feast

(Drawing upon an article written some years ago by Stan Brown)

The Love Feast never acquired a formal liturgy but did develop a general order. The order we followed at the Synod Love Feast is below but feel free to vary it as suits your context. Depending upon how you choose to reflect upon Scripture, this Agape meal can be led by anyone with the necessary gifts and graces in a congregation.

Hymn

NB "Come and let us sweetly join" is a hymn Charles Wesley wrote specifically for Love Feasts. It is in both Hymns & Psalms and Singing the Faith (with a lovely new tune).

Prayers

The form we chose was participative within an overall structure – "We praise God the Father/Son/Holy who is....." with people suggesting adjectives or names, followed by a short prayer of confession with absolution.

Sung Grace

We sang "Be present at our table Lord" to Tallis Canon as a round

Distribution of food.... e.g. fruited bread / cake

You can use whatever food you wish, but ideally not ordinary bread as this may lead people to confuse an Agape meal with the Lord's Supper. The recipe we used at Synod is here: <http://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/1977666/fruit-and-spice-soda-bread>. As each person received the food, they were invited to share something they wanted to give thanks to God for. They then tore off some of the fruit bread. If people do not want to speak they simply eat and pass on. Remember to provide a gluten-free option

Circulation of the Loving Cup

*We used a fruit juice. If you have access to a traditional two-handled Loving Cup then it would be great to use this. If not, you can either pass round a cup of drink or, as we did, have separate cups and a jug, inviting people to pour themselves a drink as they share. As people received the cup they were invited to say something of where they had found God to be present to them in the last week. Whatever question you choose, try to root it in present experience – where is God at work **now** in people's lives?*

Collection for the poor

Scripture

Reflection upon scripture

Either by leader and / or by the congregation

Invitation to final reflection / extempore prayer / silence

Hymn

The grace

The above are only suggestions. Invite God to lead you in how to take this treasure of our tradition and remake it then invite the Holy Spirit to breathe life into it.

The Revd Rachel Parkinson | Wolverhampton & Shrewsbury District | *(Autumn 2016)*