

“OFFERING OF FELLOWSHIP”

(Levitical Offerings, pt 2)

(This lesson can stand alone, but having the base knowledge from pt 1 is helpful)

For The Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta

By Sally Ulrey

Key verses: Leviticus ch 3&7

“Offer it as an expression of thankfulness...” (Lev 7:12)

Objective:

- To learn about one of the Levitical offerings (fellowship offering)
- To understand the main point of this offering was to express thankfulness at being able to enjoy fellowship (restored relationship) with God
- To make our own offerings of thankfulness and fellowship

The Set up: Moderate

The Plan:

- Hook: Making Bread (15 mins)
 - As youth make simple bread (from a basic Levitical “recipe”), they will examine the symbolism of each ingredient
- Book: The Fellowship Offering (10 mins)
 - Explain details of the Fellowship Offering, specifically how it was the only offering:
 - ...that wasn’t required; it was voluntary as an expression of thankfulness
 - ...where the offerer got to eat part of the sacrifice (communion)
- Look: Our Offering of Fellowship with Each Other (15 mins)
 - Small group time with intentional questions to foster true Christian fellowship
- Took: Our Offering of Fellowship with God (5-30+ mins)
 - Share the bread made together; close in prayer
 - Optional: bring in a priest to consecrate the bread and have communion

The Supplies:

- Copy of lesson
- Copies of Small Group Questions
- Copies of Recipe for each student
- Bibles
- Flour, water, olive oil, salt, measuring cups/spoons
- Griddle (or oven)
- Optional: Communion supplies and priest

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Making Bread (Hook, 15 mins)

The point of the fellowship offering was to express thankfulness that they have fellowship (restored relationship) with God; that they've been rescued from death and given new life (in the OT, it was through those sacrificial offerings).

In this section, youth will make bread that would go along with the animal sacrifice of the fellowship offering. Each ingredient of the bread symbolized something, so youth will learn about the symbolism, and think about how it applies to their own lives.

Later, they'll share this bread in fellowship with God and with each other. There are a lot of parallels between the fellowship offering of Leviticus and communion. The fellowship offering was the only offering where the worshipper got to partake in the meal, and eat and drink the bread and wine which were offered with the sacrifice.

Set-up: You'll need to figure out if you want to try to bake the bread in the oven or if you want to cook it on a griddle. You'll want to preheat whichever one you use. If you know you'll be tight on time, you may want to have the ingredients pre-measured as well. See recipe at the end of the lesson.

- Gather the youth in a kitchen area where you'll be making the bread.
- Explain that when Israelites offered sacrifices to God back in the Old Testament (OT), a grain offering (bread) usually accompanied those sacrifices. The ingredients of the bread all symbolized something.
 - Flour without yeast (dump flour in the bowl). Yeast often symbolized sin, so it was not included in making bread offered to God, to remind the worshipper to rid their lives of sin. Take a moment to silently confess any sins to God before moving on
 - Water (pour water in, mixing slowly). Water symbolizes cleansing and purification. Take a moment to ask God to cleanse and purify your heart
 - Oil (pour oil in, mix). Oil symbolized abundance, and also was associated with the Holy Spirit. In the OT, only prophets, priests and kings could receive the Holy Spirit (after Pentecost, the Holy Spirit has been poured out on all believers). All of those OT positions were anointed with oil. There's a close association between oil and the Holy Spirit's anointing for your calling. Take a moment and ask the Holy Spirit to be present with you and help you live into your calling (if you don't know what that is SPECIFICALLY, then it's GENERALLY simply living out your Christian faith)
 - Salt (dump salt in, mix). Salt gives the flavor. Even before Jesus said we should be like salt (standing out) in the world, the Israelites used salt to symbolize what they should be: God's people, set a part...the flavor of love in a bland world. Take a moment and reflect on how you flavor the world with love.
- Dump some flour out on the counter and have the youth knead the bread until smooth-ish (too much flour will make it tough).
- Cook on the griddle, or leave for a few mins to bake in the oven. If you are short on time, and need to move on to the next piece of the lesson, leave an adult in charge of this.

Transition: One of the times that this particular kind of bread was offered was as part of an offering called a Fellowship Offering. Let's learn more about that one.

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The Fellowship Offering (Book, 10 mins)

In this section, we'll briefly tell about some of the Levitical Offerings, and then explore what set the "Fellowship Offering" apart. The main point of the fellowship offering is thankfulness, specifically that you have a right relationship (fellowship) with God, that you've been rescued from death and given new life. Some of the things that set the fellowship offering apart are that it was voluntary (not required like most offerings), and this was the only offering where the worshipper got to partake in some of what was offered (most offerings allow for the priest to eat some, but not the worshipper).

- Give an overview of some of the principles we learn from the Levitical Offerings (below)
- You won't be reading the Scripture in its entirety, but be sure to reference Leviticus 3 & 7
- Call attention to main points (below).
- This is kind of heavy on the teaching and theological concepts, so you will want to familiarize yourself with the main points.

Mini-Lecture (10 mins)

There are lots of rules about when and how and what kinds of things to offer to God in the OT sacrificial system. Here's a quick overview (for more details, look in Leviticus 1-7).

1. **WHY:** As weird as it is for us to think about burning things in worship to God, the purpose of the offerings is what we can learn from: making those offerings reminded the worshippers...
 - That God is worthy of worship and of everything they could give.
 - That worship requires sacrifice, that we give of ourselves to God.
 - To regularly acknowledge that God is good and awesome and amazing.We still do all of those things in our worship today.
2. **WHAT:** there were a couple of different kinds of offerings for different reasons.
 - **Burnt offering:** was a sacrifice where the whole animal was completely burned, and it reminded the worshippers to dedicate themselves completely and wholly to God in undivided devotion
 - **Sin offering & Guilt offering:** Acknowledgment and confession of unintentional sin. Sin offering was what you did when you couldn't make restitution. Guilt offering was when you could make restitution.
 - **Fellowship Offering:**
 - Expressed thankfulness that they had fellowship (restored relationship) with God. Just to enjoy God's goodness.
 - Completely voluntary. This offering was not required.
 - Shared the meal. This is one of the only offerings where the person making offering got to partake in eating the meal together. Pretty much every other offering, the worshipper gave it all to God (sometimes priests got to eat, but not the worshipper), but this one, the worshippers got to share the meal. In that way, it resembles communion.

The Fellowship Offering was an animal sacrifice, but like most offerings, it was always accompanied by a grain offering (like the bread we just made) and a drink offering (wine).

Again, this was the only offering where the worshipper got to eat some of the bread and wine.

Our Offering of Fellowship to Each Other (Look, 15 mins)

In this part, we're going to give the youth some framework for intentional Christian fellowship with one another in the form of small groups using some really focused questions. The main point is to show that sometimes, it's just good to BE with each other, and to be with God. Sometimes we get caught up on what God requires of us (sometimes it may even feel like God demands things from us), but the Fellowship Offering reminds us of what relationship with God was supposed to be like: not just rules, but relationship...being present together. Sharing a meal together.

- Put them in groups of 3 or 4. If you have more time for small groups, allow for it. The point of the lesson is to BE together in fellowship!
- If you have some youth or adults who can be leaders in the small groups and can prepare some deep answers in advance, that will help you accomplish the goal of true Christian bonding.
- Tell them to answer the questions FIRST... openly and honestly and deeply...encourage them to engage in answering those!
- Then tell them that if they're done and have more time, this is their opportunity to get to know each other better! Take advantage of it!

Discussion Questions (15 mins)

1. Which ingredient in the bread making was a symbol that stuck out to you or meant something to you? Why?
 - a. Flour without yeast = no sin
 - b. Water = purification & cleansing
 - c. Oil = abundance, Holy Spirit—helps you fulfill your calling
 - d. Salt = flavor, stand out from the blandness
2. How are you doing deep down inside? What's going on in your life that is contributing to that feeling?
3. What pointed you to God this week, or when did you feel close to God this week?
4. When is a time when you really felt God's presence in your life?
5. Tell the group about your full name: what it is, what it means, nicknames, if you like it, why your parents named you that, etc.
6. Tell the group your favorite service in the church year and why
7. Tell the group about a time when something you realized about God left you in awe

Our Offering of Fellowship to God (Took, 5 mins)

This is the take-home reminder to be thankful for our fellowship (restored relationship) with God. The youth will share the bread they've made with each other, communion style (have them break off a piece, offer it to the youth next to them, then pass it around in a circle, serving each other).

You can also give them some extra bread to take home, along with a recipe for making it (and what each ingredient symbolizes)

Optional: If you have time, this would be a great place to ask a priest to come celebrate communion, consecrating the bread you've made. But this will add 30 mins or so.

- Remind them of everything the bread symbolizes: that we have been cleansed (water) from sin (no yeast), and have been given the abundance of the Holy Spirit (oil) to fulfill our calling to stand out with love (salt).
- Remind them that this is also a symbol of our fellowship (restored relationship) with God and others
- Explain that a shared meal was often the thing that sealed fellowship, and that is what we will do now.
- Explain how they will pass the bread (communion-style....one youth will break off a piece and offer it to the next youth, then pass it around the circle, serving each other)
- Distribute extra bread for them to take home, along with recipe cards

Close in prayer, thanking God that He has made a way for us to have fellowship with Him, that we have a restored relationship, that we have been rescued from death through the offering of Jesus Christ, His Son, and we have been given a new life through the Holy Spirit.

**Recipe for Bread
(based on Leviticus)**

1 cup flour (without yeast)	=	No sin
½ cup water	=	Cleansing, purification
2 Tablespoon Olive Oil	=	Abundance, Holy Spirit-helps you fulfill your calling
1 teaspoon salt	=	Flavor, stand out from the blandness

The bread symbolizes: that we have been cleansed (water) from sin (no yeast), that we have fellowship (restored relationship) with God, and have been given the abundance of the Holy Spirit (oil) to fulfill our calling to stand out with love (salt).

Directions: Combine flour and salt in a mixing bowl. Mix in olive oil with a fork. Add water slowly, add more if needed until just combined. Dump a little flour on the counter (maybe ½ cup), and put dough onto flour to knead until smooth(ish). Make into 6 balls, then press down until thin.

Cook on griddle: Over medium high heat (let it heat up first). Cook 30-45 seconds until brown spots appear, then flip.

Bake: 425 for 8-10 mins on parchment paper on a cookie sheet

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