

Agape

Song: Gather Us In

Welcome sisters of Christ to this Agape or love feast. This feast was a religious meal shared by the early Christians, often in the home of an elder of the church. These Christian friends would gather to share the bread and wine and to celebrate their unity, their love for Christ and their love for one another.

We are gathered around this table tonight in the presence of the Lord to rejoice in His love and to offer thanksgiving for each other and for all women who share in this journey.

Let us pray: Holy Father, tonight we remember and give thanks for the lives of women of faith who have helped us to know You and bring about peace and justice in your reign. We give thanks for the work of women's hands that have made our lives more meaningful and fulfilled. Amen.

Song: Let Us Break Bread Together

Light of love...Essence of friendship... Bread of peace to share. That is what you see before you now. The light that surrounds us symbolizes the Divine Light of Christ, enkindled within our hearts. Keep this Divine light burning always to light up the lives of those around you with God's love.

The drink made from fruit, His gift to us made by loving hands to share with each other in true friendship. And the bread, made from women's hands- another gift from the Father is to be shared in His love, friendship and peace.

I bring sourdough bread to our table tonight. Its leavening agent is a small amount of dough that is passed on from batch to batch. Let it symbolize our mothers, our grandmothers and all our foremothers. Let it represent all those women who have shared with us their wisdom. Let it represent all the women whose steady yet unrecognized service has nurtured us along the way. I bring sourdough bread to our table tonight.

Response: Bless this bread O God; it is the work of women's hands.

I bring rye bread to our table tonight. Let it represent for us all women whose work is hard, burdensome or dangerous. Let it represent for us all women who are unemployed or discriminated against in wages and work. Let it represent for us all women who nurture a family and have a career. I bring rye bread to our table tonight.

Response: Bless this bread O God; it is the work of women's hands.

I bring whole wheat to our table tonight. Let it represent for us all women who live with illness or pain. Let it represent for us all women who do the work of healing. I bring whole wheat to our table tonight.

Response: Bless this bread O God; it is the work of women's hands.

I bring cornbread to our table tonight, a bread shared by many cultures. Let it represent for us all women who have been forced from their homes. Let it represent for us all women struggling for independence and freedom. I bring cornbread to our table tonight.

Response: Bless this bread O God; it is the work of women's hands.

I bring unleavened bread to our table tonight. Matzah is the bread of the Passover celebration. Let it represent for us all women who are lonely and yearning for relationship. Let it represent all women who do the work of hospitality in welcoming the stranger into our homes, our communities, and our churches. I bring unleavened bread to our table tonight.

Response: Bless this bread O God; it is the work of women's hands.

I bring ciabatta to our table tonight. Let it represent all women who suffer in lands filled with warfare and violence. Let it represent all women who suffer loss due to the breakup of their families through divorce, separation, or children leaving home. Let it represent all women who are peacemakers. I bring ciabatta to our table tonight.

Response: Bless this bread O God; it is the work of women's hands.

I bring rice bread to our table tonight. Let it symbolize the sisters of the future, our daughters. Let it represent mothers and expectant mothers. Let it represent all women who care for and teach children from one generation to another. I bring rice bread to our table tonight.

Response: Bless this bread O God; it is the work of women's hands.

I bring sprouted grain bread to our table tonight. Let it represent all women who are striving to be responsible stewardesses of the good things God has given. Let it represent all women who are attempting to make moral and ethical decisions in a complex society. Let it represent all women who yearn for quiet while caught up in the hectic pace of life. I bring sprouted grain bread to our table tonight.

Response: Bless this bread O God; it is the work of women's hands.

And so dear Lord, we ask you to bless these gifts and surround each of us with your Grace, that we may grow closer to You in love. May we truly become for each other the light of love as we share in the drink of friendship and through this bread spread Your peace throughout the world.

In His honor, let us begin the celebration of Agape. Following custom, do not break the bread for yourself - but take it and give it to the person next to you saying, "Bread of Life". Then take a glass of grape juice, pass it and rejoice in this new relationship with God as you say, "Cup of Salvation".

Background Music: *One Bread, One Body*
 Abba Father
 Peace is Flowing Like a River

Conclude with Blessing: Shalom