

Church of God

Sunday School



THE TABERNACLE #7 – THE TABLE OF SHOWBREAD

DAILY READINGS:

- ❑ **Monday:** God gave the exact measurements for the table (Exodus 25:23-28; Exodus 37:15).
- ❑ **Tuesday:** The table and God's Word have borders (Exodus 25:25; Proverbs 22:28; Revelation 22:18-19).
- ❑ **Wednesday:** The bread was prepared "every sabbath" (1 Chronicles 9:31-32).
- ❑ **Thursday:** The bread was always on the table, representing Jesus (Exodus 25:30; Numbers 4:7; John 6:51).
- ❑ **Friday:** The twelve cakes were placed in two rows and were to be eaten by the priests (Leviticus 24:5-9).
- ❑ **Saturday:** God has prepared a table for His people (Psalm 23:5; John 21:12; 1 Corinthians 10:20-21).

MEMORY VERSE: *"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."*
— Revelation 3:20

Fellowship Is Sharing Something in Common

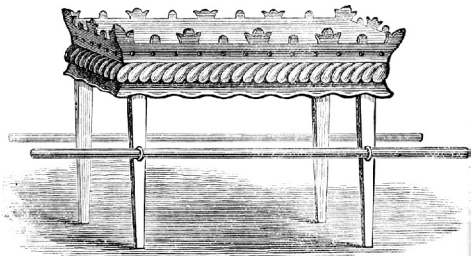
In many families, the dinner table is a special place. It is where people gather, eat together, and spend time together. Conversations often include shared interests and what happened during the day. In the Old Testament, sharing a meal also was a social time. To "break bread together" was symbolic of friendship, and being invited to a king's table was a great honor (2 Samuel 9:7). These examples help us understand the meaning of the Table of Showbread (also called "shewbread"; Numbers 4:7).

The word *fellowship* means "sharing something in common." When friends and families gather around a dinner table, they usually share something—family ties, friendship, or gathered for a local event (such as a church picnic). At these gatherings, conversations often include what people have in common.

When Adam and Eve sinned, their fellowship with God was broken. The Table of Showbread was another way God taught how He wanted to restore that fellowship. Salvation is not only about accepting Christ into our hearts—it also includes regular times of fellowship with Him.

The Table

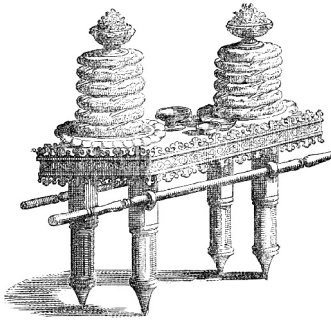
The measurements of the Tabernacle and its furnishings teach spiritual lessons. The table for the bread was only one cubit wide—just wide enough for the bread and nothing else. The table was made of wood covered with gold. The wood represents Jesus becoming human, and the gold represents His divinity. It also teaches that our human thoughts (the "wood") must stay under God's Word (the "gold").



When our ideas take over, our relationship with God is hindered. Have you ever thought, "I'm going to get even with them"? If so, was the "wood" or the "gold" showing? God's table is only wide enough for His Word. We cannot add our human ideas.

The table had a distinctive border. This border kept the bread from sliding off when the Kohathites carried it through the wilderness. A border is a boundary; it keeps things in their proper place. Just like the rules your family may have for eating at the dinner table, the Word of God also has some distinctive borders. Fellowship with God has requirements.

The Showbread



The Table of Showbread was also called "The Bread of the Face" or "The Bread of the Presence" because the bread was put on the table in the Lord's presence (before His face). The "bread" represents Jesus Christ, who was born in Bethlehem, which means "house of bread." Jesus said, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven" (John 6:51), and Amos 8:11 explains "bread" is "the words of the LORD."

According to the Talmud, the family of Garmu prepared the bread "every sabbath" (1 Chronicles 9:31-32). They took their responsibility seriously. They refused to share the recipe. (Their reason was, "Lest some unworthy person will use the secret of the showbread for idol worship.") Also, they would not use this recipe for their common bread (their personal food) so they could not be accused of using the Tabernacle flour for their own food. How seriously do we take the Word of God today?

There were "twelve cakes" of bread (Leviticus 24:5). This represents God providing bread for ALL the twelve tribes of Israel. The "cakes" (bread), arranged in two rows, represents the two portions of the Bible (the Old Testament and the New Testament). Just as God provided literal bread in the wilderness for all His people ("manna"; Exodus 16:15), He provides spiritual bread for all His people today. The showbread teaches the importance of eating this bread—all of it (Revelation 10:9). We cannot be picky eaters and leave out the parts we do not like.

Numbers 4:7 calls it the "continual bread." There was always bread on the table, just as there is always spiritual bread (the Word) on God's table today. This "continual bread" does not change. Some people try to redefine what the Word of God says, but God does not change (Malachi 3:6). We are warned to not add to or take away from God's Word (Revelation 22:18-19). Just as the Garmu family could not change the recipe, we cannot change the standards of God's Word and expect to continue our fellowship with God.

Eating at the Lord's Table

As Israel traveled through the "wilderness of Sin" (Exodus 16:1), they faced many enemies. Psalm 23:5 says God has prepared a table for us "in the presence of mine enemies." We live in a sinful world, but God has prepared a "table" for us. He invites His people to "come and dine" (John 21:12). When we are "partakers of the Lord's table"—where the bread of life (Word of God) is served—we are in "fellowship" (1 Corinthians 10:20-21) with Christ and with other Christians who eat at this table. To be in "fellowship" means we have things in common. Through salvation, we all have spiritual life in common.

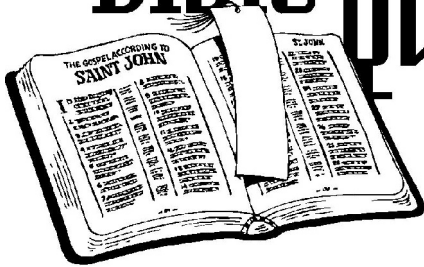
Coming into the Tabernacle Proper represents God's people gathering together in His church (the Church of God). There, the light of the Candlestick reveals the Table of Showbread (the Holy Spirit gives understanding of God's Word). At the table, we fellowship with other Christians—hearing the Word together and encouraging one another. In the Old Testament, only the priests could enter the Tabernacle Proper, but in the New Testament, with salvation, we are all "made ... kings and priests" (Revelation 1:6). We no longer have to stay in the outer court!

Are You Hungry?

In Luke, Chapter 14, "a great supper" was prepared. Invitations were sent out, but many people gave excuses for why they could not come. When Jesus invites us to "come and dine" with Him—through personal devotions, Sunday school, or worship services—what is our reply? Do we procrastinate or make excuses? Do we not like what is on the spiritual menu? Imagine if the priests said they were not hungry or they disliked the taste of showbread, and then they threw it out. Psalm 50:17 warns about people who hate God's "instruction, and casteth [His] words behind" them. If we refuse God's invitation to come or if we come and dislike what is on the menu, that is like casting His bread behind us. God's Word keeps us spiritually alive. How dangerous to refuse it!

There are things that can hinder your spiritual appetite for the Word. The enemy offers spiritual "junk food" to fill you up and take away your desire for God's Word. Paul said we need to have a "VEHEMENT [or intense] desire" (2 Corinthians 7:11)! We will not have this desire if we constantly fill ourselves with the wrong things. God has invited you to His great supper—to the Table of His Presence. It is a great honor! What will your reply be?

Bible Quiz



1. What does "to break bread together" mean? _____

2. What does the word *fellowship* mean? _____

3. Why was the table for the bread only one cubit wide? _____

4. What was the purpose of the border on the Table of Showbread? _____

5. What was another name for the Table of Showbread? _____

6. The "bread" symbolizes Jesus Christ, who was born in Bethlehem. What does *Bethlehem* mean? _____

7. Who did the twelve cakes represent? _____

8. Why were the cakes placed in two rows? _____

9. What does coming into the Tabernacle Proper represent? _____

10. In Luke, Chapter 14, what was one of the excuses given for not coming to the Great Supper? _____

11. What does the enemy provide to take away your spiritual appetite? _____

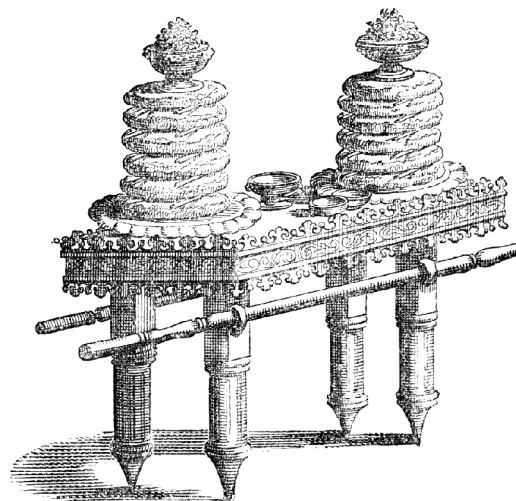
12. What kind of desire did Paul say is needed? _____



AN INVITATION

Where Is the Location?

- The Table of Showbread was located in the _____ (a type of the church).
- The table is where we are fed (spiritual food).
- The table is a place of fellowship (sharing things in common) with God and other Christians.
- The table is never empty ("the _____ bread shall be thereon"; Numbers 4:7).



What Is on the Menu?

- Bread is symbolic of Jesus Christ.
- "The _____ of the LORD" (Amos 8:11).
- "The _____ bread which came down from heaven" (John 6:51).

What Should I Bring?

- You need a good appetite ("_____ desire"; 2 Corinthians 7:11).

TO THE TABLE OF GOD'S PRESENCE

Excuses (Luke, Chapter 14)

- "I have bought a piece of _____, and I must needs go and see it."
- "I have bought five yoke of _____, and I go to prove them."
- "I have married a _____, and therefore I cannot come."

What Are Your Excuses?

- "I don't like what is on the menu."
- "I am too tired or too busy."
- "I don't have time."
- "Listening to the preaching is boring."

"In the Old Testament, the New is hidden; in the New Testament, the Old lies open."