

In Consideration of Proper Preparation and Reflection on the Lord's Supper

ADMIT: All who are baptized into Christ by a duly appointed minister, are members of Christ's Church in good standing, are not ignorant nor scandalous, and having received permission from the Church, are welcome to partake of the Lord's Supper.

PREPARE: The command of Scripture is to come to, after having examined yourself. With this in mind, we want to make sure we spend the week in preparation for this observance – especially the night before, preparing our particulars and incidentals in advance so that we arise early and with sufficient time to prepare our souls for the service. (In fact, this should be our practice for every Sabbath – but much more when the Lord's Supper is expected.)

We ought not to rush to get to church “just in time” nor should we neglect a proper time of examining ourselves during the week in preparation for the Sabbath worship. Care must be taken, and respect given to this great gift with which God has blessed His people.

EXAMINE: This is a practice often neglected and hurriedly attempted by a brief period of silence and a quick prayer just before partaking of the elements. However, this betrays a lack of understanding and proper respect given to the holy things of God.

The Westminster Larger Catechism, Question #171 provides guidance on how to properly examine oneself and prepare for partaking of communion.

If you find yourself doubting your assurance or uncertain regarding your fitness for the table, perhaps these questions might be a good addition to your examination:

1. If you are lacking assurance...
do you desire to have it?
2. If you are doubting your salvation...
do you desire to be found in Christ?
3. If you are struggling with a sin...
do you desire to flee from it?

If you answer “yes” to these, then come to the table after having examined, confessed, repented, and subsequently casting thyself upon the mercy of God. Trust that the Lord will comfort you.

If you answer “no” to any of these, then you should revisit your profession of faith to see if you truly profess Christ or if you are deceiving yourself and have no real faith in Christ.

PARTAKE: We should remember that partaking of communion is not an optional activity as there is no accommodation in Scripture for the right of private judgment to neglect the table. The Lord’s Table is necessary, and observance is commanded - not that we are perfect, but that we are honest. Scripture states, “But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat...,” the implication being that after having examined ourselves, we are then to eat.

Therefore, we encourage you to “Prepare your hearts unto the Lord,” 1 Samuel 7:3.

STUDY: For further reflection and meditation upon the Lord’s Supper, please review questions 168 – 175 of the Larger Catechism.