

Lesson 15 – Church Ordinances – Lord’s Supper (Part 3 – Close Communion)

- I.** Introduction: Baptists have been severely criticized because of their teaching of what is called “close communion.” Generally, this is because their position is not understood. [“Close Communion” in the Lord’s Supper is restricted to the baptized members belonging to the same denomination or the same church. opposed to open communion.]
- II.** God placed the two ordinances, Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, in the church, and the church alone has the authority to administer these ordinances.
- A. In Matthew 16:18 we have the record of Christ establishing the first model church.
 - B. In Matthew 18:15-17 the power of judgement and discipline are placed in the church.
 - C. In Matthew 26:26-28 the authority to observe the Lord’s Supper was placed in the church.
 - D. In Matthew 28:19-20 we have the Great Commission given to the church. The church alone has the authority to baptize.
- III.** The practice in the New Testament was to observe the Lord’s Supper in the church.
- A. In 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 the whole discourse reveals the Corinthians were observing the meal as a church. Notice particularly verse 17.
 - B. To observe the meal, they came together as a church. Read 1 Corinthians 11:18-20.
 - C. Paul states the ordinances were delivered to the church. Read 1 Corinthians 11:23.
 - D. The entire passage in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 the church, as a church, was censured for a wrong observance of the Lord’s Supper.
 - 1. Surely if the church was admonished, as a church, for the wrong observance of the Lord’s Supper, the responsibility for the correct observance rested in the church.
 - 2. The Lord has placed certain restrictions and qualifications upon the participants of the Lord’s Supper and has placed the responsibility of carrying out these qualifications upon the local church.

IV. Qualifications for a scriptural observance of the Lord’s Supper.

A. Baptism is a prerequisite to partaking of the Lord’s Supper.

1. Baptism was instituted and practiced before the Lord’s Supper.
2. Baptism was given first in the Great Commission.
3. They practiced this order in the New Testament.
4. The Apostles correspondingly instructed the churches.
5. The Scriptures make baptism the initiatory ordinance. It is the emblem of the beginning of spiritual life and the Lord’s Supper of the nutrition of that life!

B. The scriptural observance of the Lord’s Supper is ***inseparably*** connected with efficient church discipline.

- Read: Matthew 18:7; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; 1 Peter 4:17; 1 Corinthians 5:9-13

1. Church members who would not live according to God’s standards were to be excluded from church membership and denied the right to the Lord’s Supper.
2. Each individual church is only responsible for the discipline of its members. Hence, the church is only responsible for serving the Lord’s Supper to its own members.

V. “Close Communion,” therefore, is following the Lord’s instructions pertaining to the Lord’s Supper.

Questions:

1. Who has the authority to administer the Lord’s Supper?
2. Give examples proving only the church has authority to serve the Lord’s Supper.
3. What are the qualifications an individual must meet before partaking in the Lord’s Supper.
4. Prove that baptism must precede partaking of the Lord’s Supper.
5. What is “Close Communion”?

Discussions: What are the dangers of “Open Communion”?

Assignment: Read 1 Corinthians 11:26. Be prepared to define the word “evangelize.”

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- II. God placed the two ordinances, Baptism, and the Lord’s Supper, in the church, and the church alone has the authority to administer these ordinances.
- A. In Matthew 16:18 we have the record of Christ establishing the first model church.
¹⁸And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.
- B. In Matthew 18:15-17 the power of judgement and discipline are placed in the church.
¹⁵ Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. ¹⁶But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. ¹⁷And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.
- C. In Matthew 26:26-28 the authority to observe the Lord’s Supper was placed in the church.
²⁶And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. ²⁷And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; ²⁸for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

- D. In Matthew 28:19-20 we have the Great Commission given to the church. The church alone has the authority to baptize.

¹⁹Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: ²⁰teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

Amen.

III. The practice in the New Testament was to observe the Lord’s Supper in the church.

- A. In 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 the whole discourse reveals the Corinthians were observing the meal as a church. **Notice particularly verse 17.**

[The Lord's Supper]

¹⁷Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse. ¹⁸For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. ¹⁹For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. ²⁰When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper. ²¹For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. ²²What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not. ²³For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: ²⁴and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. ²⁵After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. ²⁶For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. ²⁷Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. ²⁸But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. ²⁹For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not

discerning the Lord's body. ³⁰For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. ³¹For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. ³²But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. ³³Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. ³⁴And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.

- B. To observe the meal, they came together as a church. Read 1 Corinthians 11:18-20.
¹⁸For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. ¹⁹For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. ²⁰When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper.
- C. Paul states the ordinances were delivered to the church. Read 1 Corinthians 11:23.
*. ²³For I have received of the Lord **that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread:***
- D. The entire passage in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 the church, as a church, was censured for a wrong observance of the Lord's Supper.
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B. The scriptural observance of the Lord's Supper is ***inseparably*** connected with efficient church discipline.

- Read: Matthew 18:7 ⁷ *Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!*
- 2 Thessalonians 3:6 ⁶ *Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.*
- 1 Peter 4:17 ¹⁷ *For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?*
- 1 Corinthians 5:9-13 ⁹ *I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: ¹⁰yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. ¹¹But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a*

brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. ¹²For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? ¹³But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.

1. Church members who would not live according to God’s standards were to be excluded from church membership and denied the right to the Lord’s Supper.
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Assignment: Read 1 Corinthians 11:26 +. Be prepared to define the word “evangelize.”
[evangelize = convert or seek to convert (someone) to Christianity]

1 Corinthians 11:26 - 29 ²⁶For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. ²⁷Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. ²⁸But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. ²⁹For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.