

Preparatory Reading Before Lord's Supper

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Our church administers the Lord's Supper to our professing members and others who are also professing members of a true church, all of them members in good standing of their churches. Before coming to the Lord's table, both elders and members are to examine themselves sincerely and thoroughly to prepare for receiving the elements in order to be worthy of and discern Christ's body and blood. The form below is thus usually read on the Lord's Day preceding the Lord's Day when the sacrament is to be administered.

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Part 1

Beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ, let us give full attention to the words of the institution of the holy supper of our Lord Jesus Christ, as they are delivered by the Apostle Paul (1 Cor. 11:23-29):

For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself.

Part 2

That we may now celebrate the supper of the Lord to our comfort, it is necessary, before all things, to examine ourselves fully; and further to carefully consider that end for which Christ has ordained and instituted this sacrament—namely, his remembrance.

The true examination of ourselves consists of three parts:

First: Let every one carefully consider their sins and ungodliness, that they may hate their sins and humble themselves before God, considering that the wrath of God against sin is so great that he, rather than leaving it unpunished, has punished it in his Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, with the bitter and shameful death of the cross.

Second: Let every one examine their own heart whether they also believe this sure promise of God that all their sins are forgiven them only for the sake of the passion and death of Jesus Christ, and that the complete righteousness of Christ is imputed and freely given them as their

own—indeed, so completely as if they personally had satisfied for all their sins and fulfilled all righteousness.

Third: Let every one carefully examine their own conscience to see if they are fully determined to show true thankfulness to God in every area of life, and to walk sincerely before His face; and also whether they, with full sincerity, strive to lay aside all enmity, hatred, and envy, and earnestly resolve from this day forward to live in true love and unity with their neighbor.

Part 3

All those, then, who are of this mind, God will certainly receive in grace and count as worthy partakers of the table of His Son Jesus Christ. On the contrary, those who do not feel this testimony in their hearts eat and drink judgment upon themselves. According to the command of Christ and the apostle Paul, those who know ourselves to be engaging in the following sins without repentance, have no part in the kingdom of Christ and should therefore abstain from coming to the table of the Lord: including idolaters; those who call upon deceased saints, angels or any other creature; those who revere images; those who engage in witchcraft, fortune-telling, or occult practices, or other forms of superstition; all those who despise God, his word, and his holy sacraments; all blasphemers, those who seek to cause discord, factions, and dissension in church or in the state; all perjurers; all who are disobedient to their parents and those in lawful authority; all murderers, contentious people, and those who live in hatred and envy against their neighbors; all adulterers, fornicators, drunkards, thieves, the greedy, robbers, gamblers, covetous people, and all who lead offensive lives. All those who continue in such sins, shall abstain from the Lord's Supper, which Christ has appointed only for his believers, so that they feel the weight of God's judgment and condemnation.

Part 4

But this warning is not intended to discourage those believers with contrite hearts, so that no one would come to the Lord's Supper unless they are without sin. We do not come to this supper to testify about our own perfection and righteousness, but, on the contrary, we come seeking life in Jesus Christ apart from ourselves. Therefore, although we have many shortcomings and difficulties, and we do not have perfect faith, and that we do not serve God with sufficient zeal, but that we must struggle daily with the weakness of our faith and struggle against the evil lusts of our flesh, yet, since the grace of the Holy Spirit makes us very sorry for our shortcomings and gives us the desire to fight against unbelief and to live according to the commandments of God, therefore rest assured that no sin or weakness which still remains in us against our will, can prevent us from being received by God's grace and from being made worthy partakers of this heavenly food and drink.