

June 5, 2022 -  
Communion”

I Corinthians 11:23-28 - "A Mature Church Necessitates

(Characteristics of a mature church)

## Introduction

Barna president David Kinnaman noted that nearly one-third of Churches stopped Communion during the COVID-19 pandemic. Certainly we needed to change our approach and make it safer but never to discontinue this...Communion is one of the two ordinances of the church, being Baptism and Communion. These are essential to the function of the New Testament church. We can no more remove these two elements than one can remove a motor and a transmission from one's car and state they have a functioning automobile. Communion matters simply because Christ's sacrifice matters. We are brought into fellowship with God, into *communion*, through this sacrificial offering. It matters supremely for all sinners all saints.

Barna's recent survey showed that most Christians aren't quite sure about this practice handed down from the Lord Jesus to His Church. The Lord's Supper became the normal celebration of the early church. Remember it began with Jesus at the Passover but by the time the Apostle Paul wrote to the church at Corinth they had departed from the principles and truths of Communion. They were far removed from it substance and they needed to undergo spiritual examination. A mature Church necessitates Communion it is part of the church worship. Some practice this every Sunday others once a month so to maintain it special meaning for us.

## I. The Origin of the Lords Supper

1. Jesus took the ancient feast of Passover and transformed it into a meal with new meaning when He instructed His disciples to drink of the cup and eat of the bread in remembrance of His death on their behalf. **Communion matters simply because Christ's sacrifice matters.** The Lord's Supper is a memorial that Christ Himself instituted. He became the ultimate fulfillment of deliverance from sin and death when He died on the cross and shed His blood. **For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's. --- I Corinthians 6:20**

2. The breaking of bread became synonymous with a fellowship meal. The early church incorporated the Communion established by Jesus onto the end of their fellowship meals. Eventually that combination of a fellowship meal and Communion became known as a "love feast". The early church attached Communion to a common meal not only because the Lord Jesus had done so, but because the Jewish people had always associated the Passover with a meal.

The Gentiles included a potluck meal with their religious festivals. So the early church followed that Jewish and Gentile cultural pattern in combining a meal with the Lord's Supper. However, in fact the Corinthians contributed to the death of the love feast. They had obliterated its meaning. We can understand by Paul's writings how essential this ordinance of the church is and that a mature Church necessitates Communion as part of the church worship.

The saints at Corinth had selfishly turned it into a drunken and gluttonous exercise that resembled the idolatrous feasts they once participated in. Their practice was so offensive to God that He disciplined some with illness and death. ([1 Cor. 11:29-30](#)). Observing...

## II Corinth's Improper Attitude for Communion Vv. 17-22

1. This leads us to reckoning how significant this ordinance is to our Father. First, they were dividing up into very destructive divisions and cliques within the church. When Paul speaks of the church "coming together," or "assembling as a church," he is not talking about a morning service such as we have here. Paul is referring to the unity of the church and it important...

The cliques and divisions that Paul mentions earlier in this letter had ruined the gathering of the church together, so that he could say, as he does here, "*It is not for the better that you come together, but for the worse.* You are actually injuring one another and destroying the character of the church by the way you are conducting yourselves at these love feasts which concluded in the celebration of the Lord's Table together. This is a covenant relationship with Christ and each other ". Communion also safeguards the unity of the local church.

a) Paul explains, "When you come together you ought to be concerned about the needs and the hungers of all." Thus, fragmented, selfish, uncaring, indifferent to human needs, the church was hurting the cause of Christ rather than helping it.

When you get together for your love feasts you cannot call that the Lord's Supper even though it terminates in the familiar ritual that we now call the Lord's Table. The Lord's Supper is an expression of the unity of the church, and what you are doing is a far cry from that. You are acting selfishly with one another. We are to share and help one another...

b) By sharp contrast, the apostle now goes on to draw the picture what he had taught them about the Lord's Table and the principle elements in Verse 23 –26. We will participate in this communion at the close of this message and refer to this section of scripture

## III Communion requires Proper Examination. 27-32

1) Many years ago in southern Russia, 14 new believers and some missionaries gathered in a small apartment to celebrate the Lord's Supper. The room was charged with spiritual energy and joy as the people shared in testimonies, songs, and prayers. Then, being aware of the symbolic meaning of the bread and the cup, they looked at each other and whispered, "With this we are cleansed. With this we are one!" Being reminded again of Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross for them and the forgiveness they had received, they felt a new sense of their oneness in Christ. Nothing unites believers more than this understanding of oneness and forgiveness.

2. The apostle Paul said that the Corinthian believers were not experiencing this unifying power. They were partaking in an unworthy manner. They were coming to the Lord's Table

in a kind of an empty ritual, just going through it in a mechanical, ceremonial way. Paul says this is a dangerous practice, because it is acting as though the death and the life of Jesus meant nothing to us, and he warns against that. We need to safeguard ourselves too from empty ritual. Therefore, according to the apostle, a proper participation involves a careful self-examination.

a) That is why he says let someone examine himself or herself earnestly and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. The word examine means "to prove," or literally, "to qualify" oneself in verse 31. Is it time to hit the spiritual reset of your heart today? God searches the hearts. -I Samuel 16:7.--- **Gospel – Matthew 25:41---** Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

b) Paul says to the Ephesians, "let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you," {Eph 4:31 KJV}. Attitudes of selfishness, jealousy, dishonesty, anger need to be resolved when we come to the Table of the Lord. We acknowledge them and thank God for his cleansing grace and then partake, forgiven by the grace of God.

3. The apostle clearly implies by this; a professing Christian should not go on week after week and month after month living in a wrong relationship, holding grudges or an attitude of unforgiveness that you know is wrong. The purpose of the Communion is to safeguard such unity in the Church. Today is the time to hit the reset button of your heart.

4. All offense should be dealt with before communion or you should not participate in communion. Once you decide to place that offense under the blood and come to the altar for communion you are saying in essences the matter is settled. Jesus taught us to seek forgiveness without delay. This is especially true when dealing with an offense. God's forgiveness should lead us to fear Him, worship and adore God, for his grace and forgiveness.

5. The true church is the combine body of all born again believers. It is made up of all who genuinely confess Jesus to be "the Messiah and the Son of the Living God." These are the members of the Church. These people are family. The purpose of the Communion is to safeguard unity. It is design to protect this sacred unity. The apostle Paul rebuked the church at Corinth for their poor behavior and their disgrace at the Lord's Supper. They thought they were real spiritual but the Apostle Paul told the Corinthians they needed to undergo spiritual examination. So do we!

#### Illustration & Conclusion:

I have at times had corrupt files in different software programs on my computer. We know a computer won't function properly with this corruption. Neither will the church. My son would come to the office and as it were do a reset...uninstalled and reinstall the program removing the corrupt files cleaning out the systems imperfections and resolving the issue so the computer functions properly. We each have to take responsibility to do this spiritually. This passage shows us that we have an obligation to come to the Lord's Table. We have an obligation for

self-examination. --And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. -- John 6;35