

WHAT IS THE LORD'S SUPPER?

by Richard D. Phillips

TO THE READER: A good learning technique is to answer the following questions BEFORE reading the booklet. After reading, you can refine your answers based on your reading. Then, when your group gathers, each can discuss his or her view and you can either affirm or modify what you wrote.

1. If someone asked what you believe about the Lord's Supper, what would you tell him or her?
2. What do you know about the different views of the Lord's Supper held by different denominations? [5-8]
3. The Lord's Supper has an Old Testament background in the Passover. How many details do you recall of the Exodus of Israel from Egypt and the Passover account? (Exodus 12) [8-10]
4. Read Exodus 12:26; 13:8,14. Why did God emphasize recounting this event to the children? [9]
5. The Westminster Confession tells us this sacrament is "a holy sign and seal of the covenant of grace." What "sign(s)" does the Lord's Supper point to and in what way(s) does it "seal" us? [10-13]
6. All the major views on communion try to answer the question, "In what sense is Christ present in the sacrament?" How would you answer this?[13-17]
7. What benefits can you expect to receive when you take the Lord's Supper? [18-19]

8. We say the sacraments are a *means of grace*. How is this grace given to us? [19-20]

9. Christ commanded us to partake of His supper. Does that mean it is necessary for our salvation? [20-21]

10. How often do you think the church should serve communion? Why? [21-24]

11. Who should participate in the Lord's Supper? Who should not? [24-30]

After going through these questions, read the text and fill in the answers in preparation for class, noting other questions you might have. [By the way, if you do have any other questions about what you read, write them down here so you remember them at class time.]

APPLICATION

1. **For the class:**

Consider drawing up a list of things you can do to be prepared to participate in the Lord's Supper, both during the week before and on the day.

2. **For the church:**

If your church doesn't allow children to take the elements of communion, consider this: In the Old Testament Passover, it was a child who was given the privilege of asking the question, "Why is this night different from all others?" Why not consider giving a different child each time a chance to ask, "Why is this supper different from all others?" Then the pastor, just like the father in the Jewish home, would explain the reason to the child. If the child can understand, then the rest of the church will too.

For Further Study

Given for You: Reclaiming Calvin's Doctrine of the Lord's Supper, by Keith A. Mathison. P&R Publishing, 2002.
The Lord's Supper: Eternal Word in Broken Bread by Robert Letham. P&R, 2014.

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