


NGPC Session Guide for Families at the Lord's Table

WHAT IT MEANS TO PROCLAIM THE LORD'S DEATH TILL HE COMES?

When considering the sacrament, it's important to understand that there is more going on than simply remembrance. There is a nourishing of our souls as we partake in this covenant renewal ceremony. Paul writes that as we assemble together and remember Him in this New Covenant meal and as we eat and drink, we **"proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."** What does that mean? How do we proclaim His death until He comes again?




"For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."
1Cor. 11:26



Let's start by remembering the context. In 1 Cor. 10:21, Paul says there are two cups and two tables at which we might feast: the table of the Lord and the table of demons. Contextually, the eating of food sacrificed to demons or idols was a common thing at that time. Today, we too, have many idolistic tables such as careers, pleasure, success, popularity, entertainment, materialism, etc, that we are tempted to feed our hearts on. So, Paul warns us, **"You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons."** 1 Cor. 10:21.

When we assemble as a church and eat and drink at the covenant table, we proclaim that Jesus is the source of our spiritual life and the love of our hearts. We proclaim that His covenantal life and death are our righteousness and our steadfast hope until He comes again. As Paul says in Galatians 2:20, **"I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."** Therefore, partaking of the Lord's Supper is a public affirmation before people and angels and also demons, of our union with Christ by faith, and all His saving benefits.

Moreover, it speaks of our unity in Christ; as Augustine and Calvin explained, the Lord's Supper is a 'bond of love' among believers. That is, according to Eph. 4:5-6, we have **"one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all."** Therefore, the Lord's Supper signifies Christ's atoning death, and as we partake in faith, it seals His salvific benefits to His people, who are collectively named the church.



"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."
1Cor. 11:27-28



So, when Paul writes in 1 Cor. 11:28, **"Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup,"** it requires self-reflection. Each individual is responsible to consider carefully if they can partake without eating or drinking judgement on themselves.

CAN YOUR CHILDREN TAKE THE LORD'S SUPPER?

The answer is yes - if the following is true of them:

1. They must be baptised. The sacrament of baptism should precede the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.
2. They must be able to express an age-appropriate faith in Christ that understands what Christ has done for them to the satisfaction of their parents and the NGPC elders. This satisfies 1 Cor. 11:26, where one publicly 'proclaims the Lord's death until he comes'.
3. They must be of sufficient age where they can 'examine themselves' by means of self-reflection and know they are sinners who need to have faith in Christ as their Lord and Saviour.
4. Both the parents and the elders must agree that they understand partaking of the Lord's Supper in an 'unworthy manner' is to eat and drink 'judgement on oneself'. The Session and parents must take this biblical warning very seriously.

FINAL PASTORAL EXHORTATIONS:

For adults, we encourage self-examination to ensure everyone partakes of the Supper in a worthy manner – but we also warn against failing to participate because of unresolved sin. Any believer aware of particular sins, or broken relationships that need mending, needs to deal with them as soon as possible. The Gospel is one of grace, and at every moment, anyone can find that grace through repentance and faith. As believers approach the table, there is opportunity to confess sin and receive grace in preparation to participate. Not taking the Lord's Supper should be a very exceptional circumstance for a believer.

For children, the Session is reluctant to put an age on partaking of the Lord's Supper, but we think it takes a child some time and maturity to be able to both proclaim and self-examine, and so we encourage a godly caution. If your child is baptised and you believe that they can fulfil the requirements of participation, please speak with one of the elders, and if the Session agrees, then participation will be encouraged with great joy. However, the Session will err on the side of caution, as we believe that as elders, we must safeguard against naïve participation that might result in a child eating and drinking judgement on themselves.

If you have any questions, or would just like to discuss the matter further, please feel free to speak to one of the elders.