

## Why Practice Weekly Communion?

Why practice weekly communion? Firstly, in terms of biblical evidence, there is the practice of the early church in the book of Acts. Acts 2:42 states that the “breaking of bread” (almost certainly a sacramental reference) was part of the regular worship of the apostolic church. In Acts 20:7, Luke writes, “On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them...” When we connect the “first day of the week” to the holy day of worship (cf. 1 Corinthians 16:2), it seems that Luke is indicating that the observance of the Lord’s Supper was one of the purposes for the gathering of the saints in the context of worship. When we read the Apostle Paul’s instruction concerning the Lord’s Supper in 1 Corinthians 10-11, the phrase “As often as you drink it (the cup)” also points in the direction of frequent observance of the Supper. Gordon Fee comments, “This addition in particular implies a frequently repeated action, suggesting that from the beginning the Last Supper was for Christians not an annual Christian Passover, but a regularly repeated meal in 'honor of the Lord,' hence the Lord's Supper.” (*Commentary on 1 Corinthians*, pg. 555).

There is a fittingness in “celebrating the feast” (1 Cor. 5:8) on the one holy day that is given to us in the new covenant: the weekly Sabbath. As Darryl Hart and John Muether maintain, “Because the Bible (in the NT) sanctioned no holy days and no festivities beyond the weekly Sabbath, churches should cultivate piety not through big shows ... but through the steady and unpretentious observance of all the outward and ordinary means of grace” (*Ordained Servant*, 1997, 6.4 pg. 98).

Secondly, with respect to its place in our Christian lives, the session believes weekly observance of the Lord’s Supper will strengthen us in our walk with the Lord. OPC minister Larry Wilson writes “... the Lord’s Supper accents the corporate aspect of salvation: it encourages fellowship, it promotes peacemaking and the restoration of broken relationships, and it furthers Christian unity.” In an article on the Gospel Coalition website, Van Heste anticipates a common objection: “A typical argument against this idea is, “If we do this so often it will become less meaningful.” At first this has the appearance of wisdom; but with just a little pondering the illusion fades. Do we apply this reasoning to other means of grace? Are we worried about praying too frequently? Reading the Bible too much? Shall we be safe and make biblical preaching less frequent? These practices become rote not because of frequency but because of lazy minds and hearts and the lack of robust biblical proclamation alongside the ordinance.” From Wilson again: “Eventually it struck me that in order to be consistent, arguments against weekly communion also have to equally apply against weekly Scripture reading, weekly preaching, weekly congregational singing, weekly offering, etc.” In other words, if we believe that the Supper is part of the ordinary means of grace, it is fitting that we include it on a weekly basis in conjunction with the other elements of worship.

We close with an excerpt from John Calvin (he of the original Geneva!): “It would be desirable that the Holy Supper of Jesus Christ be in use at least once every Sunday when the congregation is assembled, in view of the great comfort which the faithful

receive from it as well as the fruit of all sorts which it produces — the promises which are there presented to our faith, that truly we are partakers of the body and blood of Jesus Christ, His death, His life, His Spirit, and all His benefits, and the exhortations which are there made to us to acknowledge and by a confession of praise to magnify those wonderful things, the graces of God bestowed upon us, and finally to live as Christians, joined together in peace and brotherhood as members of the same body. In fact, our Lord did not institute it to be commemorated two or three times a year, but for a frequent exercise of our faith and love which the Christian congregation is to use whenever it is assembled.” (Articles presented to the Geneva Council in 1537, cited in Howard G. Hagemann, *Pulpit and Table: Some Chapters in the History of Worship in the Reformed Churches* [Richmond: John Knox, 1962], 25).