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# Parents' Guide to the Lord's Supper





One of Perinton Community Church's (PCC) strengths is that children from ages 5 -6 and up are with us during the entire service on Sunday mornings. So while this parents guide focuses on the Lord's Supper (also called Communion by many), we need to keep in mind the larger context for this special time together at the Lord's table: Worship.

PCC is convinced that worship puts us in the presence of the God who is extravagantly gracious and good. Sensing this confidence on Sunday mornings, our children will be ready --- even eager --- for the challenge of living with God and for God in this world. And by His grace, as our children mature, worship will be the touchstone that fuels their faithful lifestyle.

We don't include children in worship to make them good but rather that they will come to know the Lord we are praising. Worship that is sourced in Scripture will transform their lives...and feed their imaginations, and that's a good thing. Children have a wonderful ability to engage the world around them, and Jesus has a wonderful way to connect with children in ways that we adults cannot.

Sooner or later, a child who is in the home of PCC on a Sunday morning when we celebrate the Lord's Supper is going to ask, When can I eat the bread and drink from the little cup? Or, as one of our beloved children repeated to me what was first directed at mom and dad: *"Why can't I have a snack, like everyone else?"* Love the honesty! And from a parent's point of view, the heartfelt question is, When should my child take the Lord's Supper?

**When can I eat the bread and drink from the little cup? When should my child take the Lord's Supper?** We'll get to both of these questions in this parents guide. We'll start by looking into Scripture together. Moms and dads, the fact that you're taking the time to do this will be a blessing to your family.

In the following pages, the meaning of the Lord's Supper is presented in depth. The intent is not to be repetitive or overwhelming or to make a simple act of worship into something complicated. Rather, the hope is that you'll find just the information you need to share with your child in the manner best-suited to the way he or she learns. Then you and your child can make an informed, prayerful decision about when to take the Lord's Supper.

No one knows your child better than you. But let's keep in mind the other side of this dynamic. Your child knows you pretty well, too. He or she will take their cue from you in this matter. So understanding the Lord's Supper also brings to the surface a matter for parents to have settled in their own heart and mind:

**If I am going to teach my child the meaning of the Lord's Supper, I need to make sure I understand it. Do I believe what I am teaching my child? Your son or daughter will sense where you stand in this matter!**

Take your time reading through this parents guide. May it strengthen and deepen your own faith, or even awaken it. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at 223.7494 or [jeffpcc@rochester.rr.com](mailto:jeffpcc@rochester.rr.com).

*Pastor Jeff, on behalf of PCCs leadership teams*

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#### SOURCE HELPS IN PREPARATION

I am indebted Alistair Begg, John J Davis, Sinclair Ferguson, Tim Keller, J.I. Packer, Eugene Peterson, Gary Pratico and Douglas Stuart. Their help in conveying the meaning of the Lord's Supper through their articles and books has been invaluable in preparing this guide. Should you wish to read their books or listen to their lectures I would be more than happy to share my library with you and/or point you to reliable websites. *(IF)*

# Part One:

# What is the

# Lord's Supper?

*“Do this in remembrance of me”*

Jesus, Luke 22

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## THE LORD'S SUPPER IS A COMMAND

Exodus 12:24-27    Luke 22:19-20    1 Corinthians 11:23-29

Matthew 26:26-28    John 6:53-55    Acts 2:42-47

Mark 14:22-24

Please look up these Bible verses; they are the foundation of this parents guide. If you don't have a Bible, just let us know and we'll make sure you have one, as PCC's gift to you. If you're not sure how to navigate the Bible, or if you have questions about what you're reading, don't hesitate to call the church office and ask for one of the pastors (223-7494).

As you read these passages, you'll notice something interesting that we tend to overlook: Jesus did not command his disciples to remember His birth. But He did instruct them to remember His death and resurrection.

# THE LORD'S SUPPER IS ABOUT CONNECTIONS

Please be sure to read 1 Corinthians 11:17-34

## 1) The Lord's Supper Connects Us to the Past

The Lord's Supper takes us back to the night when Jesus was betrayed by one of his disciples and handed over to the religious and civil authorities, for trial and eventual execution. Jesus knew this was going to happen, so he had one 'Last Supper' with his disciples (followers).

The Last Supper Jesus had with his disciples was actually a Jewish Passover dinner. At a Passover meal, the host asks a young person some questions about the meaning of Passover.

For instance, one question is: *Why is this night unlike all other nights?*

Answer: *It's the night we remember the bitterness of our ancestors enslaved in Egypt and the Lord's deliverance, so that they could savor the glory of freedom.*

If this Q & A sounds to you like an exchange that's packed with historical significance you're right. Here's what happened on the original Passover night, approximately 3500 years ago:

The Hebrews were enslaved to the Egyptians. The Pharaoh (king) of Egypt made it clear he would not release them from bondage, no matter what kind of plague or disaster the God of the Hebrews would bring upon the country. God was sending the angel of death to Egypt. What happened was going to affect the whole country. So how were the Hebrews going to survive the coming judgment?

God commanded that every Hebrew household gather for a meal. They were to have lamb that night and put the lamb's blood on the doorposts and on the lintel over the doorway. The family would in effect be taking shelter under blood of the lamb. When the angel saw the lamb's blood on the doorposts, the angel would *pass-over* that household. The lamb dies instead of anyone inside of the home. Because of the lamb's death, Israel was saved that night.

Then Israel's leader, Moses, declared that there was to be an on-going memorial to celebrate that miraculous night. The menu would be the same year after year: Lamb, unleavened bread, bitter roots, wine. And Passover was celebrated that way by the people of Israel...until the night of Jesus' betrayal.

On that Passover night, Jesus and his disciples gathered. Bread and cups of wine had been set out, as expected. **But Jesus was the host and he made some changes that startled his disciples.**

He took the unleavened bread and gave thanks to God. But instead of saying what the host would usually say: *This is the bread of our affliction that we ate in the wilderness...* Jesus took bread and told them in essence: *This is bread of **my** affliction. It's about my body, which is going to be broken for you.*

And then Jesus announced that blood was to be shed for salvation...His blood. He willingly allowed himself to be crucified on a cross. Jesus died the death we should have died. For a good person, someone might give their life. But we are sinners and God died for us (take a look in the Bible at John 10 and Romans chapter 5 and 6).

Friends, that's God on the cross, taking the punishment we deserve, removing *our* guilt. That's what's underneath this word 'covenant' that Jesus uses in 1 Corinthians 11:25. He's telling us:

*You cannot save yourselves. You cannot do enough good things to free yourselves from sin. You will never be powerful enough or holy enough. But I am. I promised to love you with an unconditional love, and I do.*

From the time of Moses on the Lord sent prophets to his people to help them understand that Passover was ultimately a prediction. These prophets knew that Israel's sin had not really been put away by those sweet, little wooly critters. They had no power to do that.

**And that's what made the Passover that Jesus hosted for his friends such an extraordinary event.**

He's telling them:

*You need to know that those Passover lambs didn't take away sin. They represented someone else. Those Passover lambs in the past pointed to the one substitute who **is** able to take away sin.*

At the Last Supper / Passover Jesus holds the bread and the cup and says: *I am the substitute. It's my body, my blood. I am the lamb who takes away sin.* Throughout Israel's history, every sacrifice, every priest, every prophet, every king pointed toward Jesus' death on the cross. That's what Jesus proclaims:

*This is a night that is unlike any other night. Tonight I am not going to deliver you from some issue or some problem. I am going to deal with sin and death. This is the Passover unlike any other.*

Extraordinary, isn't it?

## 2) The Lord's Supper Connects Our Soul to the Heart of God

Notice the beauty and brevity of what Jesus says, vs24, 25. The bread is broken and Jesus says: *"This is my body, which is for you, do this in remembrance of me."* And the cup is taken Jesus says: *"This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."*

The bread and the cup are not just mental reminders. The way the Bible uses the word **remember** means something deeply and powerfully spiritual happens in our lives when we celebrate the Lord's Supper. When Jesus says this is my body and my blood he's making one thing very clear: God is accessible. *I am making myself accessible to you. You are close to my heart.*

**The word 'remember' is the key.** Our English word 'remember' has lost some of its muscle. We think it means *recall*, as in: 'How nice, we recall something.'

But the word *remember* in this Bible passage means: to graft or to fuse, to take something that is not part of your being and make it part of you. To remember something is to digest it, take in and let it shape the way we think about our self, others, world.

In other words, Jesus wants us to feed on what he said and did, to drink it in. At the Table Jesus is saying to us:

*Rest your weary soul. You're famished and your soul is weary. I have something far better. Open your life to me. Open your heart to me and I will satisfy your deepest thirst.*

### 3) The Lord's Supper Connects Us to a Community

1 Corinthians was a letter from the apostle Paul to Christians in Corinth, ancient Greece. There was a lot going on in this church, and much of it wasn't good. The following is from a blog at Redeemer Church in New York City, tongue in cheek:

*It's a good thing the Corinthian church was such a mess, because if it wasn't, Paul would not have had to write all these instructions...all these interesting things to fix the problems there.*

While most of us probably wouldn't put it that way, there's no doubt the Corinthian church was in tough shape. A big reason for their troubles was that they didn't understand what Christian community was all about. The church of 1<sup>st</sup> Century Corinth was certainly blessed. Paul affirmed that they were gifted and smart. Unfortunately, there were many in the church who were also arrogant and elitist. The result was a heated conflict between factions in the church.

So Paul begins in v17: "I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good." Wow. Can you imagine gathering for Sunday worship and hearing that from a pastor or worship leader? Here are people ready to celebrate the Lord's Supper and Paul bluntly says: "Why don't you stay home. What you're doing is damaging to the cause of Christ."

Back in those days, the Lord's Supper was usually celebrated at end of the worship service, similar to PCC. But unlike today, their Lord's Supper was part of a full meal. You brought food with you from home. Everyone was supposed to bring a dish to pass. (Yes, it's what churches do!) It was supposed to be a great time of sharing and love and overflowing joy and unity in Jesus Christ....Didn't happen at Corinth.

Based on archeological digs we know that the average living/dining room in Corinth was about 19 x19 feet. The 'in' people -- wealthier, better educated, more refined --arrived at the tables first with their scrumptious food. (Think catered meals and \$50 bottles of wine.) These people filled up the living room. Later on, the not-so-in-crowd would arrive. (Think stale chips and cheese whiz.)

The original wording for *"each of you"* in verse 21 emphasizes the selfish nature of the whole meal, and the Lord's Supper that followed it. By the time the have-nots arrived, the 'in' crowd -- who had refused to wait for their brothers and sisters in Christ -- had already devoured all the good food and wine. That's why Paul said v21, *"One remains hungry, another gets drunk."*

The church was and is supposed to be a place where barriers come down. It is to be the place where people love each other across racial, ethnic and socioeconomic lines. The New Testament makes a big deal out of this. We can't say we love God, and then not love our brother or sister in Christ.

No wonder Paul is furious with the Corinthians. v22: "Don't you have homes to drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing?" These are some of the harshest things said to a church anywhere in NT. Paul warns them:

*If you eat and drink like this you're bringing judgment upon yourself. You are not remembering. Corinthians, you belong to each other, because you belong to Jesus.*

**What's bothering Paul is that the heart of the gospel is being ignored.** We are saved by grace not works, and that levels the playing field. So what causes the divisions? At Corinth, it was pride:

*We don't need a connection to the past. We don't really see the need for an ever-deeper connection to God. And we sure don't need a connection to those people at that table over there.*

Paul has no choice but to say to them: *Since you have no regard for what the bread and cup mean, you have no regard for each other. How dare you take the elements?* We're a walking contradiction if we're not recognizing or discerning (v29) the significance of the Lord and his people.

We can't come to the table merely because it's a good custom or because we think it's the right thing to do. Paul wants us to take the bread and cup seriously. That's what he is getting at in v30. Some of the Corinthians had gotten sick, or worse. Paul lets them know that God will, in his wisdom, bring something serious their way to wake them up spiritually.

The Corinthians believe they are sinners saved by grace but they are not living like it. What they believe is not making a difference in their character. They are the Church.

They should be helping each other turn belief into right action. v33: *"So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for each other."* There's the right action. There's the changed character. *"Wait for each other"* literally means to welcome each other, to receive one another, to make room for another. What a simple, yet profound, challenge!

Many of us think of the Lord's Supper as a private transaction: It's about me and Jesus. So we become quiet, bow our head, focus inward, and get right with the Lord. Yes, please take time to do that. But while we're bowed in prayer asking, Do I love God?...we better also be asking ourselves, Do I love His people?

#### 4) The Lord's Supper Connects Our Life Story to the Future

How? V26: *'When you eat and drink you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes back.'* Guess what Jesus will bring when he comes back? A supper. At the end of the book of Revelation is the promise of the wedding feast hosted by the Lamb of God; the Lamb is Jesus himself. He will dwell with us. And there will be no more death or mourning or tears. All things will be made new.

What a Supper! Finally, the deepest longing of our heart is satisfied. We'll be full; no more emptiness ever again. The Lord's Supper is a preview of the eternal bliss that awaits every Christian. This table is God's proof that He loves us unconditionally committed to getting you from here to there.

Remember the connection to the past? On a Passover night, the host asks the family questions to make sure they recognize what they are doing there. The question is: Why is this night unlike any other? On Sundays when the Lord's Supper is celebrated, the Lord is the host. His question for us before we come to the table is, Why is this day unlike any other?

Answer: We have a sacrament in our midst. The Lord's Supper is what is known as a sacrament, from the root 'sacred.' A sacrament communicates. A sacrament talks and teaches. **A sacrament is an extraordinary, outward sign that our belief makes a difference; the Lord's Supper is an outward sign of an inward change.** Our belief has been turned into a lifestyle of visible actions.

## 5) The Lord's Supper is a Statement of Faith

Taking the Lord's Supper lets everyone know we are a Christian. It's symbolic of what Jesus did to save us. When Jesus said: *This bread is My body and this cup is My blood*, He didn't mean that literally. When He said that, He hadn't even gone to the cross yet; He hadn't died yet. Obviously, it's a symbol.

I've used this example with children: If I point to the picture on my office wall and say, '*This is Mrs. Fuhrman*' you wouldn't think she was photographic paper with chemicals on it. You know what I'm talking about. It represents my wife.

Here's another way to illustrate what the Lord's Supper says about our need, and what we believe satisfies that need: A child doesn't just need to hear, *I love you*. She needs a parent to wrap his arms around her and give her a hug. The people who got the Protestant Church started felt that the Lord's table is a place where God embraces us with his grace. It's as if we receive the hug of God when we come to His table. We need words *and* assurance. Our soul craves God Word *and* God's touch. The Lord's Supper gives us both.

That's wonderful. But it would be understandable for someone to look this passage over and think, I'm clearly not worthy to come to the table. Is that what the Bible tells me? Answer: None of us is worthy to come to the Table. Let's think through what Paul says in vs28, 29:

*"A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself."*

Coming to the Lord's Table is a unique moment. We cannot take it lightly. None of us have a claim to say, Okay, God, I was good enough this week, now can I come to the Table? God isn't Santa Claus. He doesn't have a naughty and nice list. The truth is we're all thoroughly naughty.

**The examination Paul is speaking of is about truly coming to terms with who Jesus is.** The whole flow of this passage, and the main problem at Corinth, is that some arrived first and impatiently wolfed down the good food while others sat on the porch and were left hungry. The Corinthians didn't recognize that by their impatient, self-centered actions ...they were sinning against their brothers and sisters.

*"A man ought to examine himself before he eats the bread and drinks the cup."*  
The word "examine" is a word that means passing a test. Is the test about whether or not we deserve God's grace? Or is it a test of our understanding of why Jesus did what he did for us.

We're not coming to the Table to increase our worthiness. The Lord's Supper is a practice designed to bring us a sense of forgiveness for our sin. Examining ourselves does not mean coming to terms with where we've been sloppy or made mistakes. Examining ourselves means coming to terms with who Jesus is, receiving him as Savior and Lord. Thereby declaring our belief that our sin is forgiven and life will never be the same again. This is not an ordinary table because Jesus is no ordinary host.

Many people at PCC come to the table for the Lord's Supper. They have come to terms with who Jesus is and who the Church is...and how that shapes their whole life. Others choose not to come to the Table, and that's OK. They are still thinking about what the Lord's Supper means. To those who do not come to the Table yet, or who are unsure...please know that we'll wait for you.

There's no pressure; it's not, Hurry up to the table, we're waiting. Nor, does it mean that those of us who love Jesus with all heart and soul and mind...and who would give our life for the sake the of brothers and sisters in faith...will forego coming to the table ourselves.

What I mean in regards to the Lord's Supper connecting us to our future, and that the Lord's Supper is a statement of faith, is this: We'll wait for that time when you come to terms with who Jesus is. We'll wait for that day when you realize the connection to your soul that God is offering...when you realize that a connection to the Lord's people will change your life.

Paul says to the ancient Corinthians "wait for each other." As for PCC, that means: We're ready to welcome you, to receive you. We're ready to make room for you. We'll wait and hope and pray for that day for you. We love you. We long for day when you come to know Jesus. Just don't make us wait too long, please. The future is rushing at us. We want you with us at the Lord's Supper in heaven.

# Part Two:

# Children and

# the Lord's Supper

*"I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you..."*

Paul, a follower of Jesus, 1 Corinthians 11:23

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repent  
receive  
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## **In Their Language, In God's Time**

We should be glad to teach our kids about the Lord's Supper. However, we may not remember to talk to our children about it in between the times that we celebrate it on the first Sunday of each month. Before we know it, they are almost teenagers and we still haven't talked with them about the Lord's Supper.

PCC does not promote a particular age when a child is expected to participate in communion. Neither does PCC require that a child be a certain age before being allowed to take the Lord's Supper. Rather, we support parents in explaining and determining if their child is ready to take the Lord's Supper as a personal act of faith.

We also know that parents, who are on their own journey with the Lord, may come to a realization that they and their child have been taking the Lord's Supper without really understanding it. If that is the case, thank you for your integrity and please let Pastor Jeff or DL know. It would be our privilege to talk with you about the Lord's Supper before coming to the table next month.

**I suggest keeping the following in mind as you think about what it means for you and your children to participate in the Lord's Supper:**

### **1) Simplicity First...Build From There**

Introduce your children to the Lord's Supper as part of an ongoing conversation about who Jesus is and what He did. When explaining the Lord's Supper to a young child it isn't necessary to give a complete and final explanation in one block of time. An understanding and appreciation of the Table will increase as the child grows in his or her faith and knowledge of the Lord.

For a child, the starting point to the Lord's Supper can be as simple as: "The Lord's Supper reminds me that Jesus died for me on the cross for my sins. Taking the Lord's Supper helps me to grow in my faith because I want to remember that Jesus died, rose from the grave, and is coming back someday."

***OR, depending on your child's age and learning style:***

Explain to your children what it means to be a Christian: We are sorry for our sin and recognize our need for God's forgiveness so that we can live the way God intends for us. Our sin must be forgiven so we can enjoy knowing God, and bring delight to Him. We must believe that on the cross Jesus paid the price for our sin; He was the only one who could do this (see Acts 4:11,12). We don't come to the Table as perfect people but as needy, yet joy-filled people.

A helpful passage from Scripture that demonstrates this point is found in Luke 18:9-14, the story of the tax collector and the Pharisee who went to the Temple. Tax collectors were hated. They were considered some of the worst sinners of the day. In contrast, Pharisees were quite confident that since they practiced their religion just about perfectly, God owed them a blessing. (Actually, all of Luke 18 is a good read for you and your child in this regard.)

Some parents approach the Lord's supper this way: They aren't necessarily looking for an 'Aha' moment from their child. There may not be able to pinpoint that one specific moment when the child asks Jesus into their heart. For the majority of us, coming to faith in Jesus is a process that unfolds over time, as God works in us. So strive to be consistent in raising your child to love and honor God rather than always steering them to "pray the sinners prayer."

Let God be God in this matter. He loves your child and is already at work in his or her heart and mind. Join Him in this by your reading of Scripture with them and prayer with them. You'll know when the time is right for them to genuinely open their heart to God...or they may even surprise you and let you know they already do know Jesus!

*OR, depending on your child's age and learning style:*

Give them one letter that will bring to mind words describing the Lord's Supper. Try the letter 'R.'

**Repent:** In humility, be sorry for your sin. Turn away from sin, turn toward Jesus.

**Receive:** John 1:12 is telling us that Jesus is a gift from God, to be received. Those who receive Jesus, and believe on His name become God's family. We are given a whole new life.

**Remember:** *Do this in remembrance of me*, said the Lord. You may recall from earlier, that in the Bible the word ‘remember’ means: to take something that is not part of your being and make it part of you. To remember something is to digest something, to take in and let it shape the way we think about our self, others, the world.

**Rejoice:** 1 Corinthians 15 tells us Jesus conquered sin and death. There’s no way we should not rejoice at the Table. We have life with God now and forever.

**Ready:** Jesus is coming back, so be ready. Live in a way that shows you’re His.

We could talk about the ‘R’ words this way, using phrases and words like:

At the Lord’s Table, we remember what Jesus did. He died for us, for our sins, on a hill outside of Jerusalem. Jesus loves you so much that He died so your sin would no longer separate you from God. The Lord’s Supper reminds us that Jesus gave His body (represented by the bread) on the cross for our sins. Jesus also bled on the cross (the cup represents his blood). He died, was buried, and rose from the tomb to live again so that you could forever live with God in heaven.

We remember what He does. Jesus is doing something for us every day of our lives. If you know Jesus is your Savior, He will always be at your side. He loves you and knows you inside-out. He leads you into the right way, into the best way to live. He is your Shepherd. He cares for you, He protects you, He looks after you. Jesus is just as near and real as the bread and the cup you see with your eyes and touch with your hands and lips.

We remember that Jesus is coming back. Jesus wants us to celebrate at the Table until He returns. Jesus is coming back in a wonderful way, yet we do not know the exact time when He will return. Are you ready for His return? The Lord’s Supper is one way we can let Jesus know we’re looking forward to seeing Him.

***OR, depending on your child’s age and learning style:***

Take your child through the following questions and read the Scripture passages together. Help them understand what the Bible is saying, and let your child give his or her own answers. The questions are repetitive, as a way to reinforce what you have been building on up to this point.

### **1. Who is Jesus and why did He die on the cross?**

Your child should have a basic understanding that Jesus died as the substitute in place of us sinners, who actually deserved to receive punishment from God. See the Bible books of Isaiah 53:4-6; John 10:11-15; Romans 5:6-8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13-14; Hebrews 9:27-28; 1 Peter 2:24.

### **2. Did Jesus need to die for you, too? Why?**

Your child should know sin not simply as a concept, but something from which he or she needs to be forgiven and saved. See the Bible books of Deuteronomy 5:6-21; 6:5; Romans 3:23.

### **3. Could you explain to a friend how we can be free from the fear of being punished for our sin?**

How is salvation received? By trying harder to keep the Ten Commandments or other requirements, or by hearing the message of the gospel and believing? See the Bible books of Romans 10:9-13; Galatians 2:20; Philippians 3:8-11.

### **4. Can you explain what the Lord's Supper is? Do you know why we take it?**

Your child should know the basic meaning of the Lord's Supper is faith in Jesus Christ, whose body was broken and whose blood was shed for the forgiveness of our sins. Also, the wider context of the Lord's Supper is uniting believers to one another in the church.

## **2) Waiting is a Blessing**

When it comes to the Lord's Supper parents may feel: *OK, I get it that at PCC what the Table means really matters. But I don't want my child to feel left out.* If your children feel left out or deprived because they can't participate in the Lord's Supper, it may be because explanations have been given in terms of denial, not anticipation.

*"No, you can't"* is very different from, *"Not yet; it's important that you learn and wait."* If you go forward to receive the bread and the cup, and your child is with you, prayerfully think of ways to help your child be involved in this time of anticipation for the day he or she can take the Lord's Supper.

One parent helped his young children anticipate the Lord's Supper in this way:

*I would hold the bread and cup in my hands, and had my kids cup their hands around mine. I whispered to them the meaning of each of these symbols and told them that God's love was extended to us in a special way in Christ's death and resurrection. My kids were drawn into remembering Jesus. I am sure that my toddlers did not understand all this truth on a theological level, but they sensed by my tears and smile and prayers that this was a profoundly significant event.*

Other parents have had conversations with their child, while holding the elements... waiting for everyone else who was taking the Lord's Supper to return to their seat:

*As our children grew up, we said to them: Think of how much God loved us... how much it cost Jesus to be obedient and die to save us...what it must have meant for God to take our sin and place it on His perfect Son...Little by little the message, the elements, the symbolism and the implications of the Lord's Supper took root. As they grew older, we began to see an increasingly serious mood and manner in them during the celebration of the Lord's Supper.*

**'Waiting'** provides us with the time to pay attention to what God is doing in our child's life. While we wait on the Lord's timing, this is what we're looking for, this is what we're listening for:

## **More Independent Thinking**

Did our child come to faith in Jesus Christ on their own? Can they put into their own words why they believe and what the Lord's Supper is? Children are thinking more independently as they grow older. They are more likely to view decisions and commitments that they make as teens as their own, and not just the decision of their parents.

A believable profession of faith would be one in which the child is not prompted by anyone with answers. It is a thought-out expression of an awareness and sorrow for sin, and that the death of Jesus on the cross was to pay for our sin: *Jesus died for my sins. There is nothing that I can do to pay for my sins.*

Sometimes it's hard to discern where a child stands in relation to God when they grow up surrounded by their parents' Christian faith. The assumption is that the children believe the same things. For example, a child answers *yes* if you asked him if he believes in Jesus....yet, the child shows no personal response to God that can be detected by mom or dad or anyone else. That child needs to wait for faith to awaken, let alone mature. Again, let God be God. He is your child's Savior, you are not.

## **Maturity and Understanding**

There is tremendous value for our children to know that there are indeed certain expectations, and certain privileges, associated with maturity.

If a child shows no sign of realizing that he or she is a moral being, who in the sight of God needs to make a decision about Jesus Christ, it is appropriate to tell that child he or she is not yet ready to participate in the Lord's Supper. Children will differ in this age-of-understanding and responsibility. Some will be aware of purposefully giving their lives to Christ at age five; others will not have considered the possibility of saving faith until age twelve, or later.

Any child who can genuinely, confidently speak of his or her own faith in Jesus is welcome to participate in the Lord's Supper at PCC. Any child who knows that he or she is not yet a Christian should be respected for not taking the bread and the cup. If they would like to accompany their parents to the Table, they will still be greeted and blessed by the pastors even though they are not taking the bread and cup.

## Parents, Thank You

It is not PCC's intent that all our children go through some sort of proper religious motions at the perfect time (whenever the 'perfect' time is). My prayer is that in teaching your child, with PCC's help, they will come to know fellowship with the living Lord, and experience his life-changing, soul-satisfying work in their heart.

There have been occasions in PCC's past when parents have initiated, with the participation of the pastor, a brief public affirmation that their child is participating in the Lord's Supper for the first time. It was a way for the church family to also encourage the child. However, this has never been a requirement for our children, nor will we make it so.

But we do think it would be helpful and appropriate to set up some time with Pastor Jeff or DL, so that your child can share their faith with them, before coming to the table. We look forward to that time to affirm what God...and you, Mom and Dad... are doing in your child's life.





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