

# The Case for “Close” Communion

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## I. Communion and feet washing

*Luk 22:19 And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.*

*Luk 22:20 Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.*

*Luk 22:21 But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table.*

*Luk 22:23 And they began to enquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing.*

*Luk 22:24 And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.*

*Joh 13:2 And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him;*

*Joh 13:3 Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God;*

*Joh 13:4 He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself.*

*Joh 13:5 After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.*

*Joh 13:12 So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?*

*Joh 13:13 Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.*

*Joh 13:14 If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.*

*Joh 13:15 For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.*

*Joh 13:16 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.*

*Joh 13:17 If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.*

## II. Open communion—Closed communion—Close communion

### A. Definitions

1. Open communion—Share communion with all—Regardless of belief or practice
2. Closed communion—Limited to baptized members of the individual church
3. Close communion—Limited to members of churches of like faith and practice

### B. Open is the easy way out—But is it Biblical?

1. My grandmother was offended — Am I a bigot? — Or a defender of the word?
2. The pastor of another denomination who hoped I would someday mature

### C. Is closed/close communion a historic Baptist response—Or is it a Bible pattern?

1. Infant baptism has caused more bloodshed than anything else in Christian history
2. Should we accept all baptisms (or even disregard baptism) by communing with all?

## III. Jesus' pattern—He reached out to the masses—He communed with the twelve

### A. Jesus preached to the multitudes

*Mat 5:1 And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:*

*Mat 5:2 And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying...*

*Mat 13:2 And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.*

*Mat 13:3 And he spake many things unto them in parables...*

### B. Jesus desired that the multitudes be preached to

*Mat 9:36 But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.*

*Mat 9:37 Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few;*

*Mat 9:38 Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.*

### C. Jesus fed the multitudes

*Mat 14:19 And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.*

*Mat 14:20 And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full.*

*Mat 14:21 And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children.*

#### D. Jesus was concerned about individuals within the multitudes

*Mat 20:29* And as they departed from Jericho, a **great multitude followed him**.

*Mat 20:30* And, behold, **two blind men** sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David.

*Mat 20:31* And **the multitude rebuked them**, because they should hold their peace: but they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David.

*Mat 20:32* And Jesus stood still, and called them, and said, What will ye that I shall do unto you?

*Mat 20:33* They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened.

*Mat 20:34* So **Jesus had compassion on them**, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, and **they followed him**.

#### E. Yet Jesus communed with the twelve

*Mat 26:20* Now when the even was come, **he sat down with the twelve**.

*Mat 26:26* And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.

*Mat 26:27* And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;

*Mat 26:28* For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

##### 1. Even as opposed to the 120

*Act 1:14* These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

*Act 1:15* And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (**the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty**.)

##### 2. Yet the service would eventually go beyond the twelve to the church

*1Co 11:23* For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread:

*1Co 11:24* And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: **this do in remembrance of me**.

*1Co 11:25* After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: **this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me**.

*1Co 11:26* For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, **ye do shew the Lord's death till he come**.

#### IV. The order in the early church

*Act 2:41* Then they that gladly (1) **received his word** were (2) **baptized**: and the same day there were (3) **added unto them** about three thousand souls.

*Act 2:42* And they (4) **continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine** and (5) **fellowship** ("common union"), and in (6) **breaking of bread** (communion), and in (7) **prayers**.

##### A. Fellowship (Gk. *koinonia*)

*1Co 10:16* The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the **communion** (*koinonia*) of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the **communion** (*koinonia*) of the body of Christ?

##### B. Breaking of bread—A Biblical phrase for the communion service

*Luk 22:19* And **he took bread**, and gave thanks, **and brake it**, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: **this do in remembrance of me**.

*Act 20:7* And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to **break bread**, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight. (If Paul ate, then this is "close" communion)

#### V. Biblical teachings that support the practice of restricting communion

##### A. The Lord's supper can be invalidated due to divisions and heresies

*1Co 11:17* Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that **ye come together not for the better, but for the worse**.

*1Co 11:18* For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be **divisions among you**; and I partly believe it.

*1Co 11:19* For there must be also **heresies among you**, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.

*1Co 11:20* **When ye come together** therefore into one place, **this is not to eat the Lord's supper**.

1. Most Christians believe in infant baptism and do not believe in "re-baptism"
2. Few Christians give God the credit for His sovereign plan and control of salvation
3. Few Christians truly believe in a successful Savior
4. Few Christians believe in an independent Holy Ghost
5. Whatever is grounds for denominational distinction  
—Likewise is grounds for "common union" distinction

##### B. We are not to eat unworthily

*1Co 11:26* For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, **ye do shew the Lord's death till he come**.

*1Co 11:27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.*

*1Co 11:28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.*

*1Co 11:29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.*

*1Co 11:30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.*

*1Co 11:31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.*

1. In one sense—If you think you are worthy—Then you probably are not
2. If you are continuing to practice unrepentant sin—Then you may not be worthy
3. Those who eat should be those who are continuing in the apostles' doctrine
4. Those who eat should understand the significance of the death of the Lord's body
5. Those who eat should not be guilty of diminishing the Lord's body and blood

*Heb 6:6 ...seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.*

### **C. Preach to the world—But do not declare “common union” with the world**

*1Co 5:9 I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators:*

*1Co 5:10 Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world.*

*1Co 5:11 But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.*

*Rom 16:17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.*

*2Th 3:14 And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.*

*2Th 3:15 Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.*

## **VI. The Bible's teaching on the test for communion**

### **A. The test for common union is the individual's profession of faith and baptism**

—In the Bible pattern the repentant sinner is the one who makes the choice

*Act 2:41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.*

*Act 2:42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.*

### **B. Further Biblical tests for who may commune**

#### **1. Do not eat with one who is a part of divisions brought on by heresies**

*1Co 11:18 For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it.*

*1Co 11:19 For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.*

*1Co 11:20 When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper.*

#### **2. Do not eat with one who has become a public disgrace due to a sinful lifestyle**

*1Co 5:11 But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.*

## **VII. To disregard these teachings is to judge by our feelings and not by God's word**

—We are not better than others

—We only wish to follow God's word and to please God with our practice

*Gal 1:9 As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.*

*Gal 1:10 For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.*

*Act 19:3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.*

*Act 19:4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.*

*Act 19:5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.*