

To whom is the Lord's Supper to be administered?

It must be administered to true believers. Only true believers have a right for themselves to the promises, Christ, and the communion of saints, and thus also to the signs of the covenant. The church, however, does not judge concerning man's internal state; the knowledge of someone's regeneration is not the basis upon which she admits persons to the holy table, but she admits all who have made a conscious confession of the true doctrine of the gospel, and who lead a life which is in harmony with their confession.

What should you do if you do not know whether you are converted, if you are tossed between hope and fear? Should you then abstain?

Answer: To this, we reply:

1. The essence of repentance and faith does not consist in being assured of them. Someone may have repented and be a believer, and yet not be assured that this is so.

2. You, therefore, need to examine yourself whether you engage in repenting and believing as described above, praying that the Lord would grant grace to engage in proper self-examination so that you will not deceive yourself in a matter of such importance. Therefore, you are to examine yourselves whether you have a true knowledge of spiritual matters such as a godly sorrow, a holy yearning, and the extrinsic activities of faith—activities such as a warfare between the flesh and the Spirit, initiated by an internal hatred against sin, and a heartfelt love for pure holiness in order to live a life that is pleasing to the Lord.

3. If your conscience can affirm this to be so, then, hoping against hope, you are to rely upon God's Word, and you may be at liberty to come to the Lord's Table even if you are not fully assured of your spiritual state. By partaking of the elements, you will then be assured that those promises are made to such a one as you are, and your faith will then be strengthened.

What are we to do when our soul is in serious disarray? When the truth has no effect upon our soul? When sin abounds and we are not affected by it with heartfelt sorrow? When we do not long for the Lord's Supper? When we are fearful of eating and drinking judgment to ourselves? When unbelieving and atheistic thoughts arise in our soul?

Answer: We are then to bare our heart before the Lord, declaring to Him how wretched our condition is, and in so doing, seek to come before Him as utterly needy and destitute. Nevertheless, we are to conduct ourselves wisely, seek to encourage ourselves, and trust in and rely upon the Word of God. We should not wander away from the Lord, for that which we desire and seek is to be found nowhere else but with Him. Instead, we are to come to the Lord's Table prayerfully and expectantly in order to see whether it would please Him graciously to meet us there and to bestow a blessing upon us.

~Wilhelmus à Brakel

NETHERLANDS REFORMED CONGREGATION

Sioux Falls, SD



*This is my body which is given for you:
this do in remembrance of me.*

Luke 22:19b

Services at 9:30 a.m. and 2:30 or 6:30 p.m.

Consistory

Elders: Mr. Derek Kattenberg, Mr. Craig Timmer

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