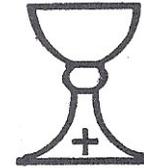


belong to the devil as do not regard nor feel their great need and the gracious help of God.”

In the Large Catechism, Luther says: “(People who) deprive themselves of, and withdraw from the Sacrament... are not to be considered Christians.” And finally: “If anyone has not committed sin for which he can rightly be put out of the congregation and considered no Christian, he ought not stay away from the Sacrament lest he may deprive himself of Life.

As Often As Possible

The point is that we Christians ought to receive the Sacrament as often as possible. It is only those without faith or who have not been instructed as to what the Holy Sacrament is— who should stay away from the Body and Blood of Christ. But there is no more reason for a Christian to stay away from the Sacrament deliberately, than there is for him to close his ears deliberately to the sermon or the reading of the Holy Scriptures. The only rule that has ever been common in the Church is that ordinarily one should not receive the Sacrament more than once a day. It will be a long time before we have to worry about receiving the Sacrament too often.



How Often Should I Receive The Sacrament?

Misconceptions

“How often should I receive the Sacrament?” This is a question often asked even among Lutherans. And it is unfortunate that the question even has to be asked. The answer ought to be self-evident.

There are people within the Lutheran Church who have the misguided fear that they will take the Sacrament too often—who stay away from the Sacrament because they are afraid that they are not “worthy” or not “ready” to receive the Sacrament. Such people have forgotten what they learned in the Small Catechism: “He is truly worthy and well prepared who has faith in these words...”

Some stay away from the Sacrament because they don’t “feel the need.” In his Large Catechism, Luther says very positively that as long as we are on this earth we need the Sacrament.

Others stay away from the Sacrament because they fear that it will become a habit. Yet they worship God and hear a sermon every week; they pray and read their Bibles every day—without fearing that it will become a habit. And what better habit could one have than to receive the grace of God?

The question still remains: “How often should I receive the Sacrament?”

The Lutheran Confessions Say:

The Augsburg Confession says: “Because I always sin, I am always bound to take the (Sacrament)... (Therefore) we hold one communion every (Sunday and) holy-day, and if any desire the Sacrament, also on other days.

The Apology of the Augsburg Confession says: “With us (Lutherans) many use the Lord’s Supper every Lord’s Day.”

In the introduction to the Small Catechism, Luther says: “Whoever does not seek or desire the Sacrament at least some four times a year, it is to be feared that he despises the Sacrament and is no Christian; just as he is no Christian who does not believe or hear the Gospel; for Christ did not say, ‘This omit,’ or ‘This despise,’ but ‘This do ye.’ He wants it done and not entirely neglected and despised.” This does not mean that a Christian who receives the Sacrament five times a year is a good Christian, but the point is: “Do this often.”

In his instruction to pastors in the Small Catechism, Luther further says: “Only set forth clearly the benefit and harm (of neglecting it)... and the people will come of themselves without your compulsion. But if they do not come, let them go and tell them that such