

THE LORD'S SUPPER at Medway Community Church

Celebration of the Lord's Supper is a joyous and significant event at MCC. We believe that God has laid down specific instructions on how we are to view this sacrament. Striving to be faithful to God's Word, here are some frequently asked questions regarding our understanding, and practice, of communion.

Q: What does your church believe about the Lord's Supper?

A: We believe the Bible teaches that the Lord's Supper, or communion, is a remembrance and a participation in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. We remember his atonement for us at the cross, and we are spiritually united with him.

Q: Do you believe that the bread and wine actually become the body and blood of Jesus?

A: No. We believe that the elements of bread and wine (or juice) remain just that. They are symbols, or signposts, pointing us back to what Jesus accomplished at Calvary. At the same time, we believe that God *spiritually* gathers with his people, in a special way, when we celebrate this sacrament by faith.

Q: How often do you celebrate communion?

A: Since the Bible gives no explicit command regarding frequency, we strive to balance regular attention to this sacrament, while maintaining its unique place in the life of the church. At Medway Community Church we typically celebrate communion on the first Sunday of every month.

Q: Who may serve communion?

A: While many men and women (usually our deacons) assist with actually passing out the elements during worship, the act of "administering" communion is reserved for ordained elders. This means that elders (ordinarily one of the pastors) will explain what the sacrament is, what warnings Scripture gives, and then invite those assisting to distribute the bread and wine.

Q: Who may receive communion?

A: Scripture clearly teaches in 1 Corinthians 10 & 11 that all who have made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ are invited to receive the Lord's Supper. Usually this profession is done in the form of membership with a local, gospel-believing church. At the same time, those who are living in unrepentant sin, or who have not diligently sought reconciliation with a divided brother or sister, should abstain from the Lord's Supper, and make preparation for it upon its next celebration.

Q: Should children receive communion?

A: Scripture gives no age limits. What *is* clear is that the Lord's Supper is for believers who have reached a maturity level where they can search themselves. *"A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup"* (1 Corinthians 11:28). Although there is no doubt that children have a special place in the heart of our Savior, this does not automatically mean they are capable of examining themselves. We encourage children to abstain from the Lord's Supper until such point as they can profess faith in Jesus Christ, and have made this faith public by participating in church membership.

Q: In what context should the Lord's Supper be celebrated?

A: In the Bible, we always see communion as a corporate, church-wide event, and coupled with the reading and teaching of God's Word. For this reason, we believe the Lord's Supper is best celebrated in the context of a church-wide worship service. For this reason, we discourage private celebrations of communion.

Q: But what about Christian shut-ins, or those confined to a hospital?

A: Our pastors have a special heart for brothers and sisters in Christ who cannot physically attend a worship

service. In these cases, a member of the pastoral team goes to the individual (preferably with one or two others) and conducts a “mini-worship” service that includes celebration of communion.

Q: I'm not a member at Medway Community Church? Can I still participate in communion?

A: Absolutely! We invite all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, who are members in a Gospel-believing church *anywhere* to celebrate with us. What a wonderful picture of our Lord's local, national, and *global* kingdom!

(Unanimously approved by Board of Elders, 2/2011)

