



THE CHURCH OF THE INCARNATION

WHY DO WE INVITE BAPTIZED CHILDREN TO THE LORD'S TABLE?

The Lord's Supper is for the Lord's people. It is a meal in celebration of the redemption he has won for us. All those to whom this salvation belongs are appropriate guests at the Lord's Table. Participation in the Lord's Supper is participation in Christ. To deny this meal to those who participate in Christ is a travesty of the one body in which we all share. Our covenant children are members of Christ's body and share in Christ. They should therefore share in the one bread and drink of the same cup of blessing which we drink. However this is not to suggest that the warnings [of] 1 Corinthians 11:27-30 have no relevance for children. Participants in the covenant meal are required to be in covenantal fellowship, and that covenantal fellowship is evidenced, through God's grace, by covenantal obedience. Yet it is a mistake to judge the faithfulness of an individual solely in terms of mature self-understanding or an articulate profession of faith. Evidence of covenant standing is not correlative to one's age. An understanding appropriate to the age, however, does not necessarily imply that children have the ability to articulate the meaning of the sacrament in adult thought forms. Conversely, an inability to give an articulate explanation of the relationship a child sustains to his or her parents does not mean that they have an incorrect understanding of their relationship to them. There is much that may be deficient about our own understanding of the Lord's Supper, as indeed there was for the twelve apostles who first took of it with their Master. Yet the immaturity of their understanding did not prevent their participation in that Supper. The importance of Paul's warnings, however, is whether or not the child is remaining faithful to the covenant in which he or she stands. To deny them the Lord's Supper is to effectively discipline them in the same way we would do a covenant breaker. Their exclusion is tantamount to identifying them with the world, unworthy to eat and drink the body and blood of the Lord. Yet our children belong to God, by the sure promise of his Word signed and sealed in baptism. Let us then feed them with the blessing of Christ, and teach them through the Supper that the privilege of union and communion with Christ belongs to them. The Lord's Supper is for the Lord's Children.

(Bishop Glenn Davies, "The Lords' Supper for the Lord's Children," *Reformed Theological Review* 50.1 (1991) 12-20.)