
Communion Preparation

At the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Manassas, Virginia, we celebrate the Lord's Supper on the first Sabbath of each calendar quarter. During the week before, we try to undertake that personal self-assessment that Paul refers to. The preparatory materials that follow are useful for this purpose, or at any time.

In preparation for the Lord's supper, a review may be useful of the Nicene Creed, which we will recite in place of the Apostles' Creed, and several questions from the Larger Catechism. The Larger Catechism, together with the Confession of Faith and the Shorter Catechism, are viewed as a reliable summary of what the Bible teaches and, consequently, are best presented with the Biblical references that are included below, at a minimum.

The Nicene Creed

I believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible;

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds; God of God; Light of Light; Very God of Very God; Begotten, not made; Being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven; And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man; And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried; And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures; And ascended into heaven; And sitteth on the right hand of the Father. And He shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead; Whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Ghost; the Lord and Giver of Life; Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son; Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; Who spake by the prophets. And I believe one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins. And I look for the Resurrection of the dead; And the Life of the world to come. Amen.

Larger Catechism Questions

Q. 168. *What is the Lord's supper?*

A. The Lord's supper is a sacrament of the New Testament,^z wherein, by giving and receiving bread and wine according to the appointment of Jesus Christ, His death is shewed forth; and they that worthily communicate feed on His body and blood, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace^a; have their union and communion with Him confirmed;^b testify and renew their thankfulness,^c and engagement to God,^d and their mutual love and fellowship each with other, as members of the same mystical body.^e

z. Luke 22:20. a. Matthew 26:26-28; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26.

b. 1 Corinthians 10:16. c. 1 Corinthians 11:24.

d. 1 Corinthians 10:14-16, 21. e. 1 Corinthians 10:17.

Q. 169. *How hath Christ appointed bread and wine to be given and received in the sacrament of the Lord's supper?*

A. Christ hath appointed the ministers of His word, in the administration of this sacrament of the Lord's supper, to set apart the bread and wine from common use, by the word of institution, thanksgiving, and prayer; to take and break the bread, and to give both the bread and the wine to the communicants: who are, by the same appointment, to take and eat the bread, and to drink the wine, in thankful remembrance that the body of Christ was broken and given, and His blood shed, for them.^f

f. 1 Corinthians 11:23-24; Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19-20.

Q. 170. *How do they that worthily communicate in the Lord's supper feed upon the body and blood of Christ therein?*

A. As the body and blood of Christ are not corporally or carnally present in, with, or under the bread and wine in the Lord's supper,^g and yet are spiritually present to the faith of the receiver, no less truly and really than the elements themselves are to their outward senses;^h so they that worthily communicate in the sacrament of the Lord's supper, do therein feed upon the body and blood of Christ, not after a corporal and carnal, but in a spiritual manner; yet truly and really,ⁱ while by faith they receive and apply unto themselves Christ crucified, and all the benefits of His death.^k

g. Acts 3:21. h. Matthew 26:26, 28.

i. 1 Corinthians 11:24-29. k. 1 Corinthians 10:16.

Q. 171. *How are they that receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper to prepare themselves before they come unto it?*

A. They that receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper are, before they come, to prepare themselves thereunto, by examining themselves^l of their being in Christ,^m of their sins and wants;ⁿ of the truth and measure of their knowledge,^o faith,^p repentance;^q love to God and the brethren,^r charity to all men,^s forgiving those that have done them wrong;^t of their desires after Christ,^v and of their new obedience;^w and by renewing the exercise of these graces,^x by serious meditation,^y and fervent prayer.^z

- l. 1 Corinthians 11:28. m. 2 Corinthians 13:5.
- n. 1 Corinthians 5:7; Exodus 12:15. o. 1 Corinthians 11:29.
- p. 2 Corinthians 13:5; Matthew 26:28. q. Zechariah 12:10; 1 Corinthians 11:31.
- r. 1 Corinthians 10:16-17; Acts 2:46-47.
- s. 1 Corinthians 5:8; 1 Corinthians 11:18, 20. t. Matthew 5:23-24.
- v. Isaiah 55:1; John 7:37. w. 1 Corinthians 5:7-8.
- x. 1 Corinthians 11:25-26, 28; Hebrews 10:21-22, 24; Psalm 26:6.
- y. 1 Corinthians 11:24-25. z. 2 Chronicles 30:18-19; Matthew 26:26.

Q. 172. *May one who doubteth of his being in Christ, or of his due preparation, come to the Lord's supper?*

A. One who doubteth of his being in Christ, or of his due preparation to the sacrament of the Lord's supper, may have true interest in Christ, though he be not yet assured thereof;^a and in God's account hath it, if he be duly affected with the apprehension of the want of it,^b and unfeignedly desires to be found in Christ,^c and to depart from iniquity^d: in which case (because promises are made, and this sacrament is appointed, for the relief even of weak and doubting Christians^e) he is to bewail his unbelief,^f and labour to have his doubts resolved;^g and, so doing, he may and ought to come to the Lord's supper, that he may be further strengthened.^h

- a. Isaiah 1:10; 1 John 5:13; Psalm 88:1-18; Psalm 77:1-4, 7-10; Jonah 2:4, 7.
- b. Isaiah 54:7-10; Matthew 5:3-4; Psalm 31:22; Psalm 73:13, 22-23.
- c. Philippians 3:8-9; Psalm 10:17; Psalm 42:1-2, 5, 11.
- d. 2 Timothy 2:19; Isaiah 1:10; Psalm 66:18-20.
- e. Isaiah 40:11, 29, 31; Matthew 11:28; Matthew 12:20; Matthew 26:28.
- f. Mark 9:24. g. Acts 2:37; Acts 16:30. h. Romans 4:11;

1 Corinthians 11:28.

Q. 173. *May any who profess the faith, and desire to come to the Lord's supper, be kept from it?*

A. Such as are found to be ignorant or scandalous, notwithstanding their profession of the faith, and desire to come to the Lord's supper, may and ought to be kept from that sacrament, by the power which Christ hath left in His church,ⁱ until they receive instruction, and manifest their reformation.^k

- i. 1 Corinthians 11:27-34; cf. Matthew 7:6, 1 Corinthians 5:1-13, Jude 23, 1 Timothy 5:22.
- k. 2 Corinthians 2:7.

Q. 174. *What is required of them that receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper in the time of the administration of it?*

A. It is required of them that receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper, that, during the time of the administration of it, with all holy reverence and attention they wait upon God in that ordinance,^l diligently observe the sacramental elements and actions,^m heedfully discern the Lord's body,ⁿ and affectionately meditate on His death and sufferings,^o and thereby stir up themselves to a vigorous exercise of their graces;^p in judging themselves,^q and sorrowing for sin;^r in earnest hungering and thirsting after Christ,^s feeding on Him by faith,^t receiving of His fulness,^v trusting in His merits,^w rejoicing in His love,^x giving thanks for His grace;^y in renewing of their covenant with God,^z and love to all the saints.^a

- l. Leviticus 10:3; Hebrews 12:28; Psalm 5:7; 1 Corinthians 11:17, 26-27.
- m. Exodus 24:8; Matthew 26:28. n. 1 Corinthians 11:29.
- o. Luke 22:19. p. 1 Corinthians 11:26; 1 Corinthians 10:3-5, 11, 14.
- q. 1 Corinthians 11:31. r. Zechariah 12:10.
- s. Revelation 22:17. t. John 6:35. v. John 1:16.
- w. Philippians 1:16. x. Psalm 63:4, 5; 2 Chronicles 30:21.
- y. Psalm 22:26. z. Jeremiah 1:5; Psalm 1:5. a. Acts 2:42.

Q. 175. *What is the duty of Christians, after they have received the sacrament of the Lord's supper?*

A. The duty of Christians, after they have received the sacrament of the Lord's supper, is seriously to consider how they have behaved themselves therein, and with what success;^b if they find quickening and comfort, to bless God for it,^c beg the

continuance of it,^d watch against relapses,^e fulfill their vows,^f and encourage themselves to a frequent attendance on that ordinance^g: but if they find no present benefit, more exactly to review their preparation to, and carriage at, the sacrament;^h in both which, if they can approve themselves to God and their own consciences, they are to wait for the fruit of it in due timeⁱ: but, if they see they have failed in either, they are to be humbled,^k and to attend upon it afterwards with more care and diligence.^l

b. Psalm 28:7; Psalm 85:8; 1 Corinthians 11:17, 30-31.

c. 2 Chronicles 30:21-23, 25-26; Acts 2:42, 46-47.

d. Psalm 36:10; Song of Solomon 3:4; 1 Chronicles 29:18.

e. 1 Corinthians 10:3-5, 12. f. Psalm 1:14.

g. 1 Corinthians 11:25-26; Acts 2:42, 46.

h. Song of Solomon 5:1-6; Ecclesiastes 5:1-6.

i. Psalm 123:1-2; Psalm 42:5, 8; Psalm 43:3-5.

k. 2 Chronicles 30:18-19; Isaiah 1:16, 18.

l. 2 Corinthians 7:11; 1 Chronicles 15:12-14.