

A GUIDE FOR FAMILY DISCUSSIONS

Children and Communion

When our children begin to worship with us and see us partake of Communion, they often ask, “Can I have some?” Baptist tradition has directed that this privilege be extended only to baptized believers.

In some congregations the invitation to the Meal is to “all who love Jesus.” Our children love Jesus with an abandon usually not available to those of us who are adults. We are a family. Families come to meals together. Some parents allow or even encourage their young children to take Communion.

How shall families decide about Communion for their children who have not yet made a profession of faith and been baptized? This brochure is prepared to support you in your consideration of this question.



You may decide for your child to participate in Communion for some of the following reasons:

- Communion is a family experience, showing inclusion. Participation in Communion says to the child: “You are a valued part of this family of faith.”
- Communion is an act of grace, communicating God’s love, a symbol that can help the child experience acceptance and blessing.
- You have helped your child attain a basic understanding of what Communion means. Your child now understands that Communion is an act of remembering for those who love Jesus, not a snack to help him or her make it through worship!

You may decide for your child not to participate in Communion for some of the following reasons:

- The tradition of Baptists has directed that Communion follow baptism.
- It would be easy to trivialize Communion by partaking without realizing or remembering the meaning, a risk for us all.
- It is a good discipline for our children to wait and anticipate the privilege of being a part of the Communion experience with their church family.

Conclusion

A basic Baptist principle emphasizes the priesthood of all believers. We have the privilege of direct access to God. With that privilege comes the responsibility to “work out” our own faith and to determine how we are to help our children come to know the love of God.

Perhaps your family could discuss this question and decide how you want your children to handle the invitation to the Lord’s Table. Additional growth may occur for your children by discussing this issue and by discovering that your family decisions will not always match those of other families. You will have many occasions in subsequent years to say to your children: “That’s just how our family does it!”

Talk about this and other faith-related issues with your family, your church ministry staff, and your fellow believers/ministers. We are here to support one another on the faith journey!

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