

POLICY FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE LORD'S SUPPER

Welcome, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We are grateful to God for the pleasure of having you visit and worship with us. It is our desire to worship our God in spirit and truth with reverent joy. We hope this brief explanation of our policy for participation in the Lord's Supper will be of help to you.

Many Evangelical Churches practice an "Open Table" policy. Such churches ask that those who come to the Table be self-consciously converted and living with a good conscience before the Lord. The Table is open to all true Christians who are present. Admission to the Table is determined by the individual believer, a practice endorsed by 1 Cor 11:28 *But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.*

Other Evangelical Churches practice a "Closed Table" policy. Such churches admit only those who are members of their particular local church. The Table is closed to any who are not members of that local church. This practice is endorsed by 1 Cor 11:29, rightly interpreting *body* as referring to the church as the body of Christ - *For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself, if he does not judge the body rightly.*

We practice a "Restricted Table" policy. Individual salvation and local church membership are requisites for admission to the Table. The Table is "open" to true believers who are not members of our local assembly, but "closed" to any who are not members of any local church. The Table is not completely "open" nor completely "closed", but "restricted".

Our policy gives place to the individual and calls each man to personal responsibility and self-examination before Christ. If you are an unbeliever, then we would urge you to repent and come to Christ by faith. If you are a true believer who is yet to be baptized, then we would urge you to identify with Christ in the waters of baptism. If you are a baptized believer who is yet to join a local church, then we would urge you to find a local body of Christ to which you can commit yourself and in which you can lovingly serve. If you are a member in good standing (that is, not under church

discipline) in a Biblically ordered local church, then we invite you to partake with us in this act of corporate worship.

Our policy also gives place to the church and acknowledges that the observance of the Table is the corporate responsibility of the redeemed community. The Supper is not a personal, private ordinance, but a corporate ordinance, as we as Christians are not isolated but are to be joined in membership together. *Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it* (1 Cor 12:27). Paul's directive to the church in Corinth, which was observing the Supper in a fragmented, divided manner, is to eat the Supper together as a church. *So then, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another* (1 Cor 11:33). He assumes that the Corinthians knew who were, and who were not, members of their church. Once assembled, they were to eat the Supper together as a church.

A "Restricted Table" policy not only views the Supper as an ordinance for our local church, but it also acknowledges the church universal. We believe that the Supper is to be observed by the local church, but we recognize the "universal church" and the spiritual unity that we share with all true churches which, together are the collective body of Christ on the earth. The Supper gives us opportunity to enjoy fellowship with those visiting with us from other churches from around the world. (See our statement in the bulletin.)

Our practice serves to press disciples into an orderly and Biblical walk under the government of Christ which is expressed in His church. The Biblical pattern of discipleship, baptism and church membership is thus promoted. *To Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.* (Eph 3:21)

We hope that this brief explanation has helped you to order your conscience in approaching the Table. If you have any further questions, one of our pastors would be happy to speak with you at your convenience.