

Communion Meditation – Table Manners

1 Cor 5.1-13

“Fencing the Table”

Apr 23rd, 2017

Teasing Closely Related Issues Apart

- Today’s topic is on “**fencing the table**”
- But closely related topics are:
 - baptism, church membership, excommunication, elders administering
- A single study could address all simultaneously / But far too involved
- Today’s topic asks, “**Ought a church restrict communion in any way?**”

3 Primary Views of Communion

1. Open ~ Y’All come (*no restrictions*)
2. Closed ~ Only members of that church or known affiliates can come
3. Close ~ Open to all qualified (*baptized, member of evangelical church*)
 - Debate on specific qualifications (*What’s evangelical?*)

“What is our justification for restricting communion?”

1. Continuity from Old Testament practices
 - The Lord’s Supper replaces many OT ceremonies & festivals
 - OT practices were regulated / specific days & ways / rituals
 - Many who practice open communion regard OT as “**storybook**”
2. Logical necessity (2 examples)
 - Baptism required to enter covenant before participation in it possible
 - Excommunication
 - **Read 1 Cor 5.11-12** ~ “**But now I have .. those who are inside?**”
3. Explicit example of Paul (**1 Cor 11**)
 - Paul’s discourse is a “**fencing**” of the Lord’s Table

“Fencing” Perhaps Too Ambiguous

- Fences vary quite a bit in design and intention
- Open advocates see high walls or fences topped with razor wire
- **III: Forest Lawn** graves ~ White picket fences / eggs or rabbits
 - They represented a border to be honored

“Fencing the Lord’s Table” has negative connotations in our egalitarian society
It draws distinctions between people / Many don’t like that
But God draws distinctions between people / We honor God by doing it