

Every Week Communion? Why Not? Too Long & Too Few Volunteers

The Sabbath

Read Genesis 2:1-3.

- Why did God rest? (See Isaiah 40:28.)
- What did God do to the seventh day?

Notice: Exodus 16:22-26 before Exodus 20:8-11.

- What lessons does God teach using manna?

Holy = set apart

- What does it mean to keep the Sabbath holy?
- Help from the Lord's Prayer (see slide)

Read Isaiah 58:13-14.

- What does it mean to "turn back your foot from"?
- Where is delight to be found on the Sabbath?
- Promise for those who honor it?

See Mark 2:27-28.

- What does it mean that the Sabbath was made for man?

Hebrews 4:8-10.

- What does it mean to enter God's rest?

Why Not? Reason #3: "It Will Take Too Long"

Quote from "We Have the Time" by Kenneth Wieting:

The second most common objection to recovering weekly communion in the 1999 survey was that it takes too much time. While the Holy Trinity and the saints triumphant are outside of time, we struggle in and with time. Time may seem heavy as a day drags along or sleepless hours lumber through the night. Time may appear light and fleeting as another year or decade slips away, like a shadow or a flower that withers (Job 14:2).

Our time on earth is a precious gift from God, for our times are in God's hands (Psalm 31:15). We pray, "O Lord, make me know my end and what is the measure of my days; let me know how fleeting I am!" (Psalm 39:4). We ask God, "So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom" (Psalm 90:12).

Time is precious. Jesus' love is infinitely more precious.

Our risen Lord comes among us in the Divine Service to provide refuge and security that we cannot provide for ourselves. We gather in His presence for a fraction of each week. We easily spend more than 80 minutes for a sporting event, movie, eating out with friends or relaxing in the great outdoors. But our inwardly-curved hearts easily complain about the 80 minutes to receive Jesus' loving gifts.

While temptations to usurp time in the Divine Service for extraneous things abound, Christ serving His people at His Table is never extraneous. All week, the pastor prepared a sermon for Christ to speak to His gathered guests. The liturgy confesses the King of kings in our midst acting for us. Of all the voices in the

world, only Jesus' voice reveals and heals our hearts. Of all the food in the world, only His food prepares our bodies for the resurrection of all flesh. The Lord's Supper is His doing, not ours, and He loves to give.

Questions about the time used to receive the Sacrament should be asked with Jesus Christ as the subject, not us. The question "Why should we use 10 or 15 minutes more to do this each week?" misses the mark. Such questions turn our thoughts back in on ourselves and away from Christ. The question "Why should the living Christ desire time to do this for His gathered guests each Lord's Day?" hits the target. Consider also a related, probing question: "Is our life really too busy to have Jesus serve us His holy food on our day of rest?"

- What does Paul say about time and days?

Ephesians 5:15-16 Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.

Romans 13:11-12 Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.

2 Timothy 3:1 – 4:8, especially 3:1 & 4:3
But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty... For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions.

1 Thessalonians 5:1-2, 4-5, 11 Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ... But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. For you are all children of light... Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

From a personal reflection about our response to COVID-19 (Sept. 15, 2020):

The coronavirus is only one more way in which we could possibly suffer and die in this world. However, as Christians, the Lord has already taught us to number our days – that the wages of sin is death. We knew we were going to die long before this pandemic hit. The question is, do we yet know how to live? How to be human? How to love one another? Do we see this as a time reminding us of the highest priorities in life – of hearing God's Word, partaking of our Lord's body and blood, and encouraging one another as the day approaches? Are we using this time to order our affairs and care for our families for the future? Are we spending our days with our loved ones or in isolated, traumatic fear?

When facing near-certain death in times of war, Christians knelt to receive the Lord's Supper with bloodshed all around them, recognizing the essential priority of God's gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation that come from Christ in this Sacrament. Have we lost such a high view of the Lord's gifts?

Considerations:

- Fellowship/Education Hour
- Could we adjust our service times?

Why Not? Reason #4: "Not Enough Volunteers"

- What is the role of the Altar Guild?