



# OPEN OR CLOSED COMMUNION?

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Our communion service is *open* to everyone who has personally placed their faith in Jesus Christ, and Him alone, as their forgiver and to those who in loving gratitude, seek to follow Him as their supreme leader. Such persons believe that a restored relationship with God and eternal life is wholly a work of God's free grace, and is not the work, in whole or in part, of human goodness or religious ceremony. God's free gift to us is based on a gift that cost Him everything: His Son's blood as the One who bore the divine wrath in our place.

The Bible teaches that participants in communion are to reverently partake of the *symbols* of the body and blood of Christ that secured our forgiveness and eternal relationship with God. It is to be a time of affirmation of faith, and expression of gratitude, along with confession and prayer for continued spiritual growth. We do so in sober and joyful anticipation of Jesus' return. By faith, we are also cognizant, that Jesus is present with us in a special way as we worship together as His people in observance of communion. Participants are also to continually seek to have harmonious relationships with everyone, especially with their brothers and sisters in Christ.

If the above is not true for you, while we are so very pleased to have you here with us today, we need to inform you the Bible exhorts you not to eat or drink the communion elements. Instead, please seriously consider responding to God's gift to you. If the above is true for you, our *delight* is to have you join us in partaking of the elements, regardless of whether or not you are a member of our local congregation.

We leave it up to parents to determine when their children are mature enough to meaningfully participate in communion. We do believe however, that believer's baptism (the symbol of spiritual birth) precedes communion (the symbol of spiritual growth).

Baptism information is available on the table in the lobby for young children, older children, and adults. If you would like to schedule a baptismal service, contact your Lay Pastor, an Elder, or a Pastor.

Oakwood celebrates communion every four to eight weeks. We use grape juice, not wine, for communion.

Some Christians use the phrase, *baptism of the Holy Spirit* to refer to a "second blessing," an infilling of the Holy Spirit subsequent to, and quite distinct from conversion. They

sometimes regard it as a significantly deeper spiritual experience that is accompanied and evidenced by the speaking of tongues. This view sometimes divides Christians into two levels of spirituality; those without this second experience may be viewed as not having the same capacity for intimacy with God, transformation of character, and power in ministry, as those who have had this experience. Division within the church can therefore be the result of this view.

Rather than being an issue of division, the apostle Paul teaches quite clearly in 1 Corinthians 12:13 that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is the universal spiritual experience of all true Christians and is therefore the basis for Christian unity. The Christians at Corinth had allowed their desire for various spiritual gifts such as tongues to divide them, but

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