

EXAMINE YOURSELF

1 Corinthians 11:28 “Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup.”

When I was very young, I remember my father going to our Pastor’s office in the church parsonage on Saturday afternoon prior to the Sunday when the congregation would receive the Lord’s Supper. In those days this happened four times each year.

Why did my father go to see the pastor? Such a visit was required in preparation for receiving the Lord’s Supper. The purpose of the visit was for the Pastor to meet individually with a representative of each family to ensure that the members of the congregation were examining themselves prior to receiving the Lord’s Supper. This visit was directly in response to the words of 1 Corinthians 11:28.

What was involved in this “visit?” There were four basic questions the pastor asked: 1) Do you believe that Christ’s physical body and blood are present together with the bread and wine in this holy meal? 2) Do you believe you are a sinner, are you sorry for the sins you have committed and that in receiving the Lord’s Supper Christ provides you with forgiveness of your sins? He would also ask if there was any sin that was especially troubling the heart and soul of the person with the goal of helping that individual find help in God’s word to deal with it. 3) Are you at peace with all of your fellow brothers and sisters in Christ? (Unity of the faith) 4) Do you resolve to amend your sinful life and ways and seek the Holy Spirit to guide you in a life that is well pleasing to your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ? (see pages 329-330 in LSB for a lengthier listing of appropriate questions to use for self-examination.)

In no way can a pastor, congregation or your fellow Christian brothers and sisters expect you to be perfect. The basis of self-examination is not to prevent you from attending the Lord’s Supper. Rather, it is to prepare you to receive it and the blessings Jesus offers you through it. A worthy recipient is one who recognizes his or her sinful life and unworthiness; who thirsts for God’s forgiveness; and, trusts Christ’s promise of forgiveness through the reception of His body and blood in the

sacrament. As often as you in repentance and faith in Jesus' word and promise receive this holy meal you receive the blessings He promises you.

Prayer: Through Your word and the guidance of the Holy Spirit help me, O Lord, to know my sins, confess, repent and receive Your forgiveness for Jesus' sake. Amen.

I lay my sins on Jesus, The spotless Lamb of God;
He bears them all and frees us From the accursed load.
I bring my guilt to Jesus To wash my crimson stains
Clean in His blood most precious Till not a spot remains.

I lay my wants on Jesus; All fullness dwells in Him;
He heals all my diseases; My soul He does redeem.
I lay my griefs on Jesus, My burdens and my cares;
He from them all releases; He all my sorrows shares.

I rest my soul on Jesus, This weary soul of mine;
His right hand me embraces; I on His breast recline.
I love the name of Jesus, Immanuel, Christ the Lord;
Like fragrance on the breezes His name aboard is poured.”
(LSB 605)