

Practice of the LORD'S SUPPER in the LIFE and MINISTRY of GRACE BFC

~ Adopted by the Elders of Grace BFC Wallingford in June, 2017 ~

1. AN OPERATING DEFINITION

- a. The Lord's Supper is an ordinance of the New Testament,⁽²⁾ in which, by the giving and receiving of bread and wine,⁽³⁾ according to the appointment of Jesus Christ, His death is proclaimed. Those who worthily partake in this remembrance of Him feed upon Him to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace, have their union and communion with Him confirmed, and testify and renew their thankfulness and commitment to God and their mutual love and fellowship each with the other as members of the same mystical body.
 - i. Addendum (additional clarifiers we feel helpful)
 1. ⁽²⁾ entrusted to the Church of Christ and its Spiritual oversight
 - a. Per Paul's admonition to the Church in Corinth in their disregard for the Church of Christ.
 2. ⁽³⁾ (and/or grape juice)
 - a. Per our present action
 3. We also were concerned to highlight the aspects of remembrance, reconciliation, and the forward-looking dimension of the supper as foretaste of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

2. ACTION to be TAKEN in LIGHT of DEFINITION

- a. We will endeavor to appropriately emphasize the various Spiritual effects and benefits of the Lord's Supper as we lead our people in enjoyment of them.
 - i. In how we frame the Lord's Supper verbally from the front
 - ii. In occasional sermons that focus more on the Supper
 - iii. Perhaps in the way in which we partake from time to time (mode)
- b. We will offer the Lord's Supper to those members¹ of our Church who are unable to be present at worship on Communion Sunday on account of physical/health limitations.
 - i. Who qualifies to receive the Supper outside the corporate gathering.
 1. Those who are sick, hospitalized, or shut-in at home or other facilities.
 2. We would consider requests, on a case by case basis, from those required to work on a communion Sunday.
 3. The intention of this policy is not to accommodate those who voluntarily chose to be away on any given communion Sunday
 - ii. Addendum
 1. ⁽¹⁾ This is a statement is only in relation to members. We feel a responsibility by virtue of our membership covenant to offer communion to members unable to be present. It is not to say we

would *not* consider taking to active participants who are non-members. But that is not our question here. And again, this is not intended for members who voluntarily choose not worship with us on Communion Sunday.

- iii. Who will officiate the Lord's Supper in these contexts?
 1. Pastors, Elders, and/or Deacons who have been
 - a. trained in the Biblical theology and mechanics of the Supper,
 - i. including the appropriately warnings and examinations associated with the Supper
 - ii. will have a script for training purposes and also available for ongoing use as needed
 - b. mentored through one or two opportunities to facilitate it on their own, and
 - c. approved and commissioned by the board of elders to officiate the Supper
 - iv. When will this be administered?
 1. The intent would be to administer it primarily on Communion Sundays – the day of the week set aside by our Lord for corporate remembrance and celebration of His death/resurrection, and the particular day Grace BFC has set aside to partake of the supper together as a body.
 - a. The intent here is to receive the Supper as an extension of the Supper shared together by the Body during corporate worship.
 - b. Being sensitive to the potential difficulty of administering the Supper in certain circumstances on Communion Sunday, we would be willing to do so at a later point in the week.
 - c. A point person will indirectly oversee the administration of the Supper, ensuring it is administered faithfully and efficiently.
 - c. The Supper could be administered in other corporate gatherings of the Church under the following conditions
 - i. The occasion(s) is approved by the board of elders
 - ii. The Supper is led by an officiant approved by the Board of Elders.

3. RELATED GUIDELINES FOR APPROVAL

- a. Can someone other than a pastor, elder, or deacon administer the Supper?
 - i. **Yes**, given they have successfully completed the same process for approval
- b. Can a woman as officiant administer the Supper?

- i. **Yes**, but only in the same contexts in which they are permitted to teach the Word corporately and after successfully completing the approval process
- c. Can a woman serve the Supper as a non-officiant? For instance, can a female deacon serve communion on a Sunday morning?
 - i. **Yes**
- d. Can other pastors and elders officiate the Supper during Lord's Day Worship?
 - i. **Yes**
- e. Can non-elders and non-deacons serve the Supper during Lord's Day Worship?
 - i. **Yes**, with the approval of the board of elders
- f. Can we utilize other formats in celebration of the Supper
 - i. **Yes**, with the approval of the board of elders, for example:
 1. Come and receive the elements from a central station(s)
 2. Partake as part of a full meal shared together
 3. Intinction – individually dipping bread in a common cup passed around
 4. Singing while the elements are passed around
- g. Should we wear suits for the Supper?
 - i. It is the opinion of the sub-committee that the table should **not** be symbolically elevated above the pulpit. Thus we would recommend dressing in similar attire for the administration of the Supper as we do for the administration of the Word.
 - ii. We will work towards development of a *Service Decorum* for all those helping lead/facilitate the various aspects of our worship service.
- h. Is there an age requirement for participation in the Supper?
 - i. **No**

4. RELATED QUESTIONS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

- a. Should the Supper be administered more frequently on Sunday mornings, (i.e. as often as we administer the Word)?
 - i. There are numerous perspectives and opinions on this question. The committee sees no definition answer from Scripture. The committee recommends that the board regularly consider, in light of the Spiritual benefits enjoyed in the Supper, whether we should be partaking more frequently.
- b. Should someone be baptized before partaking of the Supper?
 - i. Though we do not require baptism before coming to the table, the logical order from Scripture seems to be that baptism is the initiatory rite into the communion of the body. Similarly, if someone is not fit or willing to be baptized, we question their fitness for the table.