

Communion: Mindset
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A very common question asked about communion pertains to the mindset of taking it. We are told in 1 Corinthians 11 that if we partake in an unworthy manner, we can bring condemnation on ourselves. Specifically, we are told that we fail to discern the Lord's Body. What is the Lord's Body we are meant to understand?

More specifically, in 1 Corinthians 11:23-25 Paul said that we must (individually) examine ourselves to take communion, since "he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body". What does Paul mean by "discerning the Lord's body"?

The context of the passage (effectively, from chapter 11 through chapter 15) deals with the conduct of the church, particularly when they gather together as an assembly. Paul repeatedly describes the Lord's body as the congregation "*For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread.*" 1 Corinthians 10:17; "*....for the sake of His body, which is the church*" Colossians 1:24b. The body of reference is not the bread, but the church. Therefore, the command to discern the body refers to our mindset towards one another.

Paul makes it clear that the main theme of 1 Corinthians 11 and the problems in communion were due to their lack of regard for one another and the church as a whole. (*For first of all, when you come together as a church.....What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing?* 1 Corinthians 11:18a, 22). Communion is a proclamation of fellowship. It points out that we embrace the other people taking communion with us as being fellow heirs of grace.

So how is it that we "discern" the church, the local body of Christ? First, it is about simply being together when we take it (*Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another.* 1 Corinthians 11:33). Second, it is about being without divisions (*For first of all, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it* 1 Corinthians 11:18).

The proper mindset in communion is one of understanding. It is not about engaging our emotions, but having a mind towards our Lord and towards those with whom we have like precious faith.