

Discerning the Body and Paedocommunion

By Pastor Dennis Tuuri, February 17, 2008

I. Paedocommunionists obey the injunction to properly discern the Lord's Body.

- 1 Corinthians 11:27-30 - The *curse*, *command* and *cure* sections of this text all point to the covenant community as the Lord's Body.
- 1 Corinthians 11:18,21,22 - Paul's critique of the Corinthian situation shows the failure of discerning the body is a failure of community, not meditation of the mystical body of Christ.
- 1 Corinthians 11:33 - The application of the cure shows the answer is to engage in proper community.

"Lord's body" - Preponderance of usage, possibility of a better manuscript (omit "Lord's"), contextual evidence, corrective all point to the meaning of the Lord's body is the covenanted community of Christ.

- 1 Corinthians 10:1-5 - The historical OT analogue of the Christian church demonstrates that a proper discernment of the Lord's body includes the children of the church.

Summation:

1 Cor. 11:27-30 - Judgment; 1 Cor. 11:18,21,22 - Due to sins against the visible church; 1 Cor. 11:33 - Therefore, tarry for one another, consider one another.

Properly discerning the (Lord's) body means, among other things, understanding that children are part of that body, and need to be nourished.

II. The self-examination clause does not dictate against paedocommunion.

- A. The self-examination command is given to adults, not to infants. This is akin to the requirement in 2 Thes. 3:10 "if anyone will not work, neither let him eat." And Romans 10:13 "For 'whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.'"
- B. Infants were not the ones guilty of sins against the body, and were therefore not the subjects of the self-examination clause.
- C. Infants are not capable of being "unworthy" due to the sin that is the subject of the "proving"
- D. The self-examination clause can be exercised by children at a very early age. Children learn very early to see how they are relating to the rest of the children and adults.
- E. The self-examination clause leads the adults to properly discern the children of the church's inclusion in the corporate body of Christ. Baptism is the initiatory rite into the church and her supper. It is the "proof" of the children's participation in Christ's family.

III. Paedocommunion is a “whole bible” practice, children ate OT sacramental meals.

A. 1 Corinthians 10:1-5 - Manna

The Westminster Confession of Faith, declares that manna was a sacrament: "The sacraments of the old testament, in regard of the spiritual things thereby signified and exhibited, were, for substance, the same with those of the new" (27.5). The prooftext for this assertion is 1 Corinthians 10.1-4.

B. Covenant Renewals and Other Assemblies

Deut. 29:10-12 - "All of you stand today before the LORD your God: your leaders and your tribes and your elders and your officers, all the men of Israel,¹¹ "your little ones and your wives—also the stranger who *is* in your camp, from the one who cuts your wood to the one who draws your water—¹² "that you may enter into covenant with the LORD your God, and into His oath, which the LORD your God makes with you today,
Joel 2:16 - 16 Gather the people, Sanctify the congregation, Assemble the elders, Gather the children and nursing babes; Let the bridegroom go out from his chamber, And the bride from her dressing room.

C. Original Passover, the preeminent food & drink, nurture sacrament of OT

Hebrews 9:9,10 - It was symbolic for the present time... concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation.
Exodus 12:3,4 - **all the congregation** of Israel.. a lamb for a household..⁴ 'according to the number of the **persons**; according to **each man's need** (see Exodus 16:16,18,21 in reference to manna)

Exodus 12:24 - "And you shall observe this thing you and your sons forever.

D. The Priest's Family And The Offerings.

Leviticus 10:14 "The breast of the wave offering and the thigh of the heave offering you shall eat in a clean place, you, **your sons, and your daughters with you; for they are your due and your sons' due, which are given from the sacrifices of peace offerings** of the children of Israel.

Numbers 18:11 "This also *is* yours: the heave offering of their gift, with all the wave offerings of the children of Israel; I have given them to you, **and your sons and daughters with you**, as an ordinance forever. **Everyone who is clean in your house may eat it.**

E. The Peace Offering, Sacramental Feasts in Jerusalem.

Leviticus 7:15-18 - Peace offering is eaten.

Deut. 12:7, 12, 18 ⁷ "And there you shall eat before the LORD your God, and you shall rejoice in all to which you have put your hand, **you and your households**, in which the LORD your God has blessed you....¹² "And you shall rejoice before the LORD your God, **you and your sons and your daughters**, your male and female servants, and the Levite who *is* within your gates, since he has no portion nor inheritance with you.¹⁸ "But you must eat them before the LORD your God in the place which the LORD your God chooses, **you and your son and your daughter**, your male servant and your female servant, and the Levite who *is* within your gates; and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God in all to which you put your hands.

Deuteronomy 15:19,20 - ¹⁹ "All the firstborn males that come from your herd and your flock you shall sanctify to the LORD your God; you shall do no work with the firstborn of your herd, nor shear the firstborn of your flock.²⁰ "**You and your household shall eat it** before the LORD your God year by year in the place which the LORD chooses.

1 Samuel 1:4 Whenever the day came for Elkanah to sacrifice, he would give portions of the meat to his wife Peninnah and **to all her sons and daughters.**