

## EVILS OF OPEN COMMUNION

Before we show you the evils of OPEN Communion, let us note that the church (the assembly; a local congregation) has the authority from God to exclude, or to withdraw fellowship from its members if they are disorderly: NOTICE: *I Corinthians 5:9*; *II Thessalonians 3:6, 14*; *Romans 16:17*; *Matthew 18:15-18*.

Too many times we let sentiment decide for us instead of the Word of God. Sentiment has mutilated the plain Word of God in our churches today and many are afraid to discipline disorderly members.

Now just suppose that we practiced open Communion and we were consistent in withdrawing fellowship from disorderly members, as well as being consistent in not receiving those who were unscripturally qualified for membership in this church. Notice some of the things that could happen:

- A. We exclude a member for drunkenness, *I Corinthians 5:11*; he joins the "Big-wig Church" who is in a habit of taking in excluded members. Later at our next observance of the Lord's Supper he or she comes back and sits next to the deacon who had made the motion to have them excluded and participates in the Supper.
- B. We exclude two members for "*fornication*," *I Corinthians 5:11*; they later join a liberal protestant church. On the evening of our observance of the Lord's Supper they come to our church and participate in the Supper.
- C. We refuse to accept into our membership a person who has been sprinkled by some "so called church"; they go down the street to the "accept anything Baptist Church," and they are accepted into full fellowship on their sprinkling. Yet, they never fail to miss the observance of the Lord's Supper here at this church.
- D. This church excludes a man for preaching false doctrine, yet since we observe open Communion, he is permitted to come back and participate in the Supper with us.

Thus, it is plain to see that if we practice "OPEN" Communion, we would not have any guardianship over the Supper, which is a right that God has given to His churches. Baptist churches have control of their own members, to exclude them from the table if the church should find their life to be unworthy.

Open communion takes away all control over others who may be more unworthy who are not members of the church that may be present for the supper. Such churches can exclude heretics, drunkards, revelers, and everyone else that walks disorderly from their membership, that they may not defile the feast; but they cannot protect the table from such so long as they do not limit it to their membership.

We can prevent the "unworthies" from our own membership from partaking of the Supper until they get back into fellowship with this church, but if we practiced OPEN communion, excluded "unworthies" from other churches, as well as other unscripturally qualified individuals could come right in and partake, and defile the Supper.

We will not allow certain preachers to preach in our pulpits because of error in their teaching, or because they have destroyed their testimony by their ungodly lives and the continuous rebellion in righting that which is wrong. Yet, in spite of this, these same preachers can come in and participate with us in the Supper if we observe open communion.

Since each church is responsible to care for and to discipline its own members, we would not have any way to prevent "unworthies" from participating in the Supper, unless we recognize that the Supper is a church ordinance, and only those within its membership can participate. Call it CLOSED communion, or narrow-mindedness or whatever you please, but the truth is that it is what Christ commands. We show no discourtesy to visiting professing Christians when we announce that we observe closed communion, we are simply obeying Christ.

It's not that we believe that Baptists are the only ones that are saved, nor that our church is the only Baptist church preaching the truth. But in order for the church to retain its proper position as custodian and guardian over the Supper, (which means that she must see that the Supper is observed undefiled), the church MUST have disciplinary control over the participants. Therefore the participants are limited to its membership. By partaking with a certain church, we thereby show our submission to its government and discipline.

NOTICE: If visitors from any and other churches (whether Baptist or not) are allowed to participate in the Supper in any Baptist church, including this one, then the privilege of voting should also be extended to them because both are equally church acts and church privileges.

Is it discourteous to prohibit visitors from voting rights in a church where they do not have their membership? No, because this is a church right and thus limited to its membership. Is not the Supper also a church right and privilege? Why then should it be termed an act of discourtesy on our part if we retain that "right", "privilege" and command from God?

Observe further that Paul commands the "Ye" and the "You" to "put away", a disorderly brother and with such a one "they" were "not to eat", *I Corinthians 5:4-13*. Now who represents the "Ye" and "You" in this chapter? Who was Paul writing to in this letter? *"Unto the CHURCH of God which is at Corinth," I Corinthians 1:2*. So, he was not writing to the preacher or to other officers only, but to the "Church...at Corinth," and thus the command to "put away from among yourselves that wicked person" - *I Corinthians 5:13*, was given to the whole church and was to be obeyed by the whole church. The church at Corinth had no right or authority to discipline disorderly members in the church as her right to discipline was limited to "them that

*are within", I Corinthians 5:12*, that is, within its own membership. *"With such an one"* (the excluded member), they (the church at Corinth), *were not to eat," I Corinthians 5:11*. However, if the church at Corinth believed in "open communion", this same excluded man could come back and *"eat"*. The supper would then be defiled and the church would have gathered *"together not for the better, but for the worse", I Corinthians 11:17*.

By allowing him and others like him to be a communicant, they would in a sense be putting their approval upon his wicked life. This holds true also if we allow those who preach heresies to participate. If, after warning the audience of our belief, and they still partake, they are inviting judgment from God upon themselves.

Yes, the Bible clearly teaches CLOSED COMMUNION and as one of the Lord's churches we have no right or authority to change any part of that which He has left.