

# Children & The Lord's Table

## A Position Paper

Christ Fellowship Bible Church

*God birthed the Church on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2). The book of Acts is not prescriptive but descriptive in all that it speaks of. That is to say, the narrative events that Luke records should not function as a standard for churches throughout church history. Acts served as a special transition book from the Gospels to the birth, persecution of, and global-spread of the church. Even still, it appears that in the early days of the church, there is a pattern described that other churches would be wise to emulate particularly with reference to hearing the gospel, believing the truth, being baptized, and then partaking in the Lord's Table.*

### **1. The Preaching of the Gospel (Acts 2.37-40)**

The Apostle Peter preached on the day of Pentecost and proved that Jesus came from God and performed miracles and wonders and signs and that He was nailed to the cross to die. Three days later, God raised Him up again since it was impossible for Him to be held by death's power. When the crowd heard this sermon, they were pierced to the heart and cried out: "what shall we do?" Peter responded to those inquiring about how to be saved and told them to repent, be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of their sins and that promise of forgiveness of sins to those who repent and then are baptized is for all people whom God would call to Himself. It was with many words that Peter kept on exhorting the people to be saved from the perverse, worldly generation. Thus, salvation comes through hearing the gospel. And how can people hear without a preacher?

### **2. The Receiving of the Word (Acts 2.41a)**

The first verbal in verse 41 speaks of the people who had received Peter's word. He preached the gospel and when people inquired about how to be saved, he told them they must repent of their sins and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Those who heard the truth received it. The verb speaks of a welcoming of someone or something. It is a warm, kind, friendly, wholehearted acceptance of something. Those who heard the truth believed it and received it. In this specific context, they received the word of the Lord and embraced Jesus, whom they crucified, as Lord and Christ, for salvation.

### **3. The Baptism of the Believer (Acts 2.41b)**

Those who heard the preaching and believed were baptized. Throughout the book of Acts, baptism appears to be an initial step of obedience for those who believe in Christ. Those who heard the preaching, and those who received it, were those who were baptized.

### **4. The Adding to the Church (Acts 2.41c)**

The text states that those who were baptized were added to the church. Luke records that there were about three thousand souls added to the church. In other words, people heard the gospel preached, they received it in saving faith, they demonstrated their faith by being baptized, and then they were added to the church. Someone was counting the people who were added to the church on that day of Pentecost. Those who were baptized were even added *that very same day*. There was the sermon, the receiving of the truth, the baptism, and then joining the church.

### **5. The Continuing Devotion of Communion (Acts 2.42-47)**

Those who had received Peter's word and who were baptized, and who were added to the church were those who continued to devote themselves to four primary activities within the life of the church body: apostles' teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer. Since communion is a real communing with Jesus Christ and a remembering of His death on the cross, only believers should participate in communion. And the book of Acts portrays baptism as a sort of initial step of obedience in a new believer's life. When a person hears the Word, trusts in Christ, testifies of Christ publicly through water baptism, he then can be added to the church and participate in the full blessings of local church life, including the breaking of bread, which is the Lord's Supper.

## **The Role of the Parents (Specifically, the Father)**

Scripture reveals that parents must teach their children in the ways and word of God (Deut 6:4-9). It is the role of the parents to instruct their children in the way they should go so that when they are old they will not depart from it (Prov 22.6). Fathers must bring their children up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Eph 6.4). In light of this, CFBC affirms the blessed and privileged role that the father has in shepherding his child in the word of God. The father plays such a vital part in the discipline, instruction, nurturing, and guiding the child and his heart to the gospel of Christ. The father can, with the possible guidance and oversight of an elder at the church, actively endeavor to question his children so as to understand where they stand spiritually with the Lord.

Some questions that the father (and, if advantageous, with the help of an elder) might consider:

- Does my child profess to be a Christian?
- Is there evidence of the new birth? What tangible, visible fruit does my child produce?
- Does my child have an exhibited hunger for the Word of God, for prayer, and for the things of God?
- Is there great reason to think that my child is actively fighting sin in his life?
- Does my child demonstrate submission to authority, including the parents?

This process underscores the God-given responsibility that every father has to teach his children the deeds of the Lord and the fear of the Lord (Deut 4.9-10). The local church and its leadership seeks not to usurp the father's role but rather to come alongside of the father in loving support, biblical teaching, compassionate discipleship, and assisted instruction so that the children will be exposed to the gospel of grace, the glory of Christ, the sufficiency of His atonement, and the urgent need for repentance and faith.

When there is reason to believe that the profession of faith is genuine and that the fruit of his life demonstrates Christlikeness, then the child should seek to be obedient to Christ's command for all of his disciples to be baptized and then he would be welcome to partake in the Lord's Supper as well as the pursuit of church membership.

The shepherds of Christ Fellowship Bible Church do not desire to take the place of fathers and their role of being the primary shepherds of their children at home throughout the week, but the elders do strongly desire to support, encourage, equip, and enhance what the fathers are already doing to evangelize, instruct, catechize, and train up the child in the ways, word, and works of God by calling him to turn from his sin, flee to Christ, and follow Him with his life.