

Well, it was my fault that I couldn't commune today. With my smart phone and directions in hand, off I went to Divine Service today at Shepherd of the Springs Lutheran Church in Colorado Springs, CO.

I wasn't late. I made it with a minute to spare! I was greeted by their greeter, received a worship guide and entered the nave. Naturally, there were looks. After all, I was a visitor. I found a place to sit and I didn't know, but every Sunday at this congregation is Communion Sunday or as they call it Divine Service! They are a member congregation of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod.

And there it is – a very clear statement concerning attendance at the Lord's Supper; it was even printed at the very beginning of their guide! One of the lines read: "*Guests at our services...should speak to our pastor...before receiving the Sacrament.*" So what did I do? When the time came I remained in my seat, thankful that the pastor and the congregation cared enough about me to ask me to wait on communing until I could speak with the pastor.

At the end of the service I thanked their pastor for the loving practice of the Biblical doctrine of Closed Communion. He was pleasantly surprised! I take it that he had never received such a thank you.

Talking with the pastor about the Lord's Supper is really about "Table Manners" and a "Confession of the Truth." First, consider Table Manners. You would never, ever go to another person's house, walk in, sit down at their dining table, and expect to be fed. That would be very presumptuous and very rude! How much more so when it is the Lord's House and you are a visitor! It really is important to exercise proper Table Manners when you are visiting another congregation with which we are in fellowship.

It's very important to remember:

1. Do not assume that you have a right to commune; that is, that you are somehow entitled to go to the Lord's Supper.
2. If you would like to go to the Sacrament of the Altar, try to contact the pastor a day or so prior to the service. (Please don't wait until a couple minutes before the service begins.)

3. Please don't be offended if you are asked to speak with the pastor before attending the Lord's Supper.

4. Please be respectful and understanding if you are not given permission to commune there or if you are asked to wait.

Second, consider the opportunity that you are going to be given by speaking to the pastor. It will be an occasion for you to make a Confession of the Truth. He may ask you some questions. What sort of questions? Here are some examples he may ask...

- What is the name of your home congregation?
- Is your congregation a member of another synod? Or Lutheran?
- Who is your pastor?
- Are you a confirmed member of your home congregation?
- Are you a member of a lodge or unionistic society?
- Why do you desire to commune here?
- What do you hope to receive in the Lord's Supper?
- Are you prepared?

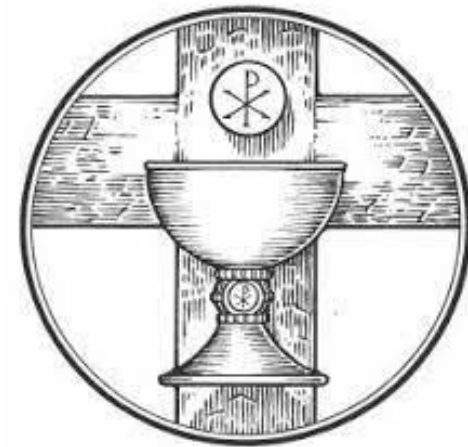
Finally, would you be angry if I asked you to wait before communing here? Holy Communion is given as and intended to be a blessing. It is possible to commune to your judgment if you don't know why you are coming or what you hope to receive. (Please read 1 Corinthians 10 and 11.)

Pastors are stewards of the mysteries of God (1 Corinthians 4:1) and the Lord's Supper is one of those Gospel mysteries. On the Last Day each pastor will be called to give an account of his stewardship (Hebrews 13:17). That's something for you to consider. Remember, table manners!

The peace of the Lord be with you always,

Rev. Jeff Patterson
Pastor, Shepherd of the Springs Lutheran Church

**A Word about Table Manners at
The Lord's House
Whether at Home or Away**



**Shepherd of the Springs Lutheran Church
6755 Earl Drive, Suite #100
Colorado Springs CO 80918**

*A Confessional, Evangelical, Sacramental, and Liturgical Congregation
of the Lutheran Confessions --
Where the Lutheran Reformation lives!*

MEMBER: THE LUTHERAN CHURCH – MISSOURI SYNOD