

## FROM THE PASTOR'S HEART.....

I want to pick up where I left off with last Sunday's sermon about Holy Communion. I truly thank APUMC for deciding to offer Holy Communion each week. This is the historical pattern of Christian worship. The General Conference of the UMC has encouraged our churches to offer communion more frequently. The Table of the Lord has helped to unify our church with its call to and experience of unity each week. It has been especially helpful to those sensory types among us who need more than words to experience the Risen Christ. It gives me a meaningful way to invite persons into intentional Christian discipleship every time we worship. If you missed the sermon, that's about it.

John Wesley strongly encouraged a Methodist to partake of Communion "as often as he can." He delivered a sermon entitled "The Duty of Constant Communion." Here Wesley stated two reasons to "communicate" often. 1) It is a command of God. And 2) It is a mercy to man. (Note Wesley pre-existed non-sexist language.) Why would we disobey the Lord? Why would we deprive ourselves of this great help? he asks.

Next he deals with several objections to frequent Communion. Here they are with my interpretation of his replies.

- Unworthiness

Answer: We are all and always unworthy. Paul meant not personal but community unworthiness. Church order prevents this.

- No time to prepare for it.

Answer: The only prep needed is the desire to be saved.

- It decreases my reverence.

Answer: Our personal feelings are beside the point. Faith & obedience is the point.

- I get nothing out of it.

Answer: That's our fault, not God's.

- The Anglican Church only required it 3 times a year.

Answer: But it encouraged Communion as often as possible.

Wesley concludes:

It has been shown, First, that if we consider the Lord's Supper as a command of Christ, no man can have any pretense to Christian piety, who does not receive it (not once a month, but) as often as he can. Secondly, that if we consider the institution of it, as a mercy to ourselves, no man who does not receive it as often as he can has any pretense to Christian prudence. Thirdly, that none of the objections usually made, can be any excuse for that man who does not, at every opportunity, obey this command and accept this mercy.

See you in Church, APUMC! At the Welcome Table!

Pastor Carl

