

## The table of the Lord for the family of the Lord

**Blow the trumpet in Zion, Consecrate a fast, Call a sacred assembly;  
Gather the people, Sanctify the congregation, Assemble the elders,  
Gather the children and nursing babes; (Joel 2:15-16)**

### What does the Old Testament say about children participating in worship?

Ex. 3:18 Then they will heed your voice; and you shall come, you and the elders of Israel, to the king of Egypt; and you shall say to him, 'The Lord God of the Hebrews has met with us; and now, please, let us go three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God.'

10:7-11 Then Pharaoh's servants said to him, "How long shall this man be a snare to us? Let the men go, that they may serve the Lord their God. Do you not yet know that Egypt is destroyed?" 8 So Moses and Aaron were brought again to Pharaoh, and he said to them, "Go, serve the Lord your God. Who are the ones that are going?" 9 And Moses said, "**We will go with our young and our old; with our sons and our daughters, with our flocks and our herds we will go, for we must hold a feast to the Lord.**" 10 Then he said to them, "The Lord had better be with you when I let you and your little ones go! Beware, for evil is ahead of you. 11 Not so! Go now, you who are men, and serve the Lord, for that is what you desired." And they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence.

12:3-4 Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: 'On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household. And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take it according to the number of the persons; according to each man's need you shall make your count for the lamb.

Deuteronomy 12 gives general instructions for the three main feasts that the people of Israel were required to attend on an annual basis.

- Feast of Unleavened Bread (Passover)
- Feast of Weeks (Pentecost)
- Feast of Booths (Tabernacles)

Deut. 12:7 – 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... 28 Observe and obey all these words which I command you, **that it may go well with you and your children after you forever**, when you do what is good and right in the sight of the Lord your God.

There is never a time when the Old Testament mentions children and speaks of them as being excluded from congregational worship or a religious meal.

### Does the status of children change in the New Testament?

Eph 6:1 – Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise: "that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth."

Luke 13:29 They will come from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and sit down in the kingdom of God.

Luke 18:15-17 Then they also brought infants to Him that He might touch them; but when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. 16 But Jesus called them to Him and said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of

such is the kingdom of God. 17 Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it.”

Acts 2:38-39 “Repent and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”

As we should expect, the status of covenant children does not change in the New Testament.

### **Does Paul’s teaching in 1 Corinthians 11 prohibit children from participating in the Lord’s Supper?**

The argument against paedocommunion is this: Children do not have the intellectual or emotional capacity to examine themselves or discern the body, and this makes them ineligible to participate in the sacramental meal.

1 Cor 11:17-22, 27-34 Now in giving these instructions I do not praise you, since you come together not for the better but for the worse. 18 For first of all, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it. 19 For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you. 20 Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord’s Supper. 21 For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of others; and one is hungry and another is drunk. 22 What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise you... 27 Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. 29 For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body. 30 For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world. 33 Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. 34 But if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, lest you come together for judgment. And the rest I will set in order when I come.

1 Cor. 1:9-10 God is faithful, by whom you were called into the **fellowship** of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. 10 Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all [d]speak the same thing, and **that there be no [e]divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.**

3:3 – for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and **divisions among you**, are you not carnal and [a]behaving like mere men?

4:6-7 ...that none of you may be [c]puffed up on behalf of one against the other. 7 For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?

10:24 Let no one seek his own, but each one the other’s well-being.

12:12-14 For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. 13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink [g]into one Spirit. 14 For in fact the body is not one member but many.

### **Summary**

1. As far as Scripture ever speaks to the issue, it always includes covenant children in the worship and meals of the church.
2. This is exactly what we would expect given the fact that God works generationally, and our children belong to Him.
3. The New and Old Testament present us with a consistent view of children. They are included in the kingdom of God and kingdom privileges – they are full covenant members.
4. 1 Corinthians does not overturn all of this, but in fact supports the practice of including our children.