

Biblical Reasons for Closed Communion

Written by Chase Harrison

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Introduction

It is my purpose and intent in this article to provide Biblical reasoning and logic for why Primitive Baptists believe in and observe “closed communion” in their church practice. As any Bible-believing Christian should, we seek to be as in line with the scriptures as we possibly can, both in doctrine and in practice. In holding to this church practice, Primitive Baptists have often been accused by others as being judgmental, bigoted, and pharisaical: Judgmental in the sense that we look down on others as being less worthy or not worthy; Bigoted in the sense that we are slaves to our own ideas and opinions regardless of basis or reasoning; Pharisaical in the sense that we are self-righteous in our intent and approach. Now, while Primitive Baptists have at times been guilty of these accusations (no one is totally exempt from or immune to these attitudes), it would be narrow-minded and stereotypical to totally dismiss this important topic of closed communion based upon such generic and blanket perceptions of Primitive Baptist church practice. The fact is, Primitive Baptists do not seek to be odd, different, judgmental, or any such thing just for the sake of being that way. As stated in our articles of faith, we believe in the Divinely-inspired scriptures of both the Old and New Testaments and that they are the **only** rule of faith and practice within the Lord’s church. In the case of closed communion, this is our foundational basis and sole point of reasoning. We feel doctrinally constrained by New Testament scripture to observe the Lord’s Supper and communion in this way. It is my purpose in this article to present scriptural evidence as the basis for our commonly questioned and heavily criticized practice of closed communion.

First, I feel it necessary to express a quick word pertaining to terminology. When it comes to how Primitive Baptists observe the Lord’s Supper and communion, some people refer to it as

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“closed” communion and some people refer to it as “close” communion. This is merely an issue of semantics and preference. So, for the purposes of **this** writing, and in order to be consistent and avoid confusion, I will now define what I mean by “closed communion” and that will be the term and definition in which I will use throughout this article. This is meant solely for the clarity of this article only and is not an effort to standardize Primitive Baptist terminology. For this article, I choose the term “closed communion” and define it to mean the following: Primitive Baptists maintain that only believers baptized into a Primitive Baptist church may partake in the ordinance of the church known as The Lord’s Supper and/or Communion. In other words, only those baptized believers of like faith and order may participate together in this church ordinance. Another reason I personally prefer the term “closed” over “close” is that later in this article we will contrast the two different ideas of open communion versus closed communion. Obviously, it logically makes more sense to contrast the opposites “closed” and “open” rather than the opposites “close” and “far” (or “distant”). Again, this may seem like a silly distinction to some, but for the purposes of this article and to be clear, it is expedient that we chose **one** term, define it, and stick with it. So, for the duration of this article, when I refer to closed communion, you now know exactly what I am referring to.

Overview of Scriptural Points to Consider

1) Jesus preached to multitudes but communed with the apostles only (disciples).

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Many who oppose or question the Primitive Baptist practice of **closed** communion do so because they themselves practice

open

communion, or they have at least seriously considered it as a proper option. Naturally, they view anything more limited than open communion as being unfair and unequal treatment. In their view, anyone and everyone who desires to partake in communion should be able to. At first glance, this would appear to be very fair and reasonable thinking. Treat everyone equally as not to offend anyone. Well, if open communion is in fact the proper approach, then surely Jesus Christ Himself would have taught it and done it, right? Because whatever Jesus did, we can rest assured that it was right and perfect and irrefutably good. Whatever His example is, we as Christians should undoubtedly follow and not question.

Throughout the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, it was very common for Him to address, teach, and preach to multitudes of people of mixed backgrounds, beliefs, and moral character. Jesus broadcasted His own gospel to these public multitudes and often qualified it by declaring, *“he that hath an ear to hear, let him hear.”* However, while Jesus clearly **preached** to multitudes, not one time in scripture will you find that He

communed

with the multitudes or the general public in the sense of symbolically taking His body and His blood, i.e. the Lord’s Supper. The only time in scripture that we read about Jesus commanding such things as

“Take, eat; this is my body”

and

“Drink ye all of it”

in a communion-type setting is when He communed with His

twelve disciples

right before He went to pray in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:17-30; Mark 14:12-26; Luke 22:7-20). Jesus preached for about three and a half years leading up to His death, yet He waited to have the first communion service about a day before His crucifixion. If open communion were the correct approach, then why would Jesus let so many opportunities to openly commune with the multitudes go by? Why did He wait almost until His dying hour to administer the first communion service? I believe it was to weed out the true followers from all the rest. Out of the thousands that Jesus preached to during the course of His ministry, how many remained steadfast and followed Him through all the hard sayings and tough times? How many were willing to sacrifice their earthly lives to follow Christ wholly and all the way to the end? How many were still following Him right before He went to the cross? The answer is

twelve

. And Christ desired to have this special communion and sacred service with those twelve just before He would go to suffer on the cross (Luke 22:14-15). I believe this communion is a very special service and blessing for one who has made the proper commitment and sacrifice to follow the Lord in discipleship. They have an extra abundant blessing of very close communion and fellowship with the Lord because of the sacrifice and commitment they have made to the Lord to obey His word and serve Him in His church kingdom. The Lord is truly a rewarder of those that diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6).

Jesus Himself practiced “closed communion” in this sense. He never commanded nor offered

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the ordinance of the communion service to the general public. He did not even administer it to general believers, for there were many that believed on Jesus only for the miracles that they saw Him perform (John 2:23; John 6:2). By the unmistakable actions of Jesus, communion was only to true believers and disciples who were so committed to their discipleship that they were willing to deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Him daily no matter what (Luke 9:23). Consider the account at the end of John 6 in which Jesus had many disciples following Him. Yet, as Jesus began to teach some hard truths and lessons, many became offended and turned and followed Him no more. After these “part-time disciples” departed, Jesus turned to His true and steadfast disciples (the twelve) and asked, “*Will ye also go away?*” Of course, we all know what Peter’s wonderful answer was there, but the point is that great sacrifice and steadfast perseverance is required for true discipleship. And scripture has already confirmed that Jesus only communed with the twelve, His closest and most steadfast disciples. Now, it is very worthy to be noted that no disciple is perfectly steadfast in their service. Peter denied Christ three times before His death. The eleven apostles (I am omitting Judas) all lost hope and sorrowfully went back to their previous lives after Christ was crucified, put to death, and laid in the tomb. None of the apostles anxiously awaited His resurrection with joyous anticipation like they should have. They had to be reminded of His resurrection after the fact, and they were upbraided by Jesus for their unbelief. They all faltered in that regard. So let’s keep discipleship in its proper perspective. At the same time, though, the fact still remains that Christ only communed in this very special and sacred way with His disciples and not the general multitudes.

Therefore, by the example of Jesus set forth in New Testament scripture, we as Primitive Baptists maintain that a disciple is one that has professed belief in the Lord Jesus Christ, denied themselves, taken up their cross to follow after Him, been baptized into His New Testament church, and then continues to be as steadfast as possible in that capacity (John 8:31). This is a person that has scriptural right to commune at the Lord’s Supper as an ordinance of His church.

2) Doctrine matters! -- The Day of Pentecost as an example and pattern.

After Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost, many were pricked in their heart and compellingly inquired, “*What shall we do?*” Peter responded:

“Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” – Acts 2:38.

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Clearly, the proper response to the New Testament gospel message is repentance and water baptism, which, as we are about to see, is the entry into the New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ:

“41 - Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

42 - And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

43 - And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.

44 - And all that believed were together, and had all things common;

45 - And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.

46 - And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,

47 - Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.” – Acts 2:41-47

Let's consider a few points within this section of scripture:

1 They that gladly received his word were baptized and added to the church. The context for the rest of the passage is here established as referring to baptized believers of like faith and order as members of the Lord's church.

2 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship and breaking of bread. This speaks to two things: 1) steadfast commitment and discipleship, and 2) how that **doctrine**

is inseparably connected to

fellowship

and

communion

. Doctrine is important and essential. Continuing in the apostles' doctrine was necessary if they were going to also enjoy the fellowship and breaking of bread (communion).

3 All that believed were together and had all things common. This is quite self-explanatory,

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but I would like to emphasize the importance of being

together

and having

all things common

in the Lord's church and service, especially pertaining to fellowship and communion, as is in this context.

4 They sold their possessions and goods and parted them to all men. Again, this speaks to the level of commitment and sacrifice that these particular disciples had in their obedience and willingness to serve the Lord in His church after hearing the gospel call through preaching. They were so excited about the gospel and serving the Lord that they were willing to give up their worldly possessions to follow Christ and serve Him in His church kingdom. (See the "rich young ruler" for a counter-example.)

5 They continued daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, and did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart. Again, this speaks to their daily continuance in their commitment and discipleship. And yet again, I cannot stress it enough, please notice the

unity

of faith and practice that they enjoyed. They did all these things with

one accord

, and with

gladness

, and with

singleness of heart

. And yet again, the breaking of bread is mentioned, which indicates that communion is still consistently part of the context throughout this passage.

6 And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. This last part confirms for us that verse 41 was indeed referring to three thousand souls being added to the **church**

after they gladly received the word and were baptized.

It was evidently set forth on the Day of Pentecost that only baptized believers of like faith, order,

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and practice as members of the Lord's New Testament church were the ones that were breaking bread and participating in the communion service. As it was with Jesus in our first point in this article, so it was with the apostles on the Day of Pentecost. They did not command or offer communion to the general masses, but rather only to baptized believers and disciples that were of like belief, of the same doctrine, of one accord, and had all things common. There is no scriptural evidence here that any valid communion ever included unbaptized individuals or those who had departed from the "apostles' doctrine". In fact, as we have shown above, the scriptural evidence actually gives strong indication to the contrary.

3) Participating in communion is a doctrinal statement, not just practical and symbolic.

We as Primitive Baptists believe that there are two ordinances of the New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ: Water Baptism and the Lord's Supper (communion). While these two ordinances differ in their exact purpose and scope, both of them exist within the framework of the New Testament church and both have strong symbolic meaning. Water baptism symbolically depicts the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ and is a public profession of faith that one believes in Christ and the fact that He died, and was buried, and was raised again on their behalf. The Lord's Supper, or communion, is also very symbolic. It depicts the Lord's sacrificial body and blood and serves to remind baptized believers that His *"body was broken"* and His

"blood was shed"

for them. While there is no doubt that these two ordinances are practical and symbolic, they are also very doctrinal. When a person participates in these ordinances, they are not just going through the motions of a practice, but they are boldly making a public statement and profession of faith regarding their doctrinal beliefs of Christ and His work and His gospel and His church.

As we saw in the previous point and example regarding what happened on the Day of Pentecost, the apostles' doctrine was essentially tied to fellowship and the breaking of the bread in communion. Doctrine is inseparably connected to the practices and ordinances of the church and is therefore very important and should not be compromised. Let's consider a scripture in which Paul addressed the Corinthian church:

"For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." – 1 Corinthians 11:29.

Discerning the Lord's body while we take communion is surely a doctrinal matter. It refers to

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understanding and belief of what we are doing when we remember the Lord's sacrificial body and blood in the communion service. A Catholic does not doctrinally discern the Lord's body in the same way that a Methodist does. A Methodist does not doctrinally discern the Lord's body in the same way that a Baptist does. So on and so forth. The idea of open communion violates this principle of doctrinally discerning the Lord's body by essentially implying that doctrine does not matter. Some proponents of open communion state that as long as one believes in Christ and professes to be a Christian then they are welcome to commune at the Lord's Supper. Some do not even limit it that far and open it up to the masses without any restrictions whatsoever. Consequently, by practice, this states that doctrine does not matter and is not significant when it comes to the Lord's Supper and communion. This goes against the scriptural evidence that we have looked at so far.

Paul rebuked the Corinthian church for not discerning the Lord's body properly. The effects and consequences of not discerning the Lord's body are not to be overlooked or taken lightly. Paul was very serious and listed severe ramifications. One that eats and drinks the Lord's Supper but does not discern the Lord's body is in danger of eating and drinking unworthily and eating and drinking damnation to one's self. Obviously, this is not eternal consequence, but Paul even goes on to say in the very next verse that some had in fact already experienced judgment for not discerning the Lord's body and partaking of the Lord's Supper unworthily: *"For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep."*
– verse 30.

4) The word *communion* in itself means *fellowship*.

The word ***communion*** is only found four times in three verses in the New Testament of the KJV Bible. All four times, it is translated from the Greek word ***koinōnia*** which is defined by Strong's to mean:

"fellowship, association, joint participation"

. This same Greek word in other places in the New Testament is also translated into the English word

fellowship

twelve times. Clearly, I think it is more than safe to conclude that

communion

and

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fellowship

can be thought of synonymously. The Bible itself uses them as such. Thus it follows that the church ordinance known as the Lord's Supper, or communion, is certainly a matter of fellowship.

With the semantics now being defined and established, there are simple and clear scriptural commands given in the New Testament to avoid divisions and heresies and to not fellowship those things. These commands can be found in scriptures such as:

“And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.”
– 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15

“If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.”
– 2 John 10-11

“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.”
– Romans 16:17.

Did you notice what the common thread is in these three different passages? In a word, **doctrine**

Doctrine is the determining factor in all three cases. This speaks again to how very important and essential that doctrine is when it comes to church practice and church fellowship. Doctrine is the foundation and basis by which a division, or heresy, is recognized, identified, and determined to have taken place, and thus is what defines the denominational distinctions and lines of fellowship pertaining to churches.

In the Thessalonian passage, they were to *“have no company with”* anybody that did not *“obey our word by this epistle”*

. If those words and phrases mean anything at all, then they at least have reference to fellowship determined by doctrine and obedience to doctrine. In the 2 John passage, the clear admonition is to not even bid a person God speed if they do not bring and line up with *“this doctrine”*

, much less fellowship with them in their house or any other setting, especially the church. Finally, the Romans passage is perhaps the most insightful of them all. This section of scripture not only teaches us to mark and avoid them which cause divisions, but it also tells us *how*

divisions are

caused

AND

recognized

. Notice, contrary to popular belief, doctrine does

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not

cause divisions.

People

that walk

contrary to doctrine

cause divisions. The clear rendering and natural reading of the text demonstrates this truth. The word

“them”

refers to people, and the phrase says,

“

them

which

cause

divisions”

. No other conclusion can be properly conceived. People cause divisions when they do not adhere to the New Testament doctrines of the church of Jesus Christ. It is His church, His doctrine, His commandments, and His rules. The doctrine itself does not cause divisions but rather people do when they walk contrary to it, as the Romans verse clearly states. The doctrine is simply the standard rule of measure by which we determine a division or offence has occurred.

So, in all three scriptural passages, doctrine is the common key in determining a division has occurred, and all three also confirmed that we are to not fellowship those who walk contrary to doctrine. This does not mean that we are to look down upon, judge, be hateful towards, or mistreat those that differ from us doctrinally. The Thessalonian passage above gives us the proper balance in this tough issue. It tells us to not count them as an enemy but admonish them as a brother. Clearly, we are to treat all with respect, kindness, meekness, and love, just as we would a brother. Yet, the other part of the passage cannot be ignored either. If the instruction to *“note that man and have no company with him”* means anything at all, then surely it has reference to fellowship. And as we demonstrated at the beginning of this section, fellowship and communion are the same and are treated synonymously in scripture. Therefore, doctrine determines who we are able to sit down with at the Lord’s Supper table in His church when we observe the communion service.

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5) Paul rebuked the Corinthian church for divisions that made void their communion service.

In the previous section, I felt it necessary to establish the essentiality and importance of doctrine as it pertains to church practice and church fellowship. This next point will build upon what we have established thus far. So to summarize, I would like to reiterate the following scriptural concepts and principles:

- 1) Doctrine indeed matters regarding church practice and church fellowship. It cannot be compromised.
- 2) Communion is equal to fellowship. Partaking the Lord's Supper in the church is a matter of fellowship.
- 3) Doctrine defines divisions and scripture admonishes us to not fellowship those who have caused division.

Considering all three of those principles together, we have a strong conceptual case for "closed communion" but we have yet to see an example where the concept is applied in a real and actual church setting. That is where this fifth point comes in. Let's look at the very telling account where Paul rebuked the Corinthian church for making a mockery of the communion service which rendered it nothing more than a farce and a travesty:

"17 - Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse.

18 - For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it.

19 - For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.

20 - When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper."

– 1st Corinthians 11:17-20

Paul calls out the church members at Corinth for having divisions and heresies among themselves when they came together in the church to eat the Lord's Supper and have communion. Verse 20 is the very telling part. The word **therefore** ties the context of the preceding verses to verse 20. Thus, we conclude that the divisions and heresies among them were the cause of their communion service being rendered null and void. Paul clearly states, "*when ye come together...this is*

not

to eat the Lord's Supper

". When the Corinthians came together in the church in this state of having divisions and heresies among them and not being united in doctrine, faith, order, and practice, it had a severe

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impact on the validity of the communion service. It was rendered invalid.

Let's see if we can apply the three principles summarized at the beginning of this section to this specific example regarding the Corinthian church:

1 Doctrine matters – If doctrine did not matter when pertaining to the communion service, then Paul would have had no basis for his rebuke of the Corinthian church. There would have been no basis to determine that the divisions and heresies had even occurred. Paul's accusations would have been baseless. Doctrine was the foundational basis of Paul's rebuke, and he tied it directly to their communion service being rendered invalid by their actions. Doctrine does matter and has a great influence on church practice, as is demonstrated by this example.

2 Communion is fellowship – By Paul's rebuke and final declaration that their communion service was made void by their fellowshiping of divisions and heresies, we can undoubtedly conclude that the practice of partaking in the communion service is indeed a matter of distinct fellowship that is determined by doctrinal standard and unity. This is because a division or heresy cannot exist without some type of doctrinal difference or doctrinal distinction. And clearly, the church at Corinth had divisions and heresies among them, implying doctrinal differences at some level. The fellowshiping of these doctrinal differences caused them to be in a divided, heretical, and schismatic state. And their divided state caused their communion service to be not only nullified, but turned into a shame and a mockery of the Lord's sacred service. To commune with those of doctrinal difference is to fellowship division and heresy. And to fellowship division and heresy is to render your own communion service null and void. Communion and fellowship go hand in hand in this way and cannot be separated. They are synonymous! To commune with division is to fellowship division. If doctrine does in fact matter, and we have already shown that it does, then doctrinal unity on the essentials is necessary for scriptural fellowship and communion.

3 Do not fellowship divisions – As we have already shown, the clear instruction of scripture is to not fellowship divisions, offences, heresies, or errors. This example demonstrates that there are serious ramifications to violating those scriptural instructions. In other words, it is not optional or suggested. God is serious about His word and His church, and there are consequences to fellowshiping divisions, heresies, and doctrinal differences. As mentioned earlier in this article, the consequences the Corinthians suffered for fellowshiping divisions and

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heresies were as follows:

- Their communion service was rendered null and void (verse 20).

- They made a mockery and drunken spectacle of the Lord's Supper (verse 21).

- They ate and drank the body and blood of the Lord unworthily, rendering them guilty of the same (verse 27).

- They ate and drank damnation to themselves (verse 29).

- They did not discern the Lord's body (verse 29).

- Many became weak and sickly among them, and many even died (verse 30).

This section was lengthy but important. It is a straightforward scriptural example and application of the principles and concepts that we established earlier in this article. Put these first five scriptural points together, and consider their logical sum, and you will see that the popular idea of open communion goes against the abundance of Biblical evidence that we have looked at so far.

6) The Lord's supper/Communion is an ordinance of the New Testament Church and is therefore subject to the authority, rules, and discretion of the church.

Some advocates of open communion use the following scripture as grounds to try to establish that no person has the right to judge another person pertaining to the communion service, thus opening communion up to any person claiming to have already examined themselves properly:

“But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.”
– 1st Corinthians 11:28.

In other words, according to their view, a person examining themselves is sufficient, and the validity of their communion is between them and the Lord only. To assert this view is to ignore the context of the passage and the context of the overall Corinthian letter. First of all, Paul is not writing to random individuals or the general public. He is writing to the **church** at Corinth. This is clearly stated at the beginning of his letter:

“Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:
” – 1 Corinthians 1:1-2

Any Bible verse must always be considered in its immediate context AND within the context of the book/letter in which it is contained. This is a basic principle of hermeneutics and Biblical interpretation. To take one verse and apply it to all individuals without restriction, when the overall book/letter applies it to a particular church, is to violate the context and intended meaning. Since the Corinthian letter was written to the Corinthian church, we must consider the above verse within the context and framework of the **church**. This is simply striving to stay true to the context.

While it is true that we must certainly examine ourselves individually in the Lord's service, this admonition cannot be extracted out of its church setting. In preceding verses, Paul has called out and rebuked the Corinthian church members for abusing the Lord's Supper and communion service. Then, in his admonition to *“let every man examine himself”*, Paul is placing individual responsibility upon each church member to do as they are supposed to in the communion service, lest they eat and drink the Lord's Supper unworthily. However, just because Paul places individual responsibility upon church members does not mean that the authority and role of the church is rendered null and void in the matter. The Lord's Supper/communion is an ordinance of the church, and therefore all of its participants and proceedings are subject to the authority, judgment, and discretion of the New Testament church, which is the pillar and ground of the truth. Consider what Paul wrote to the young minister Timothy:

“But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.” – 1st Timothy 3:15.

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Certainly, the church of God, as Jesus Christ as its Head, has the authority and governing power over the things that occur within it. As we have already established, the communion service is definitely something that goes on within the church. **It is an ordinance of the church.**

Therefore, it is subject to the church body. Every church member should indeed examine themselves as to how they ought to behave in the house of God, and individual responsibility does rest upon each church member in that regard, but the church body has scriptural authority and right to exercise judgment, discernment, and discretion in its own matters. For example, consider a couple other passages that were also written to the same church at Corinth:

1st Corinthians 5:9-13 & 1st Corinthians 6:1-8.

These two passages clearly demonstrate that the church has the right to exercise judgment and discretion amongst itself and take action in church matters. In fact, Paul rebuked them for **not** taking proper action.

Many times when someone uses the above verse as a means to justify open communion, they do so because the idea of closed communion offends them, and their usual first response is “*you don't have the right to judge me.*”

” Oftentimes, this is an emotional and knee-jerk reaction to an issue that is initially offensive to them on the surface. However, an offended person should not allow their emotion to overcome their sound reasoning inasmuch that they totally dismiss the topic. What seems like an injustice may actually be a misunderstood truth and in fact be scriptural. While no one has the right to judge another eternally, there is a proper place and balance for judgment in the church pertaining to church ordinances and church matters. This is scriptural, as we have shown, and we seek only to follow God's word as closely as possible. I am sure that any genuine Christian person and Bible-believer desires the same. Let us all strive for scriptural truth, regardless of personal opinions, preferences, or feelings. The Lord is worthy of our most honest efforts and endeavors to worship and serve Him in His church kingdom according to what He has stated in His word.

Conclusion

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In closing, I would like to make a few statements about denominations. What distinguishes one denomination from another? Is it not doctrine and practice? Yes, denominations are divisions that have occurred over time because a person or a group of people departed from the doctrine of one church in order to uphold what they believe the truth to be and established another church. All the various denominations that exist in Christianity today were the product of someone somewhere along the way becoming divided in their understanding of doctrine and church practice. Thus a line of fellowship was drawn and a denomination born. Denominations represent divisions and disagreements. Otherwise, denominations would serve no purpose. In other words, if there were no fundamental disagreements over doctrine and practice among Christians, then there would be no need for all the different denominations, and everyone would be united as one church. And clearly, that is not the case. There are hundreds of denominations and sub-denominations in existence today. What is the point? We have already thoroughly looked at how scripture tells us to not fellowship divisions and heresies. And since denominations are nothing more than doctrinal divisions, the obvious conclusion is that we cannot fellowship other denominations when it comes to taking communion. (Remember, communion equals fellowship.) It would be a blatant violation of scripture, and as Peter said in Acts 5:29, "*We ought to obey God rather than men.*" So, either the denominational line is wrong or the communion/fellowship is wrong. But both cannot be correct and co-exist and still be in compliance with New Testament scripture. Therefore, this is why Primitive Baptists do not allow interdenominational communion in their churches.

When it comes to "closed communion", and one considers these six scriptural points and the sum of their parts, there is overwhelming Biblical evidence that supports this church practice in which Primitive Baptists have historically held to and continue to hold to. While many have spontaneously written off closed communion as being pharisaical and have never given it another thought, I would encourage all serious Bible students and genuine followers of Christ to give fair consideration to the scriptural points that I have tried to present in this article. If the church at Corinth brought judgment upon themselves because they did not partake of the Lord's Supper and communion properly, then surely it would be expedient for us to give it some serious thought and consideration and not dismiss such an important topic so quickly. Measure it against ***thus saith the word of God*** and see if it stands. I leave you with one simple admonition from the Apostle Paul:

Biblical Reasons for Closed Communion

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“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.” – 1st Thessalonians 5:21.

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