

**Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 30, "Admitting People to the Lord's Supper"**

Scripture Lesson: 1 Corinthians 11:17-34

<b>Lesson Aim</b>	To understand that the church's leadership is given the responsibility to fence the Lord's Table.
<b>Steps to Learning</b>	Read the <a href="#">Heidelberg Catechism Lord's Day 30</a> and <a href="#">1 Corinthians 11:17-34</a> . Discuss the sermon and the particulars of the lesson below. It may be best to work through the material over several days or sessions.
<b>Discuss</b>	<p><b>Jesus Christ is King and Head of what?</b> The visible church on earth. Some people will argue that Christ is only King and Head of the invisible church (the elect of God spread throughout the earth) or, at least that is the emphasis in the Scriptures. But the Scriptures teach that Jesus is King and Head of the visible church too in which there are visible officers of the church given the authority to use the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven (cf. <a href="#">Matthew chapter 16 and 18</a>).</p> <p><b>With respect to the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, what are the ministers and elders (both of whom are officers) commanded to do and which Scriptures speak of these commands?</b> They are called to oversee the ministry of the church including tending the sheep and making sure all things are done decently and in good order: <a href="#">Matthew 28:19ff</a>, <a href="#">Ephesians 4:1ff</a>, <a href="#">Titus 1:5</a>, <a href="#">Acts 20:28</a>, <a href="#">Hebrews 13:17</a> and <a href="#">1 Corinthians 14:40</a>.</p> <p><b>How can elders and ministers have the authority to admit people to the Lord's Table and exclude others?</b> Jesus teaches in <a href="#">Matthew 16, 18 and John 20</a> that the church's authorities have the power of the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. That is, they may "loose" some (allow them into the church or the Kingdom of Heaven and they may "bind" others (keep them from entering the church or excluding them from it. An example of this in action is found in <a href="#">1 Corinthians 5</a> where Paul calls the church to excommunicate (bar from the Lord's Table and from church membership) a person who is in unrepentant sin. If the church has the authority to excommunicate, then by force of logic, the church has the authority to commune a person in the first place.</p> <p><b>But what about visitors who attend our worship service? Why do they need to demonstrate membership in a true visible church to commune?</b> This requirement is implied according to 1 Corinthians 11:17ff. Paul issues warnings to the Corinthians in this passage with respect to a wrong approach to the Lord's Supper. A strong warning is found in v.27: "Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord." A person needs to examine himself with respect to his own life and with respect to "discerning the body," which means believing the spiritual presence of Christ in the meal. The church must instruct and keep people accountable for following this instruction for their own protection.</p>
<b>Bible Reading</b>	Psalm 135-141 (Reading through the Psalms)