

The following "Question" was asked by a member of the congregation at Grace Community Church in Panorama City, California, and "Answered" by their pastor, John MacArthur Jr. It was transcribed from the tape, GC 70-15, titled "Bible Questions and Answers." A copy of the tape can be obtained by writing, Word of Grace, P.O. Box 4000, Panorama City, CA 91412 or by dialing toll free 1-800-55-GRACE. Copyright 1994 by John MacArthur Jr., All Rights Reserved.

Question

Could you talk about children and communion, and should they wait until they're baptized to take communion?

Answer

I think it's so hard to know, specifically, in the life of a child when they reach the age when genuine salvation occurs. I mean, I watched my own four children growing up--never did they rebel against Christ. At what point was their childlike faith saving faith? I don't know. But as soon as they wanted to participate, we were willing to let them. And, I think they need to come to a certain level. I remember the first time my father had a conversation with me about it--he's reminded me several times--and he said, "We're going to the Lord's Supper tonight and we want you to come and it'll be your first time." And I said, "Well, I hope they don't have peas." And, his basic response was, "I think we'll wait a while."

So, what I'm trying to say is, there may be an appropriate time to start letting a child participate--when they understand. I think it can be instructive, and I don't think you should become necessarily legalistic and say, you know, "Baptism is the entrée into that." I think it can be instructive at a time when children understand its meaning and they believe in their hearts that they believe. I mean, it would be hard to say to a seven or eight-year-old who says, "I love Jesus and I've asked him into my heart," "Well, I'm not sure this is really true, and we don't know whether we ought to let you do this." If it's their good intention to honor Christ and they understand that we're remembering His death and resurrection, then I think the intent of their heart is consistent with the intent of God in the service, that that's good instruction. And then they'll reach a point at some juncture when that saving faith is real and that service has its full meaning to them.

Added to Bible Bulletin Board's "MacArthur's Questions and Answers" by:

Tony Capoccia
Bible Bulletin Board
Box 119
Columbus, New Jersey, USA, 08022
Websites: www.biblebb.com and www.gospelgems.com
Email: tony@biblebb.com
Online since 1986