

Volume 12 (SUM15) Adult-Kid Connections

Unit 36, Session 1: Church Responsibility

1 Corinthians 1–16

Christ Connection:

Preschool: Jesus wants people in the church to meet together, worship God, and tell others the good news about Jesus.

Kids: Jesus' mission for the church is for believers to come together to worship God and to share the gospel.

Adults: *Read 1 Corinthians 11:23-34.*

God has given His people customs for reflecting on their relationship with Him. Two such customs that the New Testament seems to assume that we will do on a regular basis is taking the Lord's Supper and participating in fasts. We do not only practice these customs to encourage and exhibit an attitude of repentance, but the customs help us to reflect and mediate what God has done for us and is doing for us.

Fasting creates a roadblock in the ordinary rhythms of our life. When we fast from food, we post a sign at the moments of our day when we normally eat—meals, snacks, etc.—that reminds us to pray. It reminds us that there's more to life than the daily grind and that we are more than merely physical creatures or mere animals. Fasting invites us to remember our soulful nature, that we are dependent upon God's provision both physically and spiritually, and it challenges us to prioritize (in our minds) God's provision for our souls. We are so prone to forget how dependent we are. So a call to fast is a call to wake up, to turn around. It is an expression of repentance. As the prophet Joel said:

*Even now—
this is the LORD's declaration—
turn to Me with all your heart,
with fasting, weeping, and mourning. (Joel 2:12)*

Notice that Joel's call wasn't just to jump through a few hoops. We aren't just asked to fast, weep, and mourn, something we could do without having any part of our heart moved; we're called to turn to the Lord "with all your heart." God doesn't want fasting just to inflict pain or to earn points via penance; He wants us to fast in response to a repentant (*repent* actually means "to turn") heart. Joel's words call us to a repentance that is rooted in our hearts, not merely to walk through the motions.

Similar things can be said about the Lord's Supper. We are not to go through the motions when eat of the bread and drink of the cup that remind us of Christ's broken body and shed blood (1 Cor. 11:23-26). As Paul puts it "Whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy way will be guilty of sin against the body and blood of the Lord. So a man should examine himself; in this way he should eat the bread and drink from the cup" (vv. 27-28a). We do things like fasting and taking the Lord's Supper to counter going through the motions—to give ourselves opportunities to worship God afresh and respond appropriately in thankfulness and repentance. They are opportunities to experience God's grace to us in Christ crucified and resurrected.

Begin your devotional time by holding a variety of foot races. If possible, hold them outdoors on the yard or the driveway. If the weather is not cooperating, plan some toy car races inside. When you've had some time "running the race" tell the Bible story in your own words.

Ask: "What were some things Paul reminded the Corinthians to do in his letter?" Recall how the Corinthians were not getting along. When they met to eat they were divided on how to do that so Paul reminded them of the Last Supper. Paul explained that believers have different gifts and talents. He told them to run the race to win for the reward was heaven. He also told them that they should do everything in love and defined what love looked like. It should be patient, kind, doesn't get angry and doesn't give up hope. "Love never ends," Paul said.

Ask: "What was the most important thing the believer should do?"

Reiterate Paul's gospel message by reminding your kids that the most important thing the church could do was to tell others that Jesus died for our sins like the scriptures said He would. He was buried and raised to life on the third day. Then he appeared to many people.

Plan to attend church this Sunday and worship together as a family. Pray, thanking God for your church and its leaders. Ask God to give everyone in your congregation courage to share the gospel with others.