

Communion: Received, not taken

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I have taken Communion all my life. My study of the New Testament more than 40 years ago convinced me that the Lord's Supper should be a part of every Worship Service. I was a Baptist Pastor at the time and we kept the "Ordinance" once a month. The desire to follow the model of the early Church eventually led me to enter the Ministry of the "Christian Church" (churches of Christ). I left that Denomination many years ago, but the desire for weekly Communion is the main reason I now worship in an Episcopal Church parish. I still believe the Bible teaches that the Lord's Supper should be at the center of every Worship Service. Episcopalians "celebrate the Eucharist" at every Worship Service, but I no longer take Communion.

Recently, I had an insight into the difference between "receiving" Communion and "taking" Communion. Many of us, especially men, have a hard time admitting need and difficulty with receiving help from others. I do. When I need something I go for it. I take it (appropriately, of course). Grace, as with all gifts, is something offered and given to us to be received not taken. James Bond says of his martinis, "Shaken, not stirred". We Christian men, especially, need to say of God's Grace "received not taken". That applies to Holy Communion. God wants to freely give His grace and help and "food" to us. Ours is simply to admit our need and receive it. Kneeling at a Communion Rail with hands extended and open, palms up, helps us to do that. Grace is not to be demanded or taken. It is to be thankfully, humbly received. The Celebrant places the Bread into our hands or mouths and we, chewing, feed on the Lord in our hearts by faith with thanksgiving.