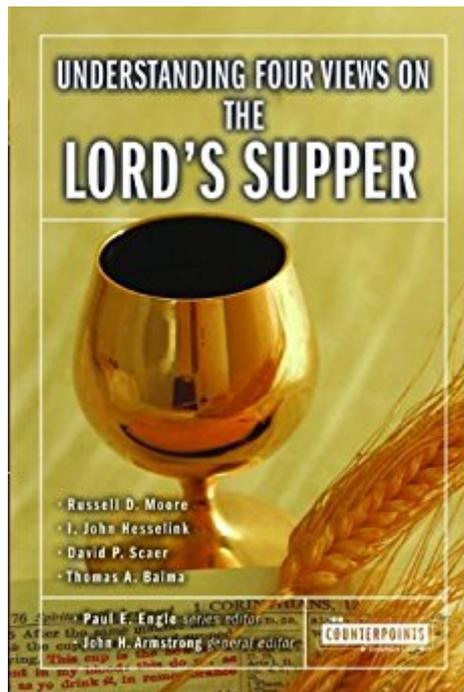


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# Understanding Four Views On The Lord's Supper (Counterpoints: Church Life)



## Synopsis

Who should participate in the Lord's Supper? How frequently should we observe it? What does this meal mean? What happens when we eat the bread and drink from the cup? What do Christians disagree about and what do they hold in common? These and other questions are explored in this thought-provoking book. This new volume in the Counterpoints: Church Life series allows four contributors to make a case for the following views: • Baptist view (memorialism) • Reformed view (spiritual presence) • Lutheran view (consubstantiation) • Roman Catholic view (transubstantiation) All contributors use Scripture to present their views, and each responds to the others' essays. This book helps readers arrive at their own conclusions. It includes resources such as a listing of statements on the Lord's Supper from creeds and confessions, quotations from noted Christians, a resource listing of books on the Lord's Supper, and discussion questions for each chapter to facilitate small group and classroom use.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I'm a big fan of Zondervan's Counterpoints series. I enjoy reading different perspectives on any

number of doctrines. I eagerly awaited the Counterpoints contribution to the Lord's Supper, and I was not disappointed. Understanding Four Views on the Lord's Supper lays out the Baptist, Reformed, Lutheran, and Roman Catholic views of the Lord's Supper. Russ Moore (dean of the school of theology at Southern Seminary) starts off the book. It's hard to believe that Moore is actually articulating a Baptist position! As a lifelong Baptist, I have yet to come across Baptist pastors who articulate such a rich, (indeed sacramental) understanding of the memorialist view (except perhaps for Charles Spurgeon). Moore's contribution includes the most Scripture - another good thing for a Baptist. He also rightly shows how different atonement theories are visible in the Lord's Supper proclamation. John Hesselink brings the Reformed position into view, quoting Calvin and the Reformed confessions at length. David Scaer clearly articulates the Lutheran position, and Thomas Baima contributes the chapter on the Roman Catholic view. Understanding Four Views on the Lord's Supper is a terrific addition to the Counterpoints series. I find much to be commended in each of the four views, though I would probably land somewhere in between the Baptist and Reformed perspective. The authors' responses to the other contributors also help the reader distinguish the differing doctrines. After reading this book, I came across with a clearer understanding of how all of our theology is affected by or at least made evident in our doctrine of the Lord's Supper. I must not fail to mention the helpful appendix.

This book forms a companion with the previously-released Counterpoints "Understanding Four Views of Baptism." I was more impressed with the earlier book than with this one. Perhaps it's because I was already more familiar with the competing views of the Lord's Supper -- a subject which has caused some of the sharpest disagreements among the Christian community -- and this book didn't add much to my understanding. This book is commendable (especially in comparison to the "Baptism" Counterpoints book) in that it includes a chapter devoted to the Roman Catholic view -- a stark contrast from the other 3 views. Each author also presents a succinct, easy-to-understand description of his respective position. Not only do they discuss the theology and nature of the Lord's Supper, but also practical considerations such as who may administer the sacrament, where should it be received, and who should receive it. Several authors include a brief historical overview of their tradition's development, in addition to its current practice. Unfortunately, that is about all you get. The allure of the "Counterpoints" series has always been the way that different authors are able to defend their own views and critique those of their opponents. Here, the essays are so brief (barely 15 pages long) and the responses so cursory (about 3 pages apiece) that they barely scratch the surface of any deeper implications of each view. Consequently, many questions that might occur

even to a casual reader are ignored. (e.g., Is the Roman Catholic "Mass" truly a heretical attempt to repeat the once-and-for-all sacrifice of Jesus on the cross?)

I've enjoyed this book for a few years now and continue to go back to it again and again. I have gleaned much from this genre of theological studies and like adding to my collection these "multiple views" discussions. *Understanding Four Views on the Lord's Supper* is another great addition to my library. In this volume, the four views represented are Baptist view (memorialism), Reformed view (spiritual presence), Lutheran view (consubstantiation), and Roman Catholic view (transubstantiation). I appreciate learning about traditions and practices other than my own and these perspectives, shared by respected leaders in their tradition are very helpful. The added benefit of having responses from other traditions helps (me) to balance the information presented without becoming swayed by any particular bias, which might easily happen because of my ignorance toward certain beliefs and practices. I've learned, after reading quite a number of these multiple perspective books, that "the ideal" positions are most often presented. What this means is that the position presented isn't always how the practice is interpreted in the world of the congregation. Hearing several views is most definitely helpful in working some of this out. What can be more helpful, and has been for me, is to visit congregations where these traditions are practiced and participate with them in their worship especially after having been educated a little through reading one of these books. *Understanding Four Views on the Lord's Supper* has been most helpful to me as a resource not just having different views presented to me, but the wealth of great information presented in the introduction written by John Armstrong and the appendices.

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