

Confession

What is confession?

Confession has two parts. First, we confess our sins, and second, that we receive absolution, that is, forgiveness, from the pastor as from God Himself, not doubting, but firmly believing that by it our sins are forgiven before God in heaven.

What sins should we confess?

Before God we should plead guilty of all sins, even those we are not aware of, as we do in the Lord's Prayer; but before the pastor we should confess only those sins which we know and feel in our hearts.

Which are these?

Consider your place in life according to the Ten Commandments; Are you a father, mother, son, daughter, husband, wife, or worker? Have you been disobedient, unfaithful, or lazy? Have you been hot-tempered, rude, or quarrelsome? Have you hurt someone by your words or deeds? Have you stolen, been negligent, wasted anything, or done any harm?

There are three types of confession:

1. Public Confession, where we together confess all our sins to God and He, through the pastor forgives us. While we are not mentioning them, we are confessing all our sins because God knows them all and He forgives them all. This takes place during the worship service.
2. Personal Confession, where we confess to another Christian when we have sinned against him or her and she or he forgives us. This forgiveness is also as real and valid as the forgiveness God gives and is something we should all take advantage of.
3. Private Confession, where the Pastor hears our confession one-on-one and gives us the forgiveness of God. Of course, this is optional and as such, has fallen out of use in the Lutheran church. But it's very valuable. Sometimes, we have something that weighs heavily on us, and we must unburden ourselves. If you ever find yourself in such a situation, remember that my door is always open, and anything said in Confession is guarded and will never get out.