

"When You Come Together as a Church"

Inbox



Joe R Price

Hey guys,

In light of our planned study Thursday morning, I did some searching on my website and found the following lesson from about five years ago. Perhaps it will give us some biblical context to our study on the Lord's Supper and the assembly.

Brotherly,
Joe

Online: <http://www.bibleanswer.com/lsinassembly.htm>

Scripture Reading: 1 Corinthians 11:17-22

When You Come Together as a Church

Intro.

1. Acceptable worship *must* be in spirit and truth, **Jno. 4:23-24**.
2. Worship is uniquely *individual*, yet the Lord has arranged the local church to provide *fellowship* in worship that produces *edification* as a benefit of our gathered worship, **Psa. 146:1-2; 122:1; Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 14:26; Heb. 10:24-25**.
3. The question arises: May (should) Christians eat the Lord's Supper (LS) when we cannot assemble together. (I was asked to teach on this topic due to its relevance. I appreciate the desire to study this together, **2 Tim. 2:15 (Acts 17:11)**).
4. Like every other question, we ask "*What does the Scripture say?*" **Col. 3:17; 2 Tim. 1:13**

I. UNDERSTANDING THE ISSUE.

A. What is *not in Question*.

1. Whether Christians should worship on the first day of the week, **Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2**.
2. Whether or not Christians should eat the LS, **1 Cor. 11:24-26**.
3. When Christians should eat the LS, **Acts 20:7**.
4. Why Christians eat the LS, **1 Cor. 11:24-26**.

B. The *Question* is:

1. Has God specified the setting in which we eat the LS?

2. When Christians are *hindered* from *attending* the worship assembly are they expected to eat the LS?
 - a. Answering “yes” spawned taking the LS to Christians in hospitals, nursing homes, etc.
 - b. Answering “yes” implies a sacramental quality to the LS.

II. ESTABLISHING AND APPLYING BIBLE AUTHORITY.

A. **Clear Authority** to Eat LS when the **Church Comes Together**.

1. The Corinthian church assembled to eat the LS, 1 Cor. 11:17-34.
 - a. *Come together (17)... as a church (18)... in one place to eat (20, 21-22)... to eat (33)... not for judgment (34).*
 - b. In the assembly, each Christian responsible to *eat (24-26)* and to *examine his manner of eating (27-32).*
2. The Troas church “came together” on the first day to eat LS, Acts 20:7.
-Occurred after Paul wrote 1 Corinthians; Paul practiced what he preached, **Acts 20:6 (16).**

B. By What **Authority** Shall Christians **Eat** the LS **Outside** the **Assembly** of the Church? **Matt. 21:23; 1 Ths. 5:21; Col. 3:17**

1. First, remember the *issue is not* whether we should eat, but whether we have *authority* to do so *outside the assembly*.
2. Using **Matthew 18:20**: “Two or three gathered...Christ is there.”
 - a. *Immediate context*: Apostolic authority practiced on earth, **18:18-20 (16:19)**. [See **Acts 1:21-26** for an illustration.]
 - b. *Applied context*: How to address unrepentant sin, **18:15-17**.
 - c. *Broader context*: When heaven’s authority is revealed by apostolic teaching, Christ is present (**Jno. 14:23**). cf. **1 Cor.5:4**
 - d. Using **Matt. 18:20** to approve out of assembly LS *proves too much*:
 - 1) Is Jesus *absent* when there is only one Christian? Of course not, because Jesus is always present!
 - 2) Would sanction whatever 2-3 Christians agree upon.
 - e. The verse speaks of the agreement of apostolic authority with Christ; not whatever 2-3 of us agree together to do.

III. UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES.

-These are not being suggested by anyone here. However, the logical extension of the practice warrants caution since some have advanced to these or similar conclusions.

1. *Assembling together for worship ultimately becomes optional and unnecessary, or at least, a secondary consideration, Heb. 10:24-25.*
2. *Assembled worship is subordinated to convenience*: “Lakeside” Church of Christ; “Hunting Lodge” Church of Christ; “Airport” Church of Christ.
3. *We imply that 2-3 gathering together constitute the church* (it does not), **Matt. 18:16-17**. (In the very context used to support the practice of at home LS a clear difference is made between individual action and collective action.)
4. *We are compelled to arrange the LS for everyone who did not attend the assembly*. If not, why not? Is it a matter of opinion, or revealed faith?

5. *We will be compelled to treat every other worship activity approved for the church assembly in the same way* (sing, pray, teach and give). (Into what treasury does one give when not in the assembly?)

Conclusion

1. We stand on solid ground of truth when we eat LS when the church comes together in one place (**1 Cor. 11:20**).
2. Let us hold fast this pattern of sound words, carefully following the apostles' doctrine (**2 Tim. 1:13; 3:10**).

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