

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

Abuse of the Lord’s Supper

By Leslie Diestelkamp

It is quite obvious that many Christians who may be quite devoted in other ways, do indeed “miss the mark” with regard to the Lord’s Supper. Consider the following:

1. The attitude and practice of some brethren indicate that they expect forgiveness of their sins of the past week because they have had the supper on Sunday. But the Lord’s Supper is not at all intended to bring pardon of sins. The body and blood which we remember in the supper were given for our forgiveness, but when we eat and drink at the Lord’s table, we do that as a memorial: **“this do in remembrance of me”** (1 Cor. 11:25).
2. As a consequence of the attitude (above), some seem to feel that if they cannot have the Lord’s Supper on a given Sunday, they will not be forgiven and will be in jeopardy until the next opportunity. Of course, if we cannot assemble with the disciples, we do indeed miss an opportunity to **“show the Lord’s death till he come.”** The Lord knows when we can’t do it, and he knows why, but he does not expect the impossible.
3. The New Testament pattern for the supper portrays the disciples coming together for this purpose – to remember – and show forth our remembrance – together. For instance, we never read of Paul (or any other disciples) having the Lord’s supper privately or in any other circumstances while they traveled, except when they were able to meet with the assembled brethren.

Now let us briefly summarize: There is certainly great benefit in regular observance of the Lord’s Supper, for every remembrance means never forgetfulness. Deliberate absence from the supper means, not only loss of benefit, but disobedience regarding the Lord’s directive. Besides the preciousness of this significant memorial of the death of Christ, we have the additional benefit of fellowship in togetherness with those of like precious faith. Obviously the Lord intended for the supper to BRING US TOGETHER (see 1 Corinthians 11: – **“that ye come together...”** (vs. 17); **“when ye come together in the church...”** (vs. 18); **“When ye come together therefore in one place...”** (vs. 20); **“when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another...”** (vs. 33). – *Collegevue church of Christ Bulletin*, June 21, 2020. ■

“House” – “Household” and the Lord’s Supper

By Jerry Fite

The Greek word *“oikia”* denotes an “inhabited dwelling” in the New Testament. How we understand the word is determined by its context. For example, when the wise men came to see Jesus, as they entered **“into the house,”** they **“saw the young child with Mary His mother”** (Matt. 2:11) The house was not only a literal structure, but it also housed inhabitants. Sometimes **“the house”** denotes only the inhabitants. When Jesus healed the nobleman’s son, who was near death, the father **“believed”** and **“his whole house”** (Jn. 4:53). The house of wood, stone and mortar did not believe, but we correctly understand all the inhabitants dwelling in the house believed.

The root Greek word, *“Oikos,”* also denotes the family designation in the New Testament. Paul identifies the church as **“...the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth”** (1 Tim. 3:15). The church is described as the **“house of God”** or as **“the household of God.”** The imagery directs our mind’s eye to a supporting structure with foundation and pillars. The united family aspect of the called-out

people of God is established to support the Truth of God.

The “*house*” and “*household*” denote the “private” side of comparisons, when contrasted with “public” places of gathering in the New Testament. For example, Paul addressed the elders of the church in Ephesus reminding them, “...*how I shrank not from declaring unto you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to Jews and Greeks repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ*” (Acts 20:20-21). Some assume that Paul went from one “house church” to another “house church” in Ephesus ministering to God’s people with the word. It is an assumption without proof. In this context Paul is reminding the Ephesians that he not only taught the word in public places, but also in private homes.

This “private-public” contrast is not an anomaly in the book of Acts. After the apostles were beaten for preaching Christ, they, “*every day in the temple and at home*” did not stop teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ (Acts 5:42). We correctly understand the apostles did not stop preaching publicly (in the temple) and privately (at home). When the church was first established, they were “*day by day continuing stedfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home...*” (Acts 2:46). They were meeting publicly in the temple for teaching and meeting in private homes to eat their food together as joyful united Christians.

In correcting an abuse, Paul asked a rhetorical question: “*What, have ye not houses to eat and to drink in?*” If you lived in Corinth you would know that the logical answer would be, “Yes.” When the church in Corinth was founded, there was more than one house inhabiting individual Christians and their families. Crispus “*believed in the Lord with all his house*” (Acts 18:8). Stephanas and his household were “*the first fruits of Achaia*” (1 Cor. 16:15). And Gaius is noted as Paul’s host, probably offering hospitality to a newcomer in his own home as he did from time to time with the whole church (Rom. 16:23). The Lord’s supper was to be partaken when these people left their own private homes and came together in the assembly of the established local church to eat (1 Cor. 11:33-34). Christians continue to do so today. Like Corinth, we gather together in a place large enough to accommodate the assembly of the established local church to partake. – *Glad Tidings*, April 19, 2020. ■



The Church is Not...

Author unknown

The church is not made up of people who believe they are better than others, but rather it is made up of those who realize their need to be better, and continually strive to do better.

The church is not made up of perfect people, but people who realize they are following a perfect Lord and a perfect plan – the Bible.

The church is not made up of people who never sin, but those who will acknowledge their sins and forsake them.

The church is not trying to set up arbitrary rules to hinder anyone, but rather to show the rule of Christ which helps everyone.

The church is not trying to take the joy out of your life, but rather trying to instill the beauty of holiness and true joy in your life.

The church is not trying to separate you from your money, but rather is trying to keep your money from separating you from God.

The church is not trying to rob you of your time, but rather trying to get you to put the priorities of your life in proper order. ■

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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