

The Lord's Supper

- I. The Lord's Supper was instituted by Jesus (Matt 26:26-30; Mark 14:22-26; Luke 22:14-20)
 - A. Jesus instituted this supper while celebrating the Jewish Passover Feast with His disciples (Matt 26:17-19; Mark 14:12-16; Luke 22:8-11, 15).
 - B. Recall that Passover was instituted in Egypt to commemorate the final event delivering the Jews from Egyptian bondage (Ex 12:1-14, 42; Deut 16:1-3)
 1. The Lord struck down the firstborn in Egypt but spared the Israelites who obeyed His instructions to spread blood on the doorposts and await God's judgment by celebrating the Passover Feast eating in haste with loins girded, wearing sandals and prepared for immediate departure (Ex 12:7-11)
 2. The Passover Feast was celebrated at the first day of the Feast of the Unleavened Bread (Lev 23:4-8; Ex 23:15; Deut 16:1-3, 16)
 - a. Leavened bread was not to be used with this feast (Deut 16:3)
 - b. Unleavened bread was called the bread of affliction commemorating their hasty departure from Egypt (Deut 16:3) - no time to leaven or ferment
 - C. The Lord's Supper consists of two emblems:
 1. The bread was the same unleavened bread that was part of the Passover Feast; it represents the body of Jesus (Matt 26:26; I Cor 11:23-24)
 2. The drink was the fruit of the vine (called the cup of blessing I Cor 10:16); it represents the New Covenant in blood of Jesus (Matt 26:28; I Cor 11:25)
 3. Jesus blessed emblems before partaking, i.e., He prayed giving thanks (Matt 26:26-27; Luke 22:19)
 4. Bread was taken first, then fruit of the vine (note Luke 22:14-18 is Passover)
 5. The bread and fruit of the vine are only emblems (I Cor 10:16-17)
 - a. They are not transformed into the literal body and blood of Jesus (false doctrine of transubstantiation)
 - b. Jesus was physically present when He broke bread and called it His body. Clearly, this is a metaphor (like Matt 5:13; 13:38)
 - c. After giving thanks and partaking, Jesus still called these emblems fruit of the vine (Matt 26:29) and bread (I Cor 11:26) - they were not transformed
 - D. Jesus, being a Jew, celebrated Passover with His disciples but used this time to mark the importance of a new deliverance - a deliverance from sin! (I Cor 5:7; 11:26)
- II. What is the significance of The Lord's Supper?
 - A. It is foremost a communion (1 Cor 10:15-18)
 1. From Greek "koinonia" - having in common, sharing, partnership, participation
 2. Paul tells us that we who are many form one body (the Church) and share (participate) in the body and blood of Jesus Christ - the sacrifice for our sins
 3. By partaking of these emblems, His Church participates in a new feast with Christ as He had promised (Matt 26:29; Mark 14:25; Luke 22:18)
 4. This is "spiritual" intimacy

- B. It is a commemoration - a memorial (I Cor 11:24-25)
 - 1. Jesus said that we should, “do this in remembrance of me” (Luke 22:19)
 - 2. Paul also confirmed this fact (I Cor 11:25)
 - 3. We are never to forget the price that was paid for our redemption (I Pet 1:18-19; Rom 5:7-10)
 - C. It is a proclamation (I Cor 11:26)
 - 1. When we partake of the emblems, we are proclaiming the Lord’s death
 - 2. This is from the Greek, “katangelo”, to preach, proclaim, advocate, report
 - 3. We are declaring our conviction that Christ died for us and He is coming again
 - 4. It is a declaration to all, especially to our children (Ex 12:26-27)
 - D. It is a time of self-examination (I Cor 11:28-32)
 - 1. It is a time for each one of us to focus anew on Christ’s sacrifice for our sins
 - 2. This is not to be taken lightly
 - a. Paul teaches that if we do not partake in a worthy manner, we bring judgment (condemnation) onto ourselves
 - b. Because of this (unworthy partaking) many were weak and sick incurring the discipline of God (1 Cor 11:29-32)
 - c. Our worship must stem from a proper relationship with God and man (Matt 5:23-24)
- III. Who is to partake of the Lord’s Supper?
- A. It is for all Christians not just some; it is for all those who are baptized into Christ
 - 1. Notice that on the Day of Pentecost about 3000 Jews were added to the Church (Acts 2:41)
 - 2. Those Christians devoted themselves to the Apostles teaching, fellowship, prayer, and “breaking of bread” (i.e., the Lord’s Supper) - Acts 2:42
 - 3. Note that Acts 2:42 is not referring to an ordinary meal; the idea of hospitality and fellowship by taking meals together is discussed four verses later (Acts 2:46)
 - B. Paul addressed the Church at Corinth (Gentile Christians) referring to the bread and cup that “we” take - acknowledging the fact that they (Gentiles) also shared this in common (I Cor 10:16-17)
 - C. The Lord’s Supper is for all Christians, Jews or Gentiles, for all are one in Christ (Gal 3:26-29)
- IV. When and how are we to partake of the Lord’s Supper?
- A. We are to partake of the Lord’s Supper “often” (1 Cor 11:26) – (Frequency)
 - 1. Paul recounted to the Corinthians instructions he had received from the Lord (I Cor 11:23-26)
 - 2. He used the Greek, “hosakis”, that is translated “as often as” or “whenever”
 - 3. Partaking of the Lord’s Supper was not to be a one time, unique event.
 - B. We are to continue to partake of the Lord’s Supper until He comes (I Cor 11:26) - (Duration)

- C. Christians are said to have “continually” partaken of the Lord’s Supper (Acts 2:42)
1. The Greek word, “proskartereo”, means “to adhere to, to spend much time together, to give attention to, to be faithful to”
 2. It conveys the meaning of an ongoing attention or maintaining – (Regularly)
 3. Translations include: “continually devoting themselves to” (NASB); “continued steadfastly in” (KJV); it was an ongoing event.
- D. In his instructions to the Church, Paul acknowledged that they had been directed to come together regularly to eat the Lord’s Supper (I Cor 11:17-34) – (Setting)
1. Paul classifies this discourse as directives/instructions to the Church (vs 17) and concludes by stating he will have more to say when he comes (vs 34)
 2. He proclaims that when they assembled, their meetings were actually causing more harm (dissension) than good (unity).
 - a. One reason was their abuse of the Lord’s Supper (vs 20-21)
 - 1) The Corinthians had turned this memorial into a selfish, gluttonous meal
 - 2) Christians were being excluded and the meaning had been lost
 - b. Paul rebuked them telling them that hunger should be satisfied through meals taken in the home (vs 22)
 3. Paul specifically teaches that the local congregation is to assemble in a common location for the purpose of partaking in the Lord’s Supper (I Cor 11:20, 33)
 4. The Lord’s Supper is to be taken together in an orderly and thoughtful manner (I Cor 11:20-22, 33-34)
- E. In the latter chapters of I Corinthians, Paul specifies the frequency of these Church gatherings (i.e., the assembling together of the local congregation) as he discusses problems in the assembly and how things ought to be done.
1. He emphasizes that the entire Church was to come together for worship and edification (I Cor 14:23-26) in an orderly manner (I Cor 14:40);
 2. Note that we have already shown that the Lord’s Supper was an important part of Christian worship in the assembly (Acts 2:42; I Cor 11:17-34)
 3. Then in I Cor 16:1-3, Paul gives instructions about the collection for the saints
 - a. He tells the Corinthians to put aside and save on the “first day of every week” so that he will not have to wait and collect from them all while he is there, i.e., it already will have been done
 - b. Why did he tell them to put aside their money on the first day of the week?
 - 1) Because that is the day when the Church regularly assembled for worship!
 - 2) Collecting the money while the Church was meeting together prevented them from having to go house to house.
 - c. Note also that this discussion falls within the continuing context of the instructions being given to deal with problems and issues pertaining to the assembling of the Church.

- d. Moreover, this was not a command limited to the Corinthians; it was a universal practice because the Galatian Churches were given identical instructions (I Cor 16:1)
4. Hence, we know that the New Testament Church was assembling on the first day of the week (I Cor 16:2), and they were partaking of the Lord's Supper when they assembled I Cor 11:20, 33, 34)
5. The Hebrew writer admonished Christians telling them not to forsake the assembling together as is the habit of some but "encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near" (Heb 10:25)
- F. Acts 20:7 confirms that the Church partook of the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week.
 1. Acts 20:6 states that Paul sailed from Philippi to Troas and stayed there for 7 days
 2. On the first day of the week when they were gathered together to break bread, Paul began preaching to them intending to depart the next day.
 - a. This is an independent example of the Church assembling on the first day of the week to partake of the Lord's Supper.
 - b. Note Paul had already been in Troas for at least 6 days prior to this meeting.
 - c. Why did he remain for one more day (the first day of the week) before leaving town?
 - 1) Note he was in a hurry to get to Jerusalem by Pentecost (Acts 20:16)
 - 2) He stayed the extra day because he knew the Church would be gathering together on the first day of the week
 - 3) This gave him an opportunity to speak to the collective body of Christians rather than limiting him to conversations with individual Christians
 - 4) Secondly, he knew he must partake of the Lord's Supper weekly and this was a chance to do so before his departure.
 3. Paul's actions confirm the teachings of I Cor 11 indicating that the Church regularly assembled on the first day of the week to take the Lord's Supper.