

Where Or How Do You Appropriate Bible Authority For Conducting Sunday School And Wednesday Evening/Night Services?

While studying the Bible, an individual must understand how God instructs us. Authority is derived by direct commands, necessary inference, and approved examples. "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16.15) is a direct statement. "Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word" (Acts 8.4) is an approved example. Authority can also be derived from necessary inference. This is the hardest for many to understand, but it must be true. Jesus used necessary inference while answering the Sadducees in Matthew 22. Wanting to disprove the resurrection, they gave a hypothetical situation where a woman married seven brothers and asked whose wife would she be? In His answer, Jesus quoted Exodus 3.6. In speaking to Moses, God referred to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the present tense. Although this was hundreds of years after they lived, they still existed. The Sadducees understood the necessary inference.

We know the apostles and disciples were commanded to preach the gospel. On the Day of Pentecost, Peter preached the first gospel lesson. He told the audience to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, Acts 2.38. Other accounts of conversions, in the book of Acts, say people heard the gospel and were baptized. The command to repent is not recorded in every conversion. It is necessary to infer that everybody repented of his or her sins.

Let us apply the above to the Lord's Supper. Jesus commanded His disciples to observe His Supper, Matthew 26.26-29. We have an approved example of the disciples coming together to "break bread" on the first day of the week in Acts 20.7. Since each week has a first day we necessarily infer that we are to come together each first day of every week to partake of the Lord's Supper. Just as the Israelites had to infer the Sabbath came every Saturday of the year.

One last thought before we answer the question. The disciples came together on the first day of the week. We learn from this example specifically what day we are to do the same. The day of the week is specified. The emblems on the Lord's Supper are specifically mentioned in Matthew 26.26ff as being unleavened bread and fruit of the vine. At what hour did they come together? We do not know. As long as the Lord's Supper is observed on the first day of the week and we are remembering the Lord's death by taking of unleavened bread and fruit of the vine, we are obeying the word of God. We could choose to come together at 9 AM, 10 AM, or even at 11 PM.

Let's apply the above to the question presented earlier. Do we have authority for coming together on Sunday? We can answer in the affirmative. The church at Troas came together on the first day of the week, Acts 20.7. Can we find either direct command, approved example, or necessary inference for the "church" to come together on other occasions? We can answer in the affirmative again. Hebrews 10.25 commands us to not forsake the assembling of the saints. It does not use the word assemble as if to refer just to the Sunday assembly but to the other assemblies as well. "So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people" Acts 11.26. We have an approved, apostolic example, of the church coming together more than once a week. We can necessarily infer that while at Antioch Paul taught the gospel of Christ. As one peruses the Book of Acts we can read of the church coming together in the following passages:

1. "So continuing daily with one accord in the temple" Acts 2.46
2. After Peter and John were released from prison the saints came together to pray, Acts 4.31.
3. "And they were all with one accord in Solomon's Porch" Acts 5.12.
4. "Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples" Acts 6.2.

5. "So it was that for a whole year they assemble with the church and taught a great many people" Acts 11.26.
6. The church came together in Acts 15 to resolve the issue of circumcision.
7. At the completion of Paul's first missionary journey the church came together as Paul reported the events, Acts 14.27.

The list could go on but this should suffice to prove the church did come together on different occasions.

We do not have specific authority for having Wednesday night services. We do have the general authority to come together on more than one occasion during the week. We could come together on Thursday night, or Tuesday night. If the Bible had specifically commanded or necessarily inferred or taught by approved example that the church came together on Wednesday then we would have no other choice but to come together on that night. However, it does not do so.

The same can be said for having "Sunday School" or Bible classes. Paul taught the brethren at Ephesus privately and publicly, Acts 20.20. The church continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine, Acts 2.42, and they continued daily with one another in the temple, Acts 2.46. If the Bible in general terms tells us to teach the word of God. One method of obeying God is by having Bible classes. – Dennis Tucker