

# Questions Concerning the Lord's Supper



# Questions Concerning the Lord's Supper

## A Consistent Biblical Framework

- The New Testament provides a clear pattern for the Lord's Supper via commands, examples, and necessary inferences.
- Any and all questions regarding the Lord's Supper must be answered through the lens of biblical authority. Our answers should not come from tradition, preference, or convenience.
- After the church was established in **Acts 2**, every approved example places the Supper in a local church assembly (**Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:17-34**).

### Guiding Principle

*When we examine the New Testament, every approved example of the Lord's Supper occurs when a local church assembles together in one place to partake at the same time.*

# Questions Concerning the Lord's Supper

## Does “Breaking Bread” Always Refer to the Lord's Supper?

*“Breaking bread” can refer to a common meal or the Lord's Supper. Context determines its meaning.*

- **Acts 2:46:** “Breaking bread” is explained by “they ate their food” = a common meal, not the Lord's Supper (**1 Cor. 11:34**).
- **Acts 27:35-38:** Paul broke bread for nourishment on a ship; travel and hunger = ordinary eating.
- **Acts 20:7:** Since the disciples came together on the *first day of the week* to break bread, the context points to the Lord's Supper.
- **1 Cor. 11:17-34:** Worship setting = Lord's Supper and not a common meal (**1 Cor. 11:34**).

### Context Clues

#### Lord's Supper

- Local Church Assembly (**1 Cor. 11:18**)
- First Day of the Week (**Acts 20:7**)
- Worship Setting (**1 Cor. 11:17-34**)

#### Common Meal

- Daily Activity
- Satisfying Hunger
- Non-Worship Setting

# Questions Concerning the Lord's Supper

## Are Comments Before the Lord's Supper Scriptural?

- The New Testament explains the *purpose* and *elements* of the Lord's Supper, but provides no word-for-word script.
- Brief scriptural comments *can* direct our minds toward Christ's sacrifice and help us engage in the act properly.
  - *We often do this when singing. If reading scripture and making comments during the Lord's Supper are unauthorized, then the same is unauthorized before singing.*
- To answer this question appropriately we must understand the distinction between an *aid* and *addition*.

### The Lord's Supper

#### How We Partake

- In remembrance of Him  
(**1 Cor. 11:24-25**)
- Proclaiming His death  
(**1 Cor. 11:26**)
- Examining ourselves  
(**1 Cor. 11:28**)
- Discerning His body  
(**1 Cor. 11:29**)

#### Elements

- Unleavened bread & fruit of the vine (**Matt. 26:17-30, etc.**)

# Questions Concerning the Lord's Supper

## Are Comments Before the Lord's Supper Scriptural?

*Aids vs Additions – This distinction matters in worship.*

### Aids

- Help carry out an authorized act
- Do not change the elements, purpose, or manner of the act

- **Example:**

Before partaking, we sing a song focused on Christ's sacrifice. This encourages remembrance (**1 Cor. 11:24-25**) without altering the Lord's Supper

### Additions

- Introduces a new element that God did not authorize
- Changes the act by altering the elements, purpose, etc.

- **Examples:**

- Using milk and eggs
- Eating to satisfy fleshly hunger
- Partaking on Tuesday

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## Are Comments Before the Lord's Supper Scriptural?

*Aids vs Additions – This distinction matters in worship.*

### Aids

- Help carry out an authorized act
- Do not change the elements, purpose, or manner of the act

### Additions

- Introduces a new element that God did not authorize
- Changes the act by altering the elements, purpose, etc.

Singing a song before the Lord's Supper, reading Scripture, or making brief comments are all examples of aids because they do not change **the elements, the time, the setting, or the purpose** of the Lord's Supper. Instead, they simply help direct our minds and assist us in carrying out what God has commanded.

**CONCLUSION:** An aid helps us do what God said; an addition changes what God said. If something alters the act, it's an addition; if it assists in performing the act, it's an aid.

# Questions Concerning the Lord's Supper

## Should We Refrain from Mentioning the Resurrection?

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- We participate in the Lord's Supper to “proclaim” the Lord's death “till He comes” (**1 Cor. 11:26**).
  - The Lord's death should be our central focus, but “till He comes” presupposes that Christ was first resurrected (**Acts 1:9-11**).
- Forgiveness of sins is dependent not just on Christ's blood being shed (**Matt. 26:26-28**) but also on Him being resurrected (**1 Cor. 15:17**).
- Mentioning the resurrection is permissible so long as the primary focus remains on commemorating the Lord's death.
  - Choosing to mention or not mention the resurrection is a matter of *judgment*.

# Questions Concerning the Lord's Supper

## How Often Should the Lord's Supper Be Observed?

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- **Acts 20:7** shows disciples purposefully assembling on the first day of the week to partake of the Lord's Supper.
- A first day recurs every week. Therefore, this example establishes a recurring weekly practice, just as was the case with Sabbath Law (**Exod. 20:8-10; Lev. 23:3**).
  - Every week has a first day.
  - No exception is given.
  - The Lord Supper is intended to continue "till He comes" (**1 Cor. 11:26**).
- Approved examples are binding (**Phil. 4:9**), so the Lord's Supper belongs on every first day of the week until the Lord's return.

# Questions Concerning the Lord's Supper

## Must One Assemble with a Local Church?

### Church Universal ≠ Local Church

- The universal church consists of all saved people (**Eph. 1:22-23; Acts 2:47; etc.**).
- The local church is an organized body in a particular location (**1 Cor. 1:2; Phil. 1:1; Heb. 10:25; etc.**).

### The Lord's Supper is Linked to a Local Church Assembly

- We know **Acts 20:7** is a local church assembly because Troas was part of Paul's prior work (**Acts 16:8**), and there was an identifiable group of disciples in that location who were coming together in one place on the first day of the week for the purpose of breaking bread.
- The same pattern appears in **1 Cor. 11**: "when you come together as a church ... when you come together in one place" (**1 Cor. 11:18, 20**)

# Questions Concerning the Lord's Supper

## Must One Assemble with a Local Church?

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- There is no New Testament example of Christians, separate from a local church, administering the Lord's Supper on their own.
  - **Examples:** Partaking in your car while traveling; various groups of saints on a cruise or at camp, participating via a livestream at home.
    - A livestream does not place a person “in one place” with the local church (**1 Cor. 11:20**).
- **Acts 28:13-14** gives no command, example, or necessary inference for partaking outside of a local church assembly. To appeal to this text is to argue from the silence of scriptures.
- The issue is not what seems practical, convenient, or from a place of sincerity but what has actually been authorized by God (**Lev. 10:1-2**).

- The word “cup” is used by metonymy. The container (cup) stands for its contents (**Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 10:16**).
  - Jesus was not saying the literal vessel was the covenant; the contents symbolized the covenant and represented His blood.
- The fruit of the vine started in one container, but Jesus told the apostles to, “Divide it among yourselves” (**Luke 22:17**), showing distribution into multiple containers. Therefore, multiple containers are approved.
- Binding one literal container restricts something God has permitted.
  - Multiple cups are an *aid*, not an *addition*.

# Questions Concerning the Lord's Supper

## Is There Authority for a "Second Serving?"

- Christ offered one serving of the Lord's Supper in **Matt. 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-20**, and there was only one serving in **Acts 20:7-11**.
- Fracturing the Lord's Supper into multiple offerings goes against Paul's command, "When you come together to eat, ***wait for one another***" (**1 Cor. 11:33**).
  - We do not "wait for another" if some partake while others do not. This falls under the condemnation of **1 Cor. 11:21**: "...each one takes his own supper ahead of others..."
- A second serving creates a problem where not all are gathered together for the same purpose, which is the opposite of what **Acts 20:7** and **1 Cor. 11:17-34** both teach.
- The Lord's Supper is not just about individual participation (**1 Cor. 11:17-22**); it is a unified act by an assembled church (**1 Cor. 11:27-29, 10:16**).
- The New Testament pattern shows ***a specific time*** (Sunday), ***a specific setting*** (an assembled local church in one place), and ***a specific manner*** (all partaking together, waiting for one another). Respecting this pattern demands we resist creating additional arrangements which divide what is supposed to be a unified act.
- The issue is not what seems practical, convenient, or from a place of sincerity but what has actually been authorized by God (**Lev. 10:1-2**).

# Questions Concerning the Lord's Supper

## Conclusion: Consistency in Establishing and Applying Biblical Authority

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### Guiding Principle

*When we examine the New Testament, every approved example of the Lord's Supper occurs when a local church assembles together in one place to partake at the same time.*

**Either we always need to follow biblical authority (CENI), or we never do. We cannot selectively apply CENI based upon our preferences, traditions, etc.**