

The Significance of the Phrase “Come Together”

First Taught in Brandy and Shane Pack's Home on October 14, 2022

1. DEFINITIONS (MERRIAM-WEBSTER)

“Come” (verb):

- “To move toward something.”
- “To arrive at a particular place, end, result, or conclusion.”

“Together” (adverb):

- “In or into one place, mass, collection, or group.”
- “In a body : as a group.”
- “At one time : simultaneously.”
- “By combined action : jointly.”
- “In or into a unified or coherent structure or an integrated whole.”

1. DEFINITIONS (BIBLE)

The Bible defines “*coming together*” as:

i. **A Plurality of Disciples**

- “Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread” (Acts 20:7a).

ii. **A Specific Type of Plurality (The Whole Church)**

- “For first of all, when you come together as a church” (1 Cor. 11:18a).
- “Therefore if the whole church comes together in one place” (1 Cor. 14:23a).

1. DEFINITIONS (BIBLE CONT.)

iii. The Whole Church in One Location

- “If the whole church comes together in one place” (1 Cor. 14:23a).
- “Therefore when you come together in one place” (1 Cor. 11:20a).

iv. The Whole Church Together for a Unified Purpose

- “Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat” (1 Cor. 11:33a).
- “How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together . . . let all things be done for edification” (1 Cor. 14:26).

1. DEFINITIONS (BIBLE CONT.)

v. The Whole Church Together Fulfilling That Unified Purpose at the Same Time

- “Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another” (1 Cor. 11:33).

Summed Up:

The Bible defines “coming together” as the whole church meeting together in one location to fulfill a unified purpose at the same time.

2. WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

Answers the question “Is assembling important?”

- “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching” (Heb. 10:23-25).

2. WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

Explains the purpose of assembling.

i. Partake of the Lord's Supper

- “Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight” (Acts 20:7).
- “Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper” (1 Cor. 11:20).

2. WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

Explains the purpose of assembling.

ii. Contribute

- “On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come” (1 Cor. 16:2).

iii. Edify

- “How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification” (1 Cor. 14:26).

2. WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

Explains the purpose of assembling.

iv. Report on Evangelism

- “Now when they had come and gathered the church together, they reported all that God had done with them, and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles” (Acts 14:27).

v. Discipline Erring Brethren

- “It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you . . . when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus” (1 Cor. 5:1-5).

2. WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

Instructs how to properly administer the Lord's Supper.

- In 1 Cor. 11:17-34, five times Paul refers to the fact that Christians celebrated the Lord's Supper as a church (the whole church) who had "*come together*" in one assembly, meeting in "one place," with everyone partaking at the same time (1 Cor. 11:17, 18, 20, 33, & 34).
- Paul says, "*When you come together as a church*" (v.18), clearly showing that it is the whole church who are to be participating in this sacred act.

2. WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

Instructs how to properly administer the Lord's Supper.

- By saying “*wait for another*” this means there cannot be people partaking of the Lord's Supper separate from one another. One group of people cannot partake in the assembly while another group or individual sits idly by.
- Since the whole church is to partake of the Lord's Supper together “*in one place*” (1 Cor. 14:23), this means things like a virtual Lord's Supper or an individual Christian partaking of the Lord's Supper in his car while he's on vacation are both unauthorized.

2. WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

Helps contextualize the head covering of 1 Cor. 11:2-16.

- Although the covering instruction is given in the midst of various other instructions that are specific to the worship service, the phrase “*when you come together*” never appears in 1 Cor. 11:2-16.
 - Are we certain we can necessarily infer that “prayer or prophesy” is a synecdoche? I do not believe this is a necessary inference.
 - If the female’s artificial covering is restricted to the assembly, then the men’s uncovered requirement must also be limited to the assembly.
 - The principles upon which the covering is rooted are universal and apply both inside and outside the assembly, so the covering requirements would also apply both in and out of the assembly.

2. WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

Instructs when a woman can/cannot speak during the church service.

- Many conflate 1 Tim. 2:11-12 with 1 Cor. 14:34-45, claiming both passages teach the same thing. However, this is not an accurate conclusion.
 - 1 Tim. 2:11-12 is a general command that applies outside the assembly since modesty is certainly not restricted only to the occasions when women are in the church service (consider 1 Peter 3:3-4).
 - Since 1 Tim. 2:8 says, “in every place that men should pray,” conduct inside AND outside the assemblies is under consideration, meaning a woman must be in submission to men both inside and outside the assemblies.

2. WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

Instructs when a woman can/cannot speak during the church service.

- 1 Cor. 14:34-35 specifically speaks about the woman's silence "*in the church*," whereas 1 Tim. 2 makes no such distinction. Similarly, 1 Tim. 2 never distinguishes that the church has "*come together*" while 1 Cor. 14:26 identifies that the church has "*come together*," and if a woman speaks while the church is gathered in one place, she is like a tongue-speaker without an interpreter (1 Cor. 14:27).
- Whereas 1 Tim. 2 references general quietness, the silence of 1 Cor. 14:34-35 is absolute silence since even asking a question during the whole church assembly is ruled out.

2. WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

Instructs when a woman can/cannot speak during the church service.

- If a church, as a part of their worship service, decides to split into different rooms for separate Bible studies, the whole church is no longer "*together*" in one place. Therefore, the silence of 1 Cor. 14 no longer applies in this situation. Coming to one location only to split apart into multiple different rooms (locations) for separate Bible classes does not constitute being together as a church, as per 1 Cor. 11:17-34.
- That being said, the rules for quietness in 1 Tim. 2 still remain. Women must still not exercise authority over men, no matter if the whole church is together or not.

3. CONCLUSION

By understanding the implications of the phrase “*come together*,” we can answer the following questions:

- Is assembling (‘going to church’) important?
- What is the purpose of assembling?
- How are we to administer the Lord’s Supper?
- Is the head covering of 1 Cor. 11:2-16 limited to the assembly?
- Can a woman speak during the whole-church assembly?

Let’s never forsake the assembling of ourselves together, always counting those times as precious and invaluable, and strive to follow God’s prescribed instructions during those times of fellowship and worship.