

## ***Abuse of the Lord's Supper***

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 Corinthians 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).

**- by Leslie Diestelkamp**

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## ***Church Recreation***

Recently I received an invitation to a facility that provided "ping pong, walking track, concerts, basketball, weights, pool table, board games, banquets, refreshments, etc." No, the invitation did not come from the local Boy's club. It came from a local church.

Increasingly churches have begun to take on the atmosphere of social clubs; some do rival local health spas. Yet, I do NOT read in the Bible where "the churches of Christ" (Romans 16: 16), in their life and death struggle to preach the gospel to a lost world, ever made such social/recreational provisions for that world (or themselves). Do you?

According to the New Testament (NT) the ONLY work God ordained the local church to do consists of: preaching the gospel (1 Thessalonians 1:8), assembling for worship and edification (Acts 2:42; Hebrews 10:24-25), and meeting the physical needs of destitute Christians (Acts 4:34-35; 6:1ff). The work of the local church was spiritual, NOT recreational.

And it certainly was not for lack of public interest that kept churches in the Bible out of athletics and entertainment. The world into which the gospel was first preached LOVED the sports arena. Their children played five different games of ball and the Roman emperors were masters at building public baths, theaters, stadiums and using them to 'politic' the people. The world back then had their superstar athletes, actors and actresses too. In fact, it is safe to say that America's enjoyment and pursuit of recreation/entertainment is equal to the people of NT times. But again, the NT is SILENT about local churches making ANY provision for the fulfillment of such interests. And get this! The hope of the gospel was still "proclaimed in all creation under heaven" (Colossians 1:23). Churches in the NT understood that the world needed the gospel and its eternal benefits, not temporary distractions.

Are you disheartened, tired or fed-up with watching the church where you worship spend her time and resources to recreate and entertain herself and the world? Then, worship with a church that believes the gospel is STILL God's power to motivate all men to faith, obedience and salvation (Romans 1:16).

- by Keith Camp

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### ***What Makes The Difference?***

- If a man has money and is not willing to have it examined, people think it is counterfeit.
- If a man is afraid to take a lie detector test, people think he is guilty of crime.
- If a man conducts a business and is unwilling to let anyone investigate it, folks think he is running a crooked business.

**BUT**, many preachers teach doctrines that under no circumstances will they test or allow to be tested by the Bible. Yet millions of people will accept them as upright, honest teachers of the truth, and will risk their salvation upon them.

What makes the difference? The Bible instructs us to try the teachers (1 John 4:1). The truth never fears investigation!

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### ***When Did Men Begin to Believe in the Inspiration of the New Testament?***

Some skeptics claim that there was a gradual evolving of thought concerning the Scripture - that only after a long period did these writings come to be regarded as an authoritative source. That simply is not true.

When the inspired men of the first century wrote, the product of their work was immediately acknowledged and accepted by those in the church. They "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine" (Acts 2:42) and they received those teachings "not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God" (1 Thessalonians 2:13). These writings were "Scripture" before the ink had dried. (The word "Scripture" is used about 50 times in the New Testament and always refers to the written record of the will of God. Thus, the word "Scripture" can be accurately applied to the things found in both the Old and New Testaments.)

Certainly there was a gradual process of spreading and distributing these writings around the world (Colossians 4:16). Ultimately there was a compiling of these works into one book. (There is some evidence that compilations of the various books that make up our New Testament began as early as 115 A.D. - perhaps only a few years after the death of the last apostle). But the actual writings were regarded as Scripture immediately. Paul (writing in about 65 A.D.) quotes Luke's gospel and refers to it as Scripture (see 1 Timothy 5:18 and Luke 10:7). Peter (in 66 A.D.) mentions Paul's writings and calls them Scripture (2 Peter 3:16).

We know that the inspired writings of the first century were widely circulated among Christians of that time (see Col. 4:16 and 1 Thess. 5:27). It is clear that those earliest Christians held the sacred writings in highest esteem and regarded them as the basis of their religious authority.

- by Greg Gwin