

IS THE "SECOND SERVING" SCRIPTURAL??

By Mark J. Ward

Revised and Enlarged

March 1998 Edition

This document may be obtained FREE at :

<http://www.religiousinstructor.com/2serving.html>

NOTE: The author wishes for all to be able to read this material.

You may distribute this "web" version of the booklet FREE to others with one condition: Please download, print out and/or copy the ENTIRETY OF THE WORK (including all the Charts and the Objection Section) whenever distributing. You may find that it is easiest to print out only 3-5 pages at a time. The Charts will look much better on paper than on the web (especially depending on the browser you use). THANKS!

Is The "Second Serving"

[OF THE UNLEAVENED BREAD AND THE FRUIT OF THE VINE]

Scriptural?

INTRODUCTION

The root of many religious differences is a lack of understanding of "**How to Establish Bible Authority.**" Just because Christians have practiced something for a number of years is not sufficient to prove such action as being authorized. We always ask our denominational friends to give a "**thus saith the Lord**" for their every deed (Col. 3:17), and we, as Christians, must be willing to do likewise.

An open mind is essential to learning God's truth on any Bible subject. For those outside the body of Christ, an honest, truth-seeking heart is a must in learning God's plan of salvation (Acts 8:31; 10:33). For Christians, an open, receptive attitude should always prevail in order to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Those who are not willing to look at opposing sides of a Bible question have truly cut themselves off from proper spiritual development. Truth has nothing to fear, for it shall stand when error falls.

There are many differences of belief, teaching and practice among brethren in churches of Christ today. My friends, these things ought not so to be! We should all strive to grow to believe, teach and practice only God's Truth (See Acts 20:26-31; Jude 3; 2 Peter 1:3; I Cor. 1:10)! Ignoring the subject, sweeping it under the rug, or refusing to study it with those with whom we disagree, will NOT solve the problem! God would have us study our differences, with the proper spirit one toward another!

This Bible study is concerned with examining the practice of a given local church serving the elements of the Lord's Supper (the unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine) in a second assembly on the same first day of the week to those who missed the first assembly wherein the Lord's Supper was observed.

Some people refer to this as "Sunday Night Communion". Others use the term "Second Serving" (which could be a third, fourth, or fifth, etc.). **Is this practice scriptural?** Does God's Word teach that a church may scripturally provide a "Second Serving" for those "who were absent" from the earlier assembly wherein the members of that church came together to break bread, tarried, and ate the Lord's Supper? What does the *Bible* teach about this matter?

Let's let our love for God's Word and for one another abound as we look at matters of disagreement. Good brethren can work together while studying this issue and not break fellowship. Those who "can participate", do so; and brethren who "cannot participate", do not. This does not, however, resolve the issue, and all "sides" of this controversial matter cannot be right. Thus, the need for study. May God bless our study!

Any correspondence concerning this subject will be cordially received and examined in light of God's Word. **I would welcome the courtesy of receiving copies of all reviews of this work, whether they are oral or are written. Send all questions, comments and/or criticisms to:**

Mark J. Ward
25 Havenwood Drive
Brunswick, Georgia 31520
(912) 265-6936
markjward@yahoo.com
<http://www.religiousinstructor.com>

SUBJECT

THE PRACTICE EXAMINED

The practice of the "Second Supper" being served to "those who missed" an earlier assembly wherein the disciples came together to break bread, tarried, and scripturally ate the Lord's Supper is the practice that we are interested in examining. "*Where is the Bible Authority for this practice?*" is a reasonable question! Please notice that **we seek authority for** the following (occurring in a later assembly in a given church on the same first day of the week after the Lord's Supper was scripturally eaten in an earlier assembly):

- Asking the question, "Is there anybody here who would like to eat the 'Lord's Supper'?"
- Praying a "second time" blessing the unleavened bread (in the same church, the 2nd observance)
- Actually "serving the bread" to a saint in the "Second Serving"
- Praying a "second time" blessing the fruit of the vine (in the same church, the 2nd observance)
- Actually "serving the fruit of the vine" in the "Second Serving"
- The church to "include in the purpose of the second assembly" the plan to ask the question above and to offer the "Second Supper" to those who were previously absent
- The saint(s) to "eat separately" in the later assembly?

Notice the differences in the practice under examination, the "Second Supper", and the Lord's Supper which took place in the earlier assembly. According to the approved example in Acts 20:7 and the other New Testament instruction on the Supper, the church comes together to break bread, tarries, and eats in the earlier assembly (Acts 20:7; I Cor. 11:17-34). There is NO DOUBT that this assembly is for the purpose of breaking bread. There will be NO DOUBT that the prayers will be offered and the distribution of the elements will occur and the Supper will be observed! **This cannot be said, however, of the Second Observance.** This is a "*maybe* there will be an eating" OR "*maybe* there will be no eating" situation. This is **not** an "eating together" situation in the second observance/serving/supper/eating. This is an example of "eating separately". This is a "fragmented observance". This is like "eating in shifts", in the sense that there was an earlier eating and now there is *potentially* a later eating of a few who missed eating the Lord's Supper. This is similar to the way in which our Catholic friends observe their Mass, with members eating in various assemblies. **We simply ask: Where is the Bible Authority for eating separately?** [NOTE: There are a few congregations that purpose to come together and eat together in multiple assemblies on the same first day of the week. This is dealt with in Objection #20 near the end of this work. However, this is not where we will focus our attention in this study.]

I want to encourage you to be open-minded and search the Scriptures for your answers. If we have Bible Authority for a practice, let's be able to produce it! In the absence of such, let's refrain from acting.

The Practice Examined

10 AM

*The Bible Class
Arrangement*

11 AM

*The Church
Assembles to
Break Bread, Tarries
& Eats Together*

6 PM

*The Church
Assembles to
Sing, Pray & Study*

HOWEVER,

*IF Someone Wishes To
Eat the Unleavened Bread
& Drink the
Fruit of the Vine
IT IS SERVED*

1

It is also interesting to note that some congregations actually have three assemblies on the first day of the week! Sometimes churches assemble in one place for prayer and Bible reading prior to dismissing that assembly (#1) to go into the Bible class arrangement. Then, after Bible classes, the church comes together into one place to eat the Supper (#2). There might also be singing, prayer, teaching and the opportunity to give at this assembly. (These are ALL the assembly activities that some congregations have on the first day of the week. Are they wrong? Certainly not!) However, there are other churches that decide to have an evening assembly (#3). Some churches include, in THIS assembly, the "plan or purpose to offer the unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine *if* there are saints who missed the eating of the Lord's Supper in the earlier assembly." Usually a question is asked if there are those present who would like to partake. Sometimes *a few* raise their hands. Other times, there is but *one saint* who wishes to partake. Sometimes, there is "*nobody* there who wants to partake". And the services might continue and the assembly is eventually dismissed. **Is this "Second Supper" authorized?** Is the church **mandated** by God's Word to have the Lord's Supper in all assemblies on the first day of the week? If so, what passage(s) would indicate such? Is this practice **optional** for churches? Could this be a **forbidden** practice for which there is no Bible Authority?

BIBLE AUTHORITY

The task of this work is to show from the Scriptures what God has said concerning the scriptural eating of the Lord's Supper. We can also learn a great deal from what is said *about unscriptural practices* surrounding the Supper in the New Testament. This work will always refer to Biblical references to substantiate the claims made herein. God's Truth is not determined on the basis of how many believe "this or that" about a subject, nor is it settled on the premise of what your "favorite preacher" thinks about the matter. "***So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God***" (Romans 10:17). Thus, one should not settle for anything less than all of God's Will on any Bible subject. ***The sum of God's Word is truth*** (Ps. 119:160, ASV) and we should not come up with ***more than or less than*** that sum on any subject.

When we are asked to produce Bible Authority for what we do, we must never have a bad attitude toward those who question our teaching or practice. Christians should always have Bible authority for engaging in any activity (James 2:12; Col. 3:17; 2 John 9); and, if we find we are doing something for which there is no authority, let us cease from participating in that unscriptural act. If we have Bible Authority for what we do, let us point to the scriptures for others to see it and be ready to give an answer for the hope that is within us (I Peter 3:15).

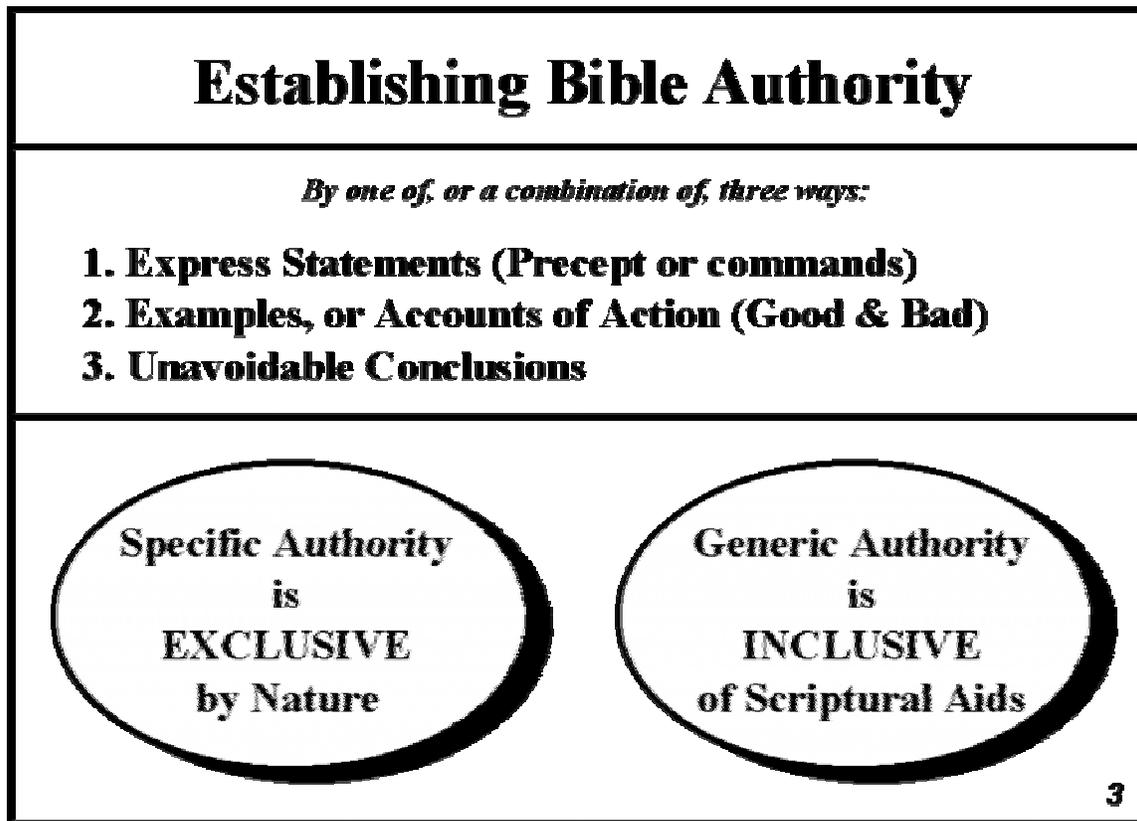
Bible Authority is properly established by one of (or a combination of) three ways: 1) by express statements [which may be in the form of precepts, positive commands, or prohibitions], 2) by examples or what we might term "accounts of action" [these could be *acceptable* actions recorded or we might find examples of *error* teaching us NOT to do something], or 3) by unavoidable conclusions. God has revealed His Will to mankind and has not left man lacking (John 14:26; 2 Timothy 3:16,17; Jude 3). Let us remember that there are some areas wherein God has been *specific*, while in other matters God has been *generic*. When God has been *specific*, that *excludes* other alternatives. When God has been *generic*, man may make use of *scriptural aids* to help carry out the requirements of God.

One of the most basic facts that may be overlooked by good brethren is that the Bible teaches there is to be the assembly for the purpose of breaking bread. Most all who claim to be Christians agree that we ARE to break bread on the first day of the week. Yet, how many realize that the Bible instructs via PRECEPT and EXAMPLE (I Cor. 11:33; Acts 20:7) that the church must set "the assembly for the purpose of breaking bread" in order to be in harmony with God's Will on the Lord's Supper? Please notice the chart below:

<h2 style="text-align: center;">The Assembly FOR THE PURPOSE OF Breaking Bread</h2>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>In Acts 20:7 do we not read of the disciples coming together FOR THE PURPOSE OF breaking bread???</i>• <i>In I Cor. 11:33 were they not told to tarry when they came together FOR THE PURPOSE OF eating the Lord's Supper???</i>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>"...when the disciples came together to break bread..."</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>"...when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another." 2</i></p>

There are many things with regard to the Lord's Supper that fall under the realm of specific authority. The unleavened bread is specific to the exclusion of leavened bread. The fruit of the vine, specifically of the grapevine, is to the exclusion of other types of liquid. The Lord has been specific in His Word with regard to the first day of the week to the exclusion of other days of the week. The limiting example of Acts 20:7 teaches more than most Christians realize with regard to specific authority. The Supper is to be scripturally observed in the

assembly as opposed to saints taking it outside the assembly. *Furthermore, God's Word specifies that the local church come together for the "purpose" of breaking bread, tarry, and eat the Lord's Supper "together" to the exclusion of multiple observances (whether within the same, or, in different assemblies) on the same first day of the week (Acts 20:7; I Cor. 11). Read all the passages on the subject in the New Testament. You can see that God's Pattern is "restrictive" in the areas we have mentioned above. Note the simple chart:*



We may not add to God's Word. We must rightly divide the Word in order to be acceptable (2 Timothy 2:15).

"FAITH" or "OPINION"?

On subjects like the "Second Serving" of the unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine, many make the mistake of assuming that these matters are merely in the realm of "opinion" and are not matters of "faith". This implies that there is no Bible answer or scriptural information on the subject. These men assume that which they are burdened to prove! Just asserting that a subject is not a matter of "faith" does not make it so.

Many try to use the "opinion" argument to "settle" many Bible issues. We can readily recognize the "Oh, that's just your opinion" argument when we think of those who do not believe that baptism is for the remission of sins. The honest Baptist might say, *"Oh, that's just your opinion. Don't bind water baptism on me! If you want to believe it, that's one thing. But, don't teach me that it is necessary."* Christians have met this false assertion for centuries by showing that the Bible teaches that baptism is "in order to receive" remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; I Peter 3:21). Just saying something is in the realm of "opinion" is one thing, but proving that it is in the realm of "opinion" is quite another matter!

Along the same line, the affusionist replies, *"Oh, that's just your opinion. I feel that baptism may be in the form of sprinkling and pouring as well as immersion. Don't bind your opinions on me!"* The careful Bible student realizes that immersion is not just a "choice"! Baptism is immersion (Romans 6:4; Col. 2:12). God's Word is clear on the subject.

Those who use mechanical instruments of music in their worship are guilty of the same assertion, at times. *"Oh, that's just your opinion. I feel that with or without an instrument we can scripturally sing."* But, understanding how Bible authority is established, Christians know that God is specific about our singing. We are to sing (Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19). We have no Bible authority, in the New Testament, to play mechanical instruments of music while singing *spiritual* songs (in or out of church assemblies. Think about it).

When we study with friends about the unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine being limited to "first day of the week *only*" some may say, *"Oh, that's just your opinion. The other days of the week are just as fine as Sunday. Don't bind your opinions on me."* Our approved example in Acts 20:7 (in light of everything that the Bible has to say on the subject) is specific in nature; it specifies the first day of the week. Being specific, it excludes all other days of the week. For our friends to say the "day" of partaking is just a matter of "opinion" is to ignore God's teaching on the subject.

Concerning the regularity of observing the Supper, we hear the same line, *"Oh, that's just your opinion. We can take the unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine quarterly and still be right! Don't bind your opinions on me."* Careful Bible students realize that it is unavoidable to conclude that the early disciples broke bread every first day of the week. We can provide Bible authority for this practice. Classifying the regularity of observing the Supper as being in the realm of "opinion" is an assumption that is lacking in scriptural proof.

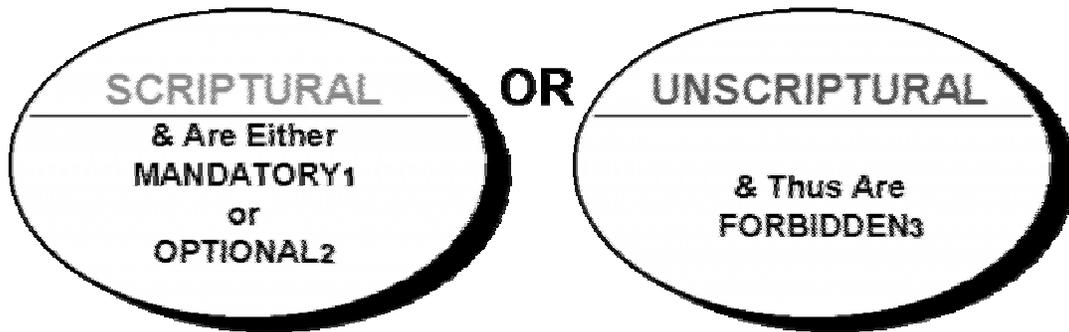
With the previous examples I can hear loud "Amens" from brethren all across the land. But, what about the "Second Serving" of the unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine? Some jump up quickly and say, *"Now wait a minute preacher. If you believe that 'Sunday Night Communion' is wrong, that's fine. But don't bind your opinions on me."* But is this matter in the realm of "opinion"? Just asserting such cannot prove it. **Is there a Bible answer on this subject?** Do we have a choice in the matter? Could some be guilty of asserting that this subject is in the realm of "opinion" (like our denominational friends do on so many subjects) without offering any evidence or scriptural proof? Really, if one states that a subject is in the realm of "opinion", he owes his audience the Biblical proof of his statement.

I am firmly convinced that God's Word contains His complete Will on the subject of His Supper. Some of the instruction is generically authoritative; and other is specific. Especially when the Lord has given *specifics* about His Supper, one must not conclude that such is in the realm of "opinion", but must recognize that it is a matter of "faith".

Many Bible truths have been ignored because some teachers have asserted (without proof) that those subjects were in the realm of "opinion". Bible matters are not settled on the assumptions of men. Christians are to be content with a "thus saith the Lord". Let us be careful that we always speak as the "oracles of God" (I Peter 4:11), and never leave what the Bible teaches to follow the assertions of men. **Really, since the "Second Serving" is an "activity" (that we either engage in or don't engage in) the Scriptures would bear out that (1) there IS a Bible answer on the subject (2 Peter 1:3; Col. 3:17; Jas. 2:12) and (2) the practice is either "mandatory", "optional", or "forbidden".**

There IS a Bible Answer!!!

All "Activities" We Might Engage in Are Either:



**We must rightly divide God's Word and make proper discernments on all ACTIVITIES so we believe, teach and practice truth and not error!
See 2 Peter 1:3; Heb. 5:14 and 2 Tim. 2:15.**

4

As is the case with ALL activities, the "Second Serving" is either "scriptural" or "unscriptural"; and, if scriptural, it would have to be either essential or optional (See Rev. 22:14; Rom. 14 & I Cor. 8). However, if it is unscriptural, it would be forbidden and we should not engage in the practice (2 John 9; Matthew 15:9; John 4:24).

One "interesting" point is that when you look to God's Word and study the word "opinion" you can find a use of the word in I Kings 18:21 wherein one opinion was "truth" (i.e. that the LORD is God) and another opinion was "error" (i.e. that Baal was God). I believe I understand the context in which some brethren are using the term "opinion" when they put certain beliefs that are held by "others" (i.e. who disagree with THEM) on these subjects of controversy in that category. Some who believe this to be a "liberty" just "assert" such without ever "proving" it is an optional matter! *However, I urge each of us to realize that really an "opinion" is simply a "belief" and we need to ultimately be concerned with whether or not the practice is scriptural or unscriptural.*

FELLOWSHIP

There IS a "Second Serving" where I attend at the time of this writing (3/28/98). I love all my brethren and respect my brethren who differ with me. Those who "can participate" do so, and those who "cannot participate" do not. By keeping dialogue "open", it is hoped that we will unite on God's Truth on this subject. We are studying (in this booklet) whether or not it is SCRIPTURAL to have the "Second Supper". This is a local congregational decision and if a church decides to have this "serving", it is then up to the individual saints to decide as to whether or not they will participate when it occurs. If a congregation decides NOT to have the "Second Supper" (based on a proper understanding of God's Word), then the "practice" is not even engaged in!

I do not make this matter a "test of fellowship". The brethren where I attend hold various views on the subject and get along fine. I love all and only want to do what God has authorized. If I am wrong I want to be shown the right way.

Fellowship is a very interesting subject and we all need to continue to study it! I don't have all the answers, but I've got a Book from God that teaches me everything He wishes for me to know on the subject! May we always continue in our wonderful love for one another and keep on trying to do ONLY the Will of the Master.

I do not withdraw from brethren who practice the "Second Serving". I worship with brethren where those who "can participate" do so. Those who "cannot participate" do not serve it, do not lead the prayers, do not ask "the question" (peculiar to the "Second Observance"), or do not eat it if they miss and return that evening. We study the subject along with other subjects. Love reigns and there is tremendous respect for one another's convictions, realizing that good brethren hold "numerous" positions on this matter (there are not just "two positions" on this topic!). I teach against the practice and allow others who disagree to teach what they believe. Hopefully, we will help each other grow into the unity of God's Truth on the subject. If I am wrong, I want to know it and change, and vice versa. We certainly will not get "together" if we ignore the matter!

Now, it is CLEAR, though, isn't it, that I believe the practice to be unauthorized? (Those who engage in the practice will have to answer for their actions. Those who do not participate in it will also answer for that.) I lovingly study with those who disagree with me as time and opportunity affords. James 3:1ff is on my mind and should be on the minds of all teachers!

Please remember that it is certain that activities fall in one of only three categories: mandatory, liberty, or forbidden. Do you agree? We might "disagree" on where a certain "practice" falls, but with GOD it is settled as to what category it is in.

We must strive to be the "family" that God wants us to be. We should continue loving one another and learning each others' convictions so we know what "offends" another! And this should help us pick our topics of study as growth occurs and we develop (I Peter 2:2; 2 Peter 3:18; Heb. 5:11-14; Gal. 6:1; Acts 18:24-26).

As to fellowship, there are "individual matters" and "congregational matters". I am going to challenge some folks' thinking now and suggest that God's Word teaches that there are SOME individual matters that I DO have to make "matters of fellowship", and that there are SOME congregational matters that I DON'T have to make "matters of fellowship" [in the sense of having to "withdraw" from a disagreeing brother].

Please let that sink in.....Please, brethren and friends.

Now, I can NEVER put myself in a situation that causes me to "share" in what I believe to be "sin" with another person (I Tim. 5:22). If I did, I would be said to be "in fellowship" with that particular activity. The NATURE of certain activities of others either allows us to "not participate" or, is such that we are "required" to be involved. This has to be looked at on a case-by-case basis. (I believe that the singing of an unscriptural song in the assembly of the church, for example, is "collective action". This would be "unscriptural church worship", wouldn't it? But, I can choose to NOT participate in the singing of THAT SONG, and still worship God acceptably by singing OTHER SONGS in the assembly that ARE scriptural. I do NOT have "fellowship" in the activity I believe to be unauthorized, however, I do not "withdraw" from the brethren who sang the unscriptural song. I had better, though, out of love for MY soul and THEIRS, approach them with love and at least bring to their attention that I believe them to have done wrong.)

Now, if the church had a mechanical instrument of music and used it with ALL the songs in the assembly, I could NEVER sing "scripturally"! The NATURE of "mechanical instrumental music with spiritual songs" would be DIFFERENT than "the singing of an unscriptural song", causing me to not be able to sing at all! I would need to teach against the unscriptural practice of the use of the mechanical instrument and, if it didn't cease, I would have to find another local congregation to worship with. See the distinction here? I believe this is how God would have it.

So for those who may have taught in the past that we should "withdraw from" folks on ALL congregational matters and we don't withdraw on ANY individual matters, please reconsider your positions. Let's take each situation on a case-by-case basis. Many things happened between the writing of First and Second Corinthians with that church for the GOOD...and what about the churches of Asia mentioned in the first part of Revelation... some saints had not "defiled" their garments though others were wrong in the same congregation they were in (Rev. 3:4).

SEVERAL DIFFERENCES EXIST ON THIS SUBJECT

We want to take a brief "snapshot" at some of the various positions that exist on the subject of the Lord's Supper. Some may think that there are only "one or two" different beliefs on this subject among brethren. Such is not the case! There are brethren who believe that God's Word teaches that it is mandatory for churches to serve the elements of the Lord's Supper at each assembly on the first day. Others believe it is a generically authorized liberty, and therefore optional to have a "Second Supper". And others, like this writer, believe the practice of the "Second Serving" is unscriptural, and therefore forbidden. There are many differing beliefs concerning this subject (see below). We do not point this out gladly, in fact it shows departure from the pattern of God's Word! We are to seek to be UNITED on God's Truth in belief, teaching, and practice and the Lord's Supper is no exception! Paul wrote, ***"...that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."*** (I Cor. 1:10). It should be in the mind of all saints to be united on God's Truth. This is the "unity" God desires for His children.

Various Positions on the Lord's Supper

- 1. "The Scriptures teach that a Christian may eat the Lord's Supper more than once on the first day of the week in the SAME congregation, if he wants to."*
- 2. "The Scriptures teach that a Christian may eat the Lord's Supper more than once on the first day of the week, but in DIFFERENT congregations only."*
- 3. "The Scriptures teach that a Christian must eat EVERY TIME that the elements are being served by a congregation, even if the Supper is observed numerous times on that same day."*
- 4. "The Scriptures teach that a Christian who misses eating the Lord's Supper at a congregation may eat in a later assembly of that church on that day."*
- 5. "The Scriptures authorize a given local church to come together to break bread, tarry, and eat together the Lord's Supper in only one assembly on the same first day of the week."*
- 6. "The Scriptures teach that the scriptural observance of the Supper is limited to eating on the first day of the week on a "Jewish timetable" and we (in America) may not eat the Supper scripturally after approximately 6 PM on Sunday evenings."*
- 7. "The Scriptures teach that only one drinking vessel (i.e. container) may be used in the distribution of the fruit of the vine."*
- 8. "The Scriptures teach that we must observe the Supper in an upper room."*
- 9. "The Scriptures teach that the Lord's Supper may be observed outside the assembly of the church like in jail, in the hospital, in a nursing home, or on vacation (like with just friends or family members)."*

10. *"The Scriptures teach that the Lord's Supper may be observed daily by the church."*

11. *"The Scriptures teach that churches of Christ MUST offer the unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine to Christians who were absent in earlier assemblies on the first day of the week wherein the elements were served and eaten (no matter how many assemblies occur on that day)."*

Various brethren, including many preachers and teachers of God's Word, are thus divided in belief, teaching, and practice given the propositions stated above. This list above is not meant to be exhaustive. We won't go into detail in this booklet on every facet of the various beliefs on the subject. ***However, once we establish wherein God has been "specific" on a particular aspect of the Supper, ALL OTHER THINGS would thus be EXCLUDED with regard to that matter under consideration!*** Please notice:

- ***Does the Bible teach*** that saints of a congregation are to "eat the Supper together" in the same assembly?
- ***Does the Bible authorize*** but one assembly per congregation on a first day of the week for the purpose of breaking bread?
- ***What authority exists in the New Testament*** that would allow one or more saints to eat in a different assembly than the one "when the disciples came together to break bread on the first day of the week, tarried, and ate the Supper together"?

Taking a brief look at the differing positions listed above (and there are more views than that) should indicate to us that there is quite a bit of study needed in order to bring about agreement in faith and practice! ALL the positions above CANNOT be right! *We will focus much of our study in this work to the "bulleted" questions above.* What does the Bible say (I Cor. 1:10; 2 Tim. 2:15; Acts 20:7; I Cor. 11)? What conclusion will a *proper understanding* of Establishing Bible Authority on the Lord's Supper lead us to hold on the subject?

AN EXEGESIS OF I CORINTHIANS 11:17-34

Please consider the following commentary on I Corinthians 11:17-34. This is a text of considerable importance concerning an *unscriptural observance* of the Supper and we would do well to investigate it in detail. Please note especially, the comments surrounding verses 21 and 33.

King James Version (KJV)

New King James Version (NKJV)

American Standard Version (ASV)

New American Standard Version (NASB)

and the Majority Greek text (M)

Verses quoted are from KJV unless otherwise indicated

17 Now in this that I declare [unto you] I praise [you] not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse. 18 For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it.

Paul had been able to "praise" the Corinthians about keeping the "ordinances" (KJV), "traditions" (NKJV)(ASV)(NASB), [paradoseis] (M) in verse 2 of this chapter, but the "transition" takes place here to reprove them for error with regard to the Lord's Supper. The church of God at Corinth was coming together (assembling as the local church) but it was not for the better, but for the worse, indicating wrongdoing on their part. In verse 18, Paul addresses PART OF THE PROBLEM, which involves "divisions" (KJV)(NKJV)(ASV)((NASB) [schismata] (M). This form of "schisms" was referred to in chapter 1.

19 For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.

"Factions" (NKJV)(ASV)(NASB) "heresies" (KJV) [haireseis] (M)...make clear or, make manifest the ones that are doing right, as opposed to them that are wrong....Sects, factions or divisions will, and must come; and in this way, you can see the righteous when problems arise. Those who are doing right are clearly seen, in opposition to those who are in error.

20 When ye come together therefore into one place, [this] is not to eat the Lord's supper.

"Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper" (NKJV) "When therefore ye assemble yourselves together, it is not possible to eat the Lord's Supper:" (ASV) "Therefore when you meet together, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper," (NASB). The "sense" of this verse is that "It is NOT POSSIBLE for you to eat the LORD'S Supper when you come together therefore into one place" (this is referring to when the saints are in the assembly arrangement, they are TOGETHER IN ONE PLACE, no class arrangement or other non-assembly arrangement is suitable for the observance of the Lord's Supper, as indicated here by the inspired record and throughout the New Testament teaching on the subject) as the CHURCH (this is the local church "at worship"...Acts 20:7; I Cor. 14:23,26,28,33,34,35 as the local fellowship of saints "collectively at worship to God"). There were things that they were doing wrong that prevented them from truly observing "the Lord's Supper".

"COME TOGETHER" (KJV)(NKJV) , "ASSEMBLE YOURSELVES TOGETHER (ASV), "MEET TOGETHER (NASB) [sunerchomenon] (M) indicates ASSEMBLY and CHURCH action, in this case, as opposed to INDIVIDUAL action. Now, it must be noted that the "individual" is ALWAYS the participant (when participation takes place) in various "activities", whether "congregational" or "individual. The PURPOSE of the gathering, or the assembly, was supposed to be "to eat the LORD's Supper". This should be our purpose as well, and churches are to set the appointed time of the assembly for "the church to come together into one place to eat the Supper" on the first day of the week.

21 For in eating every one taketh before [other] his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken.

"FOR" [gar] (M), introduces the reasons that they were not able to eat the LORD'S Supper. In the eating they were engaged in, saints were "taking before" their brethren their OWN supper (in contrast to the LORD's Supper). "taketh before (other)" (KJV)(ASV) "takes his own supper ahead of (others)" (NKJV) "each one takes his own supper first" (NASB) [hekastos gar to idion deipnon prolambavei] (M).

It appears that some were taking in time sequence "before" or "ahead of" their brethren. (Please notice the sentence, "The king's cupbearer drank the red liquid 'before [ahead of] the others' to ensure it was safe to drink it." This action could occur whether "in the presence of" or "not in the presence of" the others.) This meaning would indicate that they were not waiting till the appointed time to eat, and went on ahead, and ate before their brethren. Whether or not the others were physically there when the "taking before (other)" occurred, they certainly were not "eating together the Supper".

The inspired remedy for this part of their problems with eating the Supper is given in verse 33, "...when ye come together to eat, tarry, (or wait) one for another".

The fact that "one is hungry and another is drunken" used in the text indicates yet ANOTHER PROBLEM with this observance. A common meal was being made of this reverential act of homage unto God Almighty! While, as "individuals", saints broke bread (ate common meals) from "house to house" (Acts 2:46) with God's approval, the assembly of the local church for worship unto God is no place for such social activities!

22 What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise [you] not.

Paul admonishes the saints at Corinth to eat common meals at home...for in "socializing and having a common meal" in the church, they: (1) were NOT eating the LORD'S Supper (2) were said to be eating THEIR OWN Supper (3) were despising the church of God and (4) were not to be praised in this activity.

NOTE: This general rule of taking common meals at home (non-church action), as opposed to "church action" is to be followed throughout the dispensation. This prohibition is not limited, as some good brethren might believe, to only applicability when there is the presence of factions, while it certainly includes such! It is also wrong, even as some brethren might contend, "If there is no one hungry and drunken".

23 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the [same] night in which he was betrayed took bread: 24 And when he had given thanks, he brake [it], and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.

Paul goes back to the institution of the Lord's Supper before Christ's death, burial and resurrection as recorded in Matthew 26 and other gospel accounts...Who would want to "deviate" from the manner in which our Lord, took bread, blessed it, brake it, and made the distribution? And also, concerning the cup? I contend that this is the "right course" of action in scripturally observing the Lord's Supper; and, for those who disagree, is it not the "unquestionably safe course" of action?

25 After the same manner also [he took] the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink [it], in remembrance of me.

Similarly, the instruction regarding the "cup", (which by metonymy stands for the "contents" "the fruit of the vine" and NOT the actual "container") is given. Every time the Supper would be scripturally observed, Christ commanded that it be done in "remembrance" of Him. A harmonization of Bible passages with regard to the Supper would lead us to the proper conclusion on the frequency that God would authorize. Acts 20:7 shows that the Supper was observed once per week.

Also, please notice the gospel accounts like Matthew 26:27 which reads, "And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, saying, Drink ye ALL (emphasis mine, mjw) of it;" Did He mean for them to totally consume the LIQUID when He said this? Or, did He instruct them ALL (all of them) to do this? Did they do this TOGETHER with Christ? Or, did they eat separately, at different times, spread out over time? Mark 14:23 says, "And He took the cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave *it* to them: and they ALL (emphasis mine, mjw) drank of it."

26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

One aspect of proper observance of the Supper is to show or proclaim the Lord's death until He comes again. A weekly observance will "keep this in memory" as a good reminder that we are to be thankful for the death; appreciative of the Great Sacrifice; humbled that Deity would do such a thing to be spit upon, reviled, persecuted, falsely accused, made to bear the cross, beaten and mocked and then to be crucified as a perfectly innocent Lamb for the sins of the whole world; and, keep before our minds the "place" that this spectacular event has in our faith, our preaching, and in the matter of the resurrection of the dead (I Cor. 15).

We remember, in this observance and we show or proclaim the death of Christ until He comes again. This is indicative that the instruction to observe the Supper is to be age-lasting.

27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink [this] cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of [that] bread, and drink of [that] cup. 29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

None of us are "worthy" in one sense of the word, to eat the Supper. It would be impossible for anyone to eat, then, if we take THAT MEANING and make application here. Since we ARE to eat, Jesus said "This DO in remembrance of me", we must take the "meaning" of the terms that would include one being able to eat the Supper. The observance needs to be scriptural. Yes, it is true that saints who are unfaithful to God are out of fellowship with Him and just like other worship activity, it is of little benefit to them. Those in spiritual fellowship with the Godhead and faithful saints are "sharing" or "having fellowship" in this scriptural activity.

30 For this cause many [are] weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

Three categories are mentioned 1) weak 2) sickly and 3) sleep. When we are judged to be wrong while we are still alive here on this earth, we are being "chastened" by family members (God our Father and/or our loving brethren). The benefit to be derived from such chastening is that we can make adjustments and corrections and be right with God.

33 Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another.

When the "local church" was going to "come together to eat" the Lord's Supper, the saints were instructed to "tarry" (KJV) or "wait" (NKJV)(ASV)(NASB) [ekdecheste] (M) for one another. The inescapable conclusion here is that they were to "eat together" (the same time, the same place, the same single assembly) the Supper. Some saints may not make it to that assembly. But, after the scriptural "tarrying" or "waiting", the Supper would, of necessity, be observed in obedience to the command, "This do in remembrance of me". Any other "eatings" on that day by members of that congregation, would be another observance, a separate eating. God desires the local church eat His Supper "together", and not "separately".

Notice that the "wait" was BEFORE the scriptural eating. The order is 1) come together for the purpose of eating, 2) wait for one another until the appointed time for eating, and then 3) eat together the Supper. This is in harmony with good rules of hermeneutics (Bible interpretation). Some teachers have asserted that there is nothing of "spiritual significance" or nothing concerning the principle of "unity" (agreement) of scripture that would require saints to eat together in the same assembly! Beware! There is both "spiritual significance" in the local family eating this Supper together in the same assembly and the passages of scripture on the subject of the Lord's Supper show "unity" when this is our conclusion! The disciples ate together with Christ (notice the gospel accounts of the institution of the Supper), the disciples came together to break bread in Acts 20:7, there is the prohibition against taking before other (eating separately) in I Corinthians 11:21, and there is the admonishment to "tarry" (wait) and the natural conclusion that they were then to "eat together" after properly tarrying for one another in the "come together to eat" assembly in verse 33. (Who would contend that the Corinthians could scripturally "eat separately" after coming together to eat and tarrying one for another?)

"Eating separately", whether in the same assembly, whether in multiple assemblies, or whether in non-assembly arrangements has no authorization from God's Word.

34 And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.

Common meals are for the "home", which here indicates the idea of "outside the assembly of the church". The proper understanding of this passage (in harmony with other Biblical instruction on the matter) would also include the appropriateness of eating elsewhere than one's OWN home, such as eating at restaurants and eating at another's home. The CONTRAST here is between "church action" versus "individual action" in the matter of eating socially. Social meetings, called "fellowship dinners" by some are without divine authority when practiced "by the local church". But saints are to enjoy and engage in hospitality and breaking bread (common meals) from house to house.

There were at least two problems concerning the eating of the unleavened bread and drinking the fruit of the vine at Corinth. One problem was that some were hungry and others were drunken (I Cor. 11:21). The solution to this problem was given in verse 34, "And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come." Another problem was that the saints at Corinth were not eating together; "For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of (others);" (I Cor. 11:21; NKJV). Paul told them that the supper was no longer the "Lord's", but it had become their "own". The solution to this aspect of their eating was given in verse 33, when Paul said, "Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another." Thus, they were to eat together, and not at different times. When brethren of the same congregation eat in different, or multiple assemblies on the same day, they are eating at different times! They may be "together" in an assembly, but they are eating at different times! The specific authority of God on this subject "excludes" eating in (or, serving the elements of the Supper in) multiple assemblies.

While we may not have identical circumstances to those which prevailed at Corinth, these two principles apply to our eating of the unleavened bread and drinking the fruit of the vine as well. If we are hungry, let us eat at home that we "come not together" unto condemnation. Likewise, when we "come together to eat" let us wait and eat together.

Paul concluded this thought by saying he would tell them more when he saw them face to face.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Let me strongly suggest that I believe that the scriptural observance of the Lord's Supper is a great act of homage unto God. The Christian is privileged to partake of that which is (by faith) the body and blood of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 11:17-34). I, and all true Christians, treasure this great honor each first day of the week.

But one must keep the acts of worship in their proper place. Singing is also a great privilege. Prayer, man's avenue of communication with Deity, is likewise a great honor.

When one is not able to assemble with the saints on Sunday due to illness, he unfortunately misses these privileges. If he misses the whole day's activities because of his sickness, we do not go to his house and give him the page numbers of the songs that he missed and let him sing them while we stand idly by. We do not ask the preacher to come and deliver the exact messages that were presented so this man may hear the lessons that he missed while we stand idly by while he hears. And we certainly should not carry him unleavened bread and fruit of the vine for him to eat while we stand by and watch. We realize that this man unfortunately missed that assembly and all the activities peculiar to it.

The solemnity and holiness of the Lord's Supper has caused some brethren to take unauthorized steps to secure the unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine. The actions of some brethren show they have the false idea that if they can partake of the unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine on Sunday, they have fulfilled the really important requirement of God. Many examples illustrate this false conception.

The person who drives up to the meeting house with his boat hitched to his car and pops in for the Supper and immediately leaves before participating in other acts of worship is a classic demonstration. He misunderstands the proper place of the Supper. The one who asks brethren to bring unleavened bread and fruit of the vine to his hospital room or sick-bed and yet never seeks the songs that were sung nor asks the preacher to teach his sermon is illustrative of the same emphasis on the Supper.

Let me hasten to say that if there is authorization for the "boatman's" eating and leaving, then we have no right to oppose his practice. If the sick person can scripturally justify his request of having the elements brought to his hospital room, we lose any right to oppose such action. All we seek is the scriptural approval of these practices. Where does the Bible authorize either of them?

Many brethren have made provisions to allow "the absent" to catch the "Second Serving". Thus, if some brethren miss the "First Serving", they can always partake at the "Second Serving" in a later assembly on that day. Even when one misses the Lord's Supper due to illness and can make it to the second assembly with the BEST OF INTENTIONS... *Where is scriptural authority for the saint to eat in the later assembly? Where does the Bible authorize multiple servings of the Supper on the same first day of the week by a given local church?*

IS EATING TOGETHER REQUIRED?

There are many good brethren who do not believe that "eating together" is required by God. What does the Bible teach?

EATING TOGETHER is taught by EXAMPLE in Acts 20:7,8 and by UNAVOIDABLE CONCLUSION in I Corinthians 11:17-34.

In harmony with the "sum of God's Truth" on the subject, Acts 20:7 and I Cor. 11:17-34 teach that the Lord's Supper is to be eaten TOGETHER...and "eating together" occurs in the SAME ASSEMBLY, and not by the absent saints eating in "a DIFFERENT assembly" of a local church on the same day.

Please notice again that the instruction in Acts 20 and I Cor 11 is SPECIFIC concerning the church (1) coming together (2) for the purpose of breaking bread (3) on the first day of the week (4) tarrying until the appointed time, and (5) eating together (as opposed to taking separately) the Supper. (There yet remains the self-examination part of the Supper and other things not dealt with at this time in order to have a scriptural observance).

If there is NO BIBLE AUTHORITY TO EAT SEPARATELY IN THE SAME ASSEMBLY, where would the Bible authority be found to "eat separately" in a second, or third, or fourth assembly of a given local church on that same first day? ("This do in remembrance of me" MUST be "obeyed" at the TIME/ASSEMBLY GOD authorizes a saint to eat the Supper). Yes, careful study will reveal that God specified more than just "the first day of the week" for scriptural observance; He also specified the "coming together to break bread assembly" wherein the saints "tarry" and "eat together" the Supper!

I believe more study needs to be encouraged along the lines of recognizing the essentiality of the "church eating together the Supper".

QUESTIONS

- 1. How could a saint "eat separately" in the same assembly and be wrong?**

One example of how this might occur is given. Local church "A" has one assembly on the first day of the week. The Lord's Supper is observed before preaching takes place in that assembly. The church comes together to break bread, carries one for another and eats at the designated time. The preaching takes place and during the sermon a traveling saint comes in. A well-meaning brother, with only the best intentions in his heart, gets up after the lesson and asks, "Would you like to eat the Supper?" The saint replies, "Yes." The brother offers another prayer and distributes the bread. The saint eats. Others in the assembly don't. Another prayer for the cup is given. The fruit of the vine is served and drunk by the saint. Then the assembly is dismissed.

Is there any authority for this "Second Observance"? Where is the authority for the second supper/observance/eating/serving? I know of no authority for that activity. While in the same assembly, the Lord's Supper had previously been observed scripturally. This saint is NOT eating together with the saints there.

2. How could a saint "eat separately" in a different assembly and be wrong?

Notice the following example of how this type of "eating separately" could occur. Local church "B" decides to break bread at 11:15 AM on the first day of the week. There is a second assembly on that day scheduled for 6 PM. The church comes together at the appointed time. Songs are sung and the brethren tarry (wait) for one another until 11:15 AM (as decided by the church in accordance with New Testament instruction on the subject). The saints eat the Supper together and the first assembly dismisses. At 6 PM the saints assemble for the purpose of singing, prayer and studying God's Word. Included in this second assembly is the purpose or plan "to offer the opportunity for those who missed the Lord's Supper observed in the first assembly to be served the bread and fruit of the vine, if they so desire". The question is asked, a saint requests to be served, and a brother prays and serves the saint who missed the Lord's Supper in the first assembly.

Is there any authority for this "Second Observance"? Where is the Bible Authority for the second supper/observance/eating/serving? I know of no authority for that activity. The Lord's Supper was scripturally observed in the first assembly. This saint is NOT eating together with the saints there.

NOTE: The church COULD DECIDE to have the "coming together to break bread assembly" in the evening IF SHE WANTED TO and the saints could eat together IN THAT ASSEMBLY on the first day. But, where is the authority for "multiple servings/observances" of the Supper by the same church on the same first day of the week? Where is the authority NOT to eat the Supper "together"? A saint that eats in the second assembly is NOT "eating together" with the other saints in that assembly any more than a soloist would be "singing together" with saints who silently listen to a solo sung in a second assembly of the local church. Note the following chart please:

“Eating Together”

- 1. The disciples were WRONG in eating separately [taking before other] the Supper (I Cor. 11:21).**
- 2. The instruction was given to “tarry one for another” in the “when ye come together to eat” the Lord’s Supper assembly (vs 33)**
- 3a. Conclusion #1: It would be scriptural for them to “eat separately” so long as they “tarry” first? NO!**
- 3b. Conclusion #2: It is required to “eat together” after “tarrying” in the “coming together to eat” assembly. YES!**

It is an UNAVOIDABLE CONCLUSION:

Eating together is required.

5

God has NOT SPECIFIED "when" or "how often" singing, preaching, and praying may be done by the local church...but He has been SPECIFIC about eating the Supper together...and "eating together" CANNOT be done by some saints eating in a second, third or fourth assembly on the first day AFTER the church came together to break bread, tarried at that appointed time, and ate together the Lord's Supper.

Notice, God did not say "eat when you ARE TOGETHER" and leave it like that! God revealed His Word in the specific language that He did for a reason! Please take great care in noting the language used concerning eating together being authorized to the EXCLUSION of separate observances on the same day.

"Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another." (I Cor. 11:33). Are we to "eat together"? YES!

SCRIPTURAL TARRYING

It is interesting to note that there is a lack of teaching today on the subject of "tarrying". This is a requirement of God! Who will contend that this is "not a command to be obeyed throughout this dispensation"? What does the Bible mean when it says, "Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another."?

Scriptural Tarrying ENDS... When Scriptural Eating BEGINS

- 1. The church sets the appointed time for the disciples to come together to eat.**
- 2. The church comes together into one place to eat the Lord's Supper.**
- 3. The disciples "tarry one for another" in the "when ye come together to eat" the Lord's Supper assembly.**
- 4. When the scriptural "eating" starts, the scriptural "waiting" is OVER. This is the "Lord's" Supper.**

"...when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another."

6

We refer the reader back to the comments on verse 33 in The Exegesis of I Corinthians 11:17-34. Remember that the scriptural order is 1) come together for the purpose of eating, 2) wait for one another until the appointed time for eating, and then 3) eat together the Supper.

Some people assert that we are "tarrying" by having the "Second Supper"! This is not correct at all! Notice that scriptural tarrying or waiting is over (has ceased) when the scriptural eating of the Lord's Supper begins in the first assembly! **How can we be "waiting" if we have EATEN?** Others contend that we must be wrong if we eat in the morning if someone is absent that might be there in the evening. This is also incorrect. The church must decide upon the assembly for the disciples to come together to eat the Lord's Supper! The tarrying can be scriptural and the eating can be scriptural even if there are saints that are absent. The Lord's instruction to "tarry" or "wait" must be obeyed! We are not to "rush to eat the Supper" before the appointed time designated by the church! This would be sin. But to eat at the designated time, all else being equal, is in perfect accordance with God's instruction. It is up to each congregation as to whether they would choose to do this in the first, second or even the third assembly on the first day of the week.

Please notice that the churches that "come together into one place" for about 10 minutes before dismissing to Bible classes are in their "second assembly" when then come together into one place AFTER the Bible classes are over to eat the Lord's Supper. The Supper was probably not offered or observed by anyone in that little 10 minute "assembly". Was the church WRONG in not having the Supper then? Of course not. Following the pattern of New Testament Christianity regarding assembly worship and the Lord's Supper, the church has the "right, obligation and privilege" to set the designated time for the church to come together to eat. This may be any hour or assembly that the church chooses. The church should use the best of wisdom when making this choice. Then, after it is set, the saints have the "right, the obligation, and the privilege" to be there to sup with fellow saints in the family of God!

The Bible truth of the matter is this: **The unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine are to be eaten on the first day of the week in the assembly when the disciples come together to break bread (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 11:20-34).** There should be an assembly set on the first day of the week *for the purpose of*

breaking bread, the disciples gather together "to break bread" at the appointed time, they *tarry for one another* in that assembly, and they *eat the Supper together* in harmony with all the passages that teach on the subject. An "eating" where the disciples did NOT come together to break bread is not in Acts 20:7. There is no Bible authority to "eat separately".

There are several ways to change the "LORD's Supper" into "Another Supper". Please look to the chart to observe a few (not comprehensive):

<h2 style="text-align: center;">Changing the Lord's Supper to Another Supper</h2>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>By changing THE ELEMENTS that God authorizes, the "Supper" is no longer the Lord's (e.g. substituting milk and cornbread for the fruit of the vine and the unleavened bread, Mt. 26:26-28).</i>• <i>By changing THE DAY that God authorizes, the "Supper" is no longer the Lord's (e.g. eating on the second day instead of the first day of the week, Acts 20:7).</i>• <i>By NOT eating together in THE ASSEMBLY that God specified, the "Supper" is no longer the Lord's (e.g. eating on vacation in a hotel room with your family, at a jail or hospital, or in a first day of the week assembly AFTER the church had previously observed the Lord's Supper Acts 20:7; I Cor. 11).</i>
<p><i>God has been SPECIFIC concerning matters involving THE ELEMENTS, THE DAY and even THE ASSEMBLY in which we have authority to eat the Lord's Supper. These specifics EXCLUDE other alternatives!</i></p>
7

ARE WE FOLLOWING GOD'S WILL?

Are we following God's Will concerning our belief, teaching and practice with regard to the observance of the Lord's Supper? Matthew 26:17-30 gives us an account of Christ eating unleavened bread and drinking the fruit of the vine with His disciples. Let us notice verses 26-28, "*And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to His disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is My body. And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it: For this is My blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.*" Acts 2:42 says, "*And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.*" Acts 20:7 reads, "*And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached to them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.*" These particular passages contain more "specific authority" instruction with regard to the eating of the Lord's Supper than many realize.

Christians are familiar with these passages, but many do not realize all that is taught therein. Acts 20:7, for instance, is *a limiting, or exclusive example*. This conclusion is reached by rightly dividing the "sum of God's Word" on the subject of the Lord's Supper as found in the New Testament. This is the only passage that gives us the *day* on which the early Christians ate the Lord's Supper. Realizing (by searching all the passages that

relate to this subject) that no other day is authorized, we conclude that *the first day is specified to the exclusion of other days* of the week. God has been *specific* concerning the *day*.

Also, similar to the children of Israel keeping *every* Sabbath day holy (even though the commandment does not include the actual word "every"), we rightly divide God's Word and conclude that the frequency of scriptural observance of the Lord's Supper is *every* first day of the week (for every week has a first day). In this sense, we can truthfully say that the frequency has been specified to the exclusion of "other frequencies" that we might think of. [NOTE: We are NOT saying that you have the word "every" specifically mentioned by name in the text of the New Testament. By properly understanding how Bible Authority is established, we know that such falls into the realm of "specific authority"].

God has also been *specific* about *disciples* eating. This *excludes* non-saints. Another truth that is *specified* in the text is their *coming together* to eat. They "came together" to break bread. This *necessitates* the Supper being observed in the *assembly*, as opposed to taking the Supper outside the assembly. Further, we can note that the *specific nature* of the "*purpose*" of their coming together was "*to break bread*". This *excludes other alternatives* and we have no authority to proceed outside the pattern. We must, therefore, IMITATE these "specifics" in scriptural observance of the Supper. We also must take note that they *ate together* in **THE same assembly (one observance per first day)**. Christians in a local church of God at Corinth were WRONG when they ate separately (I Cor. 11). "Taking before others" in the same assembly is prohibited by I Cor. 11:21. **Eating together in the same assembly is mandated by the inspired writer's teaching in I Cor. 11:33.** This information and instruction is NOT merely "incidental" as some might think or assert in their teaching. God's Word bears this out when we take the "sum" of what HE revealed to us on the matter. Notice the simple chart:

<h2>Acts 20:7, Our LIMITING Example for:</h2>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First day of the week observance• Every first day of the week observance• Disciples eating the Lord's Supper• Coming together to break bread• Purpose of their coming together was to break bread• Eating together in the same assembly [NOT by "eating separately" in the same, or multiple assemblies, or in shifts, or fragmented observances, or "Mass-style", or in non-assembly arrangements]
8

I Corinthians chapters 10 and 11 contain more inspired information that deals with the subject of the eating of the Lord's Supper. Let us notice those texts: Please take time to read I Corinthians 10:14-21 and 11:17-34. When we add up all that God's Word says on the subject of His Supper, we see that the church is to come together to eat upon the first day of the week, wait and eat together at the appointed time! This practice is NOT

incidental as found in the pattern! In fact, to do otherwise would be to *violate* the teaching of the pattern! They came together FOR THE PURPOSE of eating the Supper. They were to wait for one another and EAT TOGETHER in the same assembly. The inspired record's language must be noted. *When God specifies eating together in the SAME ASSEMBLY (Acts 20:7; I Cor. 11:33), this EXCLUDES separate SERVINGS, or MULTIPLE ASSEMBLIES wherein ONE disciple eats in that "later assembly".*

- *Where is the Bible Authority* for a child of God in a given local congregation to eat separately?
- *Where is the Bible Authority* for a child of God to eat the unleavened bread and drink the fruit of the vine when the church has NOT come together to eat the Supper?
- *Where is the Bible Authority* for separate, or multiple (2 or more) observances in a church on a given first day of the week?
- *Where is the Bible Authority* for multiple servings by a local church so "one" can eat (sometimes) by himself in a later assembly?

Notice what we have learned thus far:

We HAVE Bible Authority for:

Matthew 26:27-28; Acts 20: 7; I Corinthians 11:17-34

- **Unleavened bread and fruit of the vine**
- **Disciples eating the Lord's Supper**
- **First day of the week observance**
- **Every first day of the week observance**
- **Coming together to eat the Supper**
- **The purpose of the assembly is to break bread**
- **The disciples come together to eat, tarry and eat together in same assembly**

There is NO Bible Authority for:

- **Milk and cornbread**
- **Non-Saints eating the Lord's Supper**
- **2nd - 7th day of the week observance**
- **Quarterly, or yearly observance**
- **Eating outside the assembly**
- **Eating when the assembly is NOT for the PURPOSE of breaking bread**
- **Eating in "shifts", fragmented observances, or multiple servings/eatings/observances on the same day**

9

Notice that the Lord's Supper is "church action" (collective action) as opposed to "individual action". The Lord's Supper is "assembly worship" (collective worship) as opposed to "individual worship". God placed the scriptural observance of His Supper in the assembly of the local church. When they came together (as a church) TO EAT they were instructed to WAIT and EAT TOGETHER.

While it is readily admitted that every time we speak of "church action" individuals are involved (for the church is made up of the individuals), we must take note that the Supper is scripturally observed *by the church*. Further, please take note that the Lord's Supper is exclusively *assembly worship* (Acts 20:7; I Cor. 11). The

careful student will notice that the Scriptures support the facts that the Lord's Supper is "church action" and "assembly worship", which is to be performed in THE coming together to break bread ASSEMBLY on the first day of the week.

Note the chart below that shows the repeated references in Acts 20 and I Corinthians 11 to the necessity of "coming together" *as a church* "to eat" the Supper together (NOT by eating separately in the same assembly, or by eating separately in multiple assemblies). *This SPECIFIC AUTHORITY excludes a saint eating in a second assembly at a second observance/eating/serving/supper on the same day in the same church.*

Please notice God's specific authority in the following chart.

The CHURCH Assembles to Partake	
<u>Acts 20:</u>	
vs 7	"the disciples CAME TOGETHER to break bread
vs 8	"They were GATHERED TOGETHER"
<u>I Corinthians 11:</u>	
vs 17	"you COME TOGETHER"
vs 18	"you COME TOGETHER as a church"
vs 20	"you COME TOGETHER in one place"
vs 33	"you COME TOGETHER to eat"
vs 34	"lest you COME TOGETHER for judgment"
The Lord's Supper is exclusively an act we should do TOGETHER as a CHURCH!	
10	

[AUTHOR'S NOTE: Whether or not the reader agrees that the Lord's Supper is "church worship or collective action", as opposed to it being "individual worship or individual action" does not *necessarily* prohibit one from understanding the Bible truth that the Supper is to be eaten TOGETHER in the same assembly and not separately.]

Bible authority is clearly in favor of *eating together in the same assembly* and does not authorize observing the Supper in a "fragmented" fashion, in "shifts", or by a "segmented" arrangement whether in the same assembly, or in multiple assemblies, or in non-assembly arrangements. If the inspired writer told them it was wrong for them to "take ahead of others" (i.e. not to eat together) in the SAME ASSEMBLY, what Bible authority exists for segmented, or fragmented observances (i.e. not eating together) in MULTIPLE ASSEMBLIES?

Now, let us notice some objections raised by those who believe that the "Second Serving" of unleavened bread and fruit of the vine is authorized.

OBJECTIONS

Objection #1 - "There is really no such thing as a "Second Serving". The table has merely been left spread for those who were not present earlier to eat the Lord's Supper."

Reply:

If this "serving" is not the second, our objector must believe that it is the first. How can this be when there was a serving of unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine previous to this serving??? Along the same line, if this "serving" is the first, why do not ALL who are present partake of the elements? Why is another prayer offered for the bread and the fruit of the vine? If this is truly the first, why do some offer thanks twice (i.e. once in the morning and once again in the evening)? If this is the same supper, why pray again? Furthermore, why are the prayers worded differently than the earlier prayers blessing the bread and the cup?

Certainly any careful observer can see that this is not the "first serving". This argument is really a dodge. The point is: God has been specific about eating together. This excludes separate observances of the unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine. What happens after His Supper must be "another supper". There is no Bible authority for such!

While the "Second Serving" may be the first opportunity to eat for those who were absent earlier, the point is that the local church has already eaten the "Lord's Supper". Those absent when the disciples came together to break bread missed His Supper. They also missed the songs that were sung at that particular gathering, the prayers that were led, and the lesson that was presented. If a congregation serves the bread and the fruit of the vine after the saints have eaten the Lord's Supper, that serving would have to be a "Second Serving".

Objection #2 - "As long as it is still the first day of the week, it is scriptural for Christians to eat the Lord's Supper. Sunday evening is still the first day of the week."

Reply:

There is much more involved in scripturally eating the Lord's Supper than just being a living Christian on the first day of the week. Getting "most of the specifics right" is not enough to please God! The Lord's Supper is to be observed in the assembly. The Supper is not to be eaten in just any assembly either, for it must be on the first day of the week when the disciples come together to break bread (Acts 20:7). In addition to all of this, there yet remains the self-examination involved in properly observing the Supper (I Cor. 11:26-29). Sunday evening is still the first day of the week, but if the disciples have already come together to break bread and done so in an earlier assembly, the disciples have NOT gathered for the purpose of breaking bread in the evening service.

Many Christians try to justify the "other supper" with this argument. Some argue that there is nothing spiritually significant about the number of times that the Supper is served. They say that the "day" is significant, but the number of times is not. WHERE DOES THE BIBLE TEACH SUCH? What law of Bible hermeneutics allows Christians to accept the specifics of "the first day of the week" and "the disciples", and at the same time reject the specifics of "came together" and "to break bread"? These are all in the passage; they are all binding.

If the number of times the unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine can be scripturally served is insignificant (as some suggest without proof), then the elements could be put on the table and Christians could come in and "commune" individually at many different times all day Sunday (i.e. cafeteria-style)! Why there would be no need whatsoever to "come together to eat" or "to wait and eat together the Supper". As long as there is a first day of the week assembly, according to some, then a saint may partake! But, careful Bible students realize that the Supper is to be taken in THE assembly (singular) on the first day of the week when the disciples come together to break bread. **There IS spiritual significance in "sharing, having fellowship, having communion, jointly participating" in eating "together" the Lord's Supper.**

The argument of "insignificance concerning the number of times that the unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine may be served scripturally" is invalid because God has been specific about eating "together" (i.e. the same place, the same time, the same assembly). The number of times that the elements are served is not "incidental"

as some assert. Multiple servings or eatings on the same day are excluded by this specific authority. Those who advocate multiple servings and/or eatings on the same day assert generic authority and miss the specific authority on this matter. Let us be more careful in "rightly dividing" God's Word (II Tim. 2:15).

We are in full agreement with our objector concerning the "day" being the first day, but the scriptures do not stop there and neither should we! It is just as essential that His Supper be eaten "together" in the SAME assembly as it is that it be eaten on the "first day".

Objection #3: - "You do not have the right to deny a Christian what he is commanded to do on the first day of the week: eat the Lord's Supper."

Reply:

By not having a "Second Serving" (or a second service on that day, for that matter) we do not "deny" a Christian "the right" to partake of the Lord's Supper. **The only way a congregation could do that is by not serving the Lord's Supper at all on the first day of the week!** If the Lord's Supper was observed, then it is not the fault of the congregation that the Christian was unable to partake.

I cannot deny someone the "right" to partake on Monday either. The truth is: There is no "scriptural right" to eat separately. This argument misses the point altogether. Where is the Bible authority for some saints to eat the bread and drink of the fruit of the vine when the church has not come together to break bread? Where is the authority to "eat separately" the Lord's Supper?

In the objection above, our objector is confused as to all that is involved in scripturally eating the Lord's Supper. Proper interpretation, or discernment, necessitates harmonizing all of God's Revelation on a particular subject. The Lord has required much more than just taking on "the first day of the week". He has also been specific about coming together to eat and eating the Supper together.

God has been specific about many things; He has been generic in other areas. In matters involving generic authority there is room for scriptural aids to help carry out the regulations of God. In matters of specifics, we cannot go beyond that which has been specified: other alternatives are excluded. Since God has been specific (disciples came together to break bread - Acts 20:7) concerning the scriptural observance of His Supper, it would be unscriptural to try to eat the unleavened bread and drink the fruit of the vine when the church had not gathered for the purpose of breaking bread. This is adding to God's Word (Rev. 22:18,19; II John 9).

Consider our "singing" in the assembly for a moment. When we sing, for example, we "all" sing "together". We do not tolerate "choirs, choruses, quartets, etc." because God has been specific in His instruction concerning our singing. We are to teach and admonish "one another" (Col. 3:16). We realize that to let some participate and for others to sit and listen to the singers sing is without Bible authorization.

But when we come to the matter of eating the Lord's Supper, many are not consistent with what the Bible says about our eating "together". In our singing, we all sing "together", but some feel that concerning the eating of the unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine such is not the case. If there is no need to "come together to eat", we must have authorization to stay home and partake (i.e. that instruction must not be specific according to this line of reasoning). The scriptures tell us that scriptural observance is to be done in the assembly on the first day of the week when the disciples come together to break bread. We have no Bible authorization to partake: (1) individually, outside that assembly, or, (2) in another assembly on the first day of the week when the disciples have NOT come together to break bread (Acts 20:7; I Cor. 11:20-34).

Some take the position that as long as you let your mind go back to the cross you are "observing" the "Lord's Supper" with those who are taking at the "Second Serving". This is used in efforts to prove that "all" are

engaging in the second eating of the unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine. But is this really true? If it is, then all one has to do is let his mind go back to the cross at the "first serving" and he is a partaker! And if one lets his mind go back to the cross during other days of the week, he is guilty of "taking the Lord's Supper" on the wrong day! WHO BELIEVES IT???

God has been specific about eating "together". This excludes eating at different times. Just as "one another" excludes singing quartets, "when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another" excludes separate observances. Sing together; eat together. The one saint that eats in the second assembly is NOT "eating together" with the other saints who ate in the earlier assembly, any more than a "soloist" would be "singing together" with the saints who sang in the earlier assembly who silently listen while the soloist sings the actual song selections he missed in the previous gathering! So really, one no more has the actual "right" to partake of the unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine when the church has not come together to break bread, than he does to partake on a wrong day. To do either is to act without Bible Authority.

Objection #4 - "What gives the church the right to decide when the saints can commune, and when they cannot commune?"

Reply:

One might just as well ask the question, "What gives the local church the right to decide the times for the services to meet to worship God?" The Bible teaches Christians to "come together to break bread" (Acts 20:7; I Cor. 11:20-34) on the first day of the week. The specific "hour" in which to do so is not given. God specified THE DAY and THE ASSEMBLY in which we have authority to eat scripturally. Inherent in the Bible authority to "come together to break bread" is the necessity to choose a time to do so. This is doing no more than carrying out God's Will in the matter.

Those who raise this question may feel that it is "going beyond" the Word to select one service on Sunday to eat at the exclusion of other gatherings on that same day. When we study all that God has revealed concerning "His Supper", we must conclude that it may not be "served cafeteria-style" (i.e. some eating at 11, others eating at 3 in the afternoon, and even others at 5 in the evening). These same people probably think nothing of "the hours" that have been set by the local congregation, at the exclusion of all other hours on Sunday and those hours that are set during the week for Bible study (to the exclusion of other times) to meet to worship God. When the disciples choose "the hour" to come together to break bread, they are doing no more than God has authorized.

Some think that it is "arrogant" to allow a congregation to set "the assembly" on the first day of the week for the disciples to come together to break bread to the exclusion of other services (i.e. assemblies) on that day. We need to recognize that it is God's specific authority that requires each local church to set the "coming together to break bread assembly". The point is: We are not limited to any particular "hour" on Sunday in which we may scripturally eat, but we are limited to "eating together". Therefore, following the pattern of the New Testament, we must set aside a service that we might come together for the specific purpose of breaking bread. This is in direct harmony with our approved example and adding to it would only cause problems (2 John 9). Local churches should exercise care when selecting the times for *all* the services, and this includes the "appointed time" that is selected for the disciples to come together for the purpose of eating the Lord's Supper together.

When a child of God misses the assembly when the disciples come together for the purpose of breaking bread, he misses the Lord's Supper for a week. He will stand accountable to God for his "reasons" for not attending. But he will not stand accountable for missing the eating of the Lord's Supper only! He also missed the singing at that particular gathering, the prayers that were offered and the lesson that was presented. Look to the next chart to see how Bible authority exists for the church to meet and for the church to set the appointed time for the disciples to come together for the purpose of breaking bread.

Authority for Churches to Meet & Eat

Authority to Meet as a Church:

- 1. The Lord requires the church to meet per Heb. 10:23-25; Acts 20:7; & I Cor. 11:17-34.**
- 2. The Lord has NOT specified the "hour" the church is to meet.**
- 3. Inherent in the requirement to meet is the authority and the necessity for the church to choose the hour(s) to meet.**

Authority to Eat the Lord's Supper Together:

- 1. The Lord requires the disciples to assemble as a church to eat the Lord's Supper together (Acts 20:7; I Cor. 11).**
- 2. The Lord has NOT specified "any hour" on the first day of the week for the church to eat together the Supper.**
- 3. Inherent in the requirement to eat the Supper together as a church on the first day of the week is the authority and the necessity for the church to set "the hour" for the purpose of breaking bread.**

11

Objection #5 - "But what if one is sick or has scriptural reasons for missing the assembly in which the Lord's Supper was eaten?"

Reply:

Then (having scriptural reasons for being absent), he is not held accountable for missing the Lord's Supper (and all other activities that occurred peculiar to that missed assembly) that week. The Lord's Supper will be observed by the congregation the next first day of the week when the disciples assemble to break bread. Lord willing, this Christian will be able to assemble and partake on that occasion. (See also the replies to Objections #2, #3 & #4 again.)

If we are wrong for missing a service of the local church, we should make proper correction for that. If we are not able to attend for scriptural reasons, we stand excused by God. Brethren must agree that many of the "eatings" at the "Second Serving" are because people did not put the Lord and His kingdom "first" (Matthew 6:33) and let something else stand in front of worshipping God with the saints. Abuses do not (in and of themselves) make a practice wrong, but abuses ARE WRONG. Not having Bible authority for "a practice" is what makes it wrong. Let's teach against abuses brethren, as well!

Let us ALL teach against people missing morning services "because they can always take at the evening service". This is NOT the case with the sick who get well by evening and those who might care for the sick. But what of those who actually miss the worship services of GOD for "work"? What of those who "lay out" because they stayed up too late the night before watching television? Let's eat together the Supper when the church comes together to break bread. If we miss, let's be SURE that its unavoidable. Don't put anything, especially a secular job, before worshipping God with the saints. We should never go beyond God's Word (Rev. 22:18,19; 2 John 9).

Objection #6 - "Consistency demands that you (who believe that it is unscriptural for a congregation to serve the unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine more than once on a given Sunday) do away with any 'second service' on that day. Thus, you could not have more than one service on any day of the week."

Reply:

Man may need to change to be consistent from time to time, but there is no question about the Bible being consistent all of the time. But "consistency" demands nothing if there is no parallel in the area alleged to be the same in the comparison made in the objection. Let's look more closely at the two things being compared in the objection.

God has not specified "when" or "how often" preaching, singing and praying may be done; but He has been specific about the disciples coming together to break bread on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; I Cor. 11:33). This means that a congregation could meet multiple times on the same day for singing, prayer and teaching; but the congregation does NOT have authority from God to serve the Lord's Supper in multiple assemblies on the same day! Notice the "specifics" concerning the Lord's Supper:

Is it GENERIC or SPECIFIC?

Is "unleavened bread and fruit of the vine" specific?

Can we change it?

Is the "first day of the week" specific?

May we scripturally eat on other days?

Is "disciples" specific?

Do non-saints have Bible authority to eat?

Is "came together to break bread" specific?

May the Lord's Supper be scripturally observed:

multiple times in the *same* assembly?

multiple times in *different* assemblies?

in *non-assembly* "gatherings"?

Can saints eat "*separately*", as opposed to "eating together"?

12

Our objector is trying to parallel something that has not been specified to that which is specifically locked into the assembly when the disciples gather for the purpose of breaking bread. Thus, "consistency" demands nothing in this case!

Objection #7 - "The words 'come together' simply require us 'to eat in an assembly'. While it would be wrong to take the unleavened bread and fruit of the vine outside the assembly (at a hospital, a jail, a home for the aged, etc.) as long as you have an assembly on the first day of the week, one could scripturally eat."

Reply:

First, let us agree that the Lord's Supper is exclusively an act done in the assembly of the local church. There is no Bible authority to take the unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine to saints outside the assembly. But God's Word puts more limitations on the eating of His Supper than "just any assembly" on the first day of the

week. The wording of the Inspired Record doesn't stop at "come together" or there might be validity to the objection, but the text includes the purpose "to break bread". Notice how the language in the objection leaves out that part of the pattern. We should not ignore this part of the pattern!

The Bible says "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together TO BREAK BREAD (emp. mine, mjw), Paul preached to them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight" (Acts 20:7). Notice the specific nature of God's Word in this passage. The passage did NOT state they "came together AND they broke bread", or "they broke bread while they were together", but rather that they came together TO BREAK BREAD (i.e. for the purpose of). We should "take note" at the inspired language used in Acts 20 and I Corinthians 11. There is great significance in the church coming together for the purpose of breaking bread and eating together. The time to scripturally eat the Lord's Supper is when the disciples come together to break bread on the first day of the week. Any other "observance" wherein the disciples did not come together for that purpose (in that congregation on that day) would constitute "Another Supper": one not of God.

When Paul said, "When ye come together to eat, tarry one for another" (I Cor. 11:33), what did he mean? Was it not to "eat together"? This necessitates eating at the same place, at the same time, in the SAME assembly. Let us do likewise. Where is the authority to eat in "shifts", or by "fragmentation", spread out over various assemblies on the same day?

Objection #8 - "The Lord's Supper is an 'individual' act of worship. The Bible says, 'But let a MAN examine HIMSELF, and so let HIM eat of that bread, and drink of that cup' (I Cor. 11:28)."

Reply:

The body is made up of many members (I Cor. 12:20). We should have Bible authority for all that we engage in whether in assemblies or outside assemblies (Col. 3:17; I Thess. 5:21; 2 John 9). There are things that God authorizes outside the assemblies that are not authorized in assemblies. Likewise, there are things that are exclusive to assemblies. Most of us recognize this when we carefully study all the aspects of church action versus individual action. There is a difference in what God allows the church to do and what He authorizes the individual to do (I Tim. 5:16; Jas. 1:27; Gal. 6:10). I fully recognize, when talking about "church work" or "church worship" that individuals are involved in the church action. But "church action" is NOT "individual action", and "church work" is NOT "individual work", and "church worship" is NOT "individual worship". The self-examination aspect of the Lord's Supper must be performed by each saint at the proper time God designated for the church to observe the Supper.

Could an individual scripturally examine himself in an assembly of the saints on Monday and observe the Lord's Supper with God's approval? We would answer "no" and properly point out that God has specified the "first day of the week" (among other things) in scriptural observance of His Supper. Likewise, an individual may examine himself on Sunday evening in an assembly when the disciples have NOT come together to break bread and eat the unleavened bread and drink the fruit of the vine, but would do so without God's authority. God has specified the church coming together for the purpose of breaking bread on the first day of the week and eating together. We should not act outside that Divine Authority.

If the Lord's Supper were indeed an "individual" act of worship, there would be no need to assemble to partake of the unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine. Individual acts of worship are those which may be done OUTSIDE the assembly. Those acts that are done IN the assembly are collective acts of worship. Certainly we recognize that the individual is the participant in both cases (i.e. whether in or out of assemblies) for it is individuals that make up the assembly. The Lord's Supper is exclusively "assembly", or "collective" worship (Acts 20:7; I Cor. 11). Think about it.

(Note: I fully recognize that in all "church action" you do not *necessarily* have to have "an assembly of the church" in order to have scriptural church action. God's Word would determine that on a case-by-case basis. For example, a radio program, all other things being scriptural, could be "scriptural church action" and would not require an assembly of the saints. However, in the case of the Supper, God's pattern dictates "church action" and mandates "assembly worship". When the church comes together to eat, God's requirement is to wait (tarry) and eat together (I Cor. 11:33). This CANNOT be followed by saints eating at different times either (1) in the same assembly or, (2) in different assemblies or, (3) in non-assembly arrangements. Where is the authority for a church to serve the elements of the Lord's Supper in MULTIPLE assemblies on the same first day of the week?)

Other than the "It is still the first day of the week" argument, this objection is probably the most common.

Objection #9 - "According to your position, 'all' the members of a given local congregation must be present before the church can scripturally observe the Lord's Supper."

Reply:

This is not so. "All", meaning every single *solitary* individual saint of that local congregation, are not always able to attend. Does God condemn those present who have gathered to break bread at the appointed time because "others" have not come for one reason or another? Those who are present to break bread at the appointed time do so, after scripturally tarrying until the designated time to eat. Those who are absent at the assembly when the church gathers to break bread miss His Supper for a week.

If this argument were true, a congregation could not take the unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine each Sunday unless it had perfect attendance! WHO BELIEVES IT? The same type argument could be made from I Corinthians 14. If the "whole church" refers to every single *solitary* member of a local body being in attendance at that service, then women may speak if one member is absent, all may prophesy at one time, things would not have to be done decently and in order, etc. One can readily see that we must "qualify" what is taught. This is part of rightly dividing God's Word.

The work and worship of the Lord's church goes on in spite of those who are not attending for whatever reasons. All we contend for is what the Bible says; no more, no less. The disciples came together on the first day of the week to break bread. They ate together (I Cor. 11:33; Acts 20:7). When they ate separately, they were condemned (I Cor. 11:21ff).

There may be a disciple in the audience that is unfaithful when the disciples come together to break bread. He may not have come to that service for the purpose of breaking bread due to his being out of fellowship with God and brethren. But that does not negate the purpose of that assembly (i.e. the church gathering to break bread). The Lord's Supper will be served and scripturally observed in that assembly.

Please consider a parallel to singing for a moment. We are to "sing together". We are ALL to sing together. Yet we "qualify" what is meant by the word "all" in that statement, don't we? If one saint has a throat problem and another is unfaithful and both don't sing, can the church engage in "congregational singing" or not? Sure she can! Now, if a person sings a "solo" and the other saints sit idly by, can we say the church engaged in "congregational singing"? No! When the church "purposes" to "sing together" and it appoints a time to do so, the saints sing. The actions of the person with the sore throat and the unfaithful saint do not VOID the fact that the church is "singing together".

Concerning this word "all", we should note that the Bible uses the term in I Corinthians 6:12. "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any." Now, please carefully consider the word "all" as found in this text. Is fornication lawful?

Certainly not! But, some might argue, Paul said "All things are lawful." True, but we must rightly divide God's Word, including "qualifying" what is meant by the use of the word "all" in this context. In a very similar way, we are using the word "all" when we teach we must "all" sing and we are to "all" eat the Lord's Supper together. But solo "singing" in church assemblies are not authorized. And a solo "eating" in a later assembly after the Supper was previously observed cannot be authorized by New Testament instruction!

But good brethren make an "argument" that tries to justify the Second Serving by saying "Since ALL (every single individual saint present) in the first assembly aren't eating [if there are 2 unfaithful saints present, for example, who don't eat] and it is a *scriptural observance* of the Lord's Supper, then it is a scriptural observance in the evening when some saints eat and others don't eat with them [referring to one, or a few saints eating in a later assembly after the church came together, tarried and the faithful saints ate together the Lord's Supper]! Brethren and friends, can we not see the Biblical authority requiring us to eat the Supper "together" (in the same assembly) and realize that every single individual who is saint might not eat in THAT assembly, however this is a far cry from establishing Bible authority for an "offering of the Supper to those who may have missed the earlier assembly"? Where does the Bible teach the church to make "provisions for the absent" who miss the Lord's Supper?

Certainly God is pleased when all the members of a given local congregation are present to break bread. But such is not necessary before the Lord's Supper may be scripturally served in the coming together to break bread assembly.

Objection #10 - "If 'tarry one for another' means wait for one another to eat, then you are doing wrong by taking it in the morning service and not waiting until the evening service, allowing those absent in the morning to make it in the evening."

Reply:

The local congregation may choose any hour on the first day of the week to be the appointed time for the disciples to come together to break bread. This could be an "evening" hour on the first day of the week. See Charts #6, 8, 9 & 11 again, please. I am confident, that even if the practice suggested by the objection were followed, there would still be some who attended the morning service (which, in this example, is not for the purpose of breaking bread) who would not be present in the second service (where it was decided that it would be the assembly for the purpose of breaking bread.)

We do not object to the church "gathering for the purpose of breaking bread in the evening" (per se); we oppose "some disciples" or, "one disciple" eating in an assembly when the church has not come together to break bread.

But now let us look to the phrase "tarry one for another". What does this mean? There were problems at Corinth. They were not able to eat the Lord's Supper. Some were taking before their own supper. Paul gave the solution to their eating at different times when he said "tarry one for another". His instruction was for them to eat together. Eating together necessitates eating at the same time at the same place. You can't obey instruction to eat together by having some eat at 6 PM when others have already eaten the Lord's Supper at 11 AM earlier that day! Eating together would require mutual participation in the same assembly, not observances in different assemblies.

Whatever service the local church selects on the first day of the week to observe His Supper (at that service), we need to tarry one for another and eat together. We should not eat at different times like the Corinthians did. They were wrong in eating separately. They were encouraged to eat together. The lesson for us is obviously the same.

Objection #11 - "The example of a preacher who preaches for two different congregations on the first day of the week (both of these congregations serving the Lord's Supper) proves that churches may scripturally serve the unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine when ALL who are present have not come together to break bread. Thus, it is not wrong for a congregation to serve the elements at a second service when the 'whole church' is not gathered together to break bread."

Reply:

Here we have a case of mistaken identity. Local congregations have the authority to choose a service for the saints to come together to break bread. In the example cited above, the two congregations have done no more than that which is authorized in observing the Lord's Supper once each on the first day of the week. There is nothing sinful about the times that they have chosen to partake of the Supper. There is nothing wrong with the preacher sitting in the second congregation after he already ate the Supper in the first congregation (hopefully, he would commune at his earliest opportunity lest he not make it to the second congregation).

This argument misses the whole point. We are not discussing what two local congregations can do (i.e., serve the Supper once each on a given first day of the week), but rather what one local congregation may or may not do. That which is permissible for two congregations (serving the Supper once each), cannot justify one congregation serving the unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine twice! All the two congregations have done is gather to break bread. It matters little "who" is in the audience visiting. Please study Objections # 9 & 23 along this same line of reasoning.

Objection #12 - "Those who meet on Sunday evening (who missed the 'first serving') have come together 'to break bread'. Those disciples have come together 'to eat' and are going to eat 'together.' Thus they can scripturally partake."

Reply:

This argument implies that what is necessary for one to act scripturally is to "purpose" to do something. Would it be scriptural if they "purposed" to "break bread" on Monday? We would answer "no" and reason from the scriptures that Acts 20:7 specifies the first day, thus excluding Monday. Would it be scriptural if they "purposed" to eat at home (away from any assembly)? Again, the answer is "no", and again the scriptures are used to point out a "coming together" of disciples to break bread is required. Would it be scriptural if a few who missed in the morning "purposed" to sing the songs that were sung in the earlier assembly while the others in the assembly sat by without singing with them? Certainly not!

Just because a "few" who missed the Supper offered by the local congregation "purpose" to take the unleavened bread and fruit of the vine at another time, in a later assembly, does not make their action scriptural. Where is the Bible authority for a Christian to eat the unleavened bread and drink the fruit of the vine when the disciples have not come together to break bread?

"The disciples" have not come together for the purpose of breaking bread (they did that in the first assembly when the Lord's Supper was observed), but rather "some of the disciples", or, as the objection properly states, "Those disciples" have done so in a later assembly AFTER the assembly which was for the purpose of breaking bread had dismissed earlier in the day! The "Second Serving" activity is not supported by the pattern found in God's Word.

This objection seems to overlook the Biblical truth that the Lord's Supper is to be observed in THE ASSEMBLY when the church is gathered in one place FOR THE PURPOSE of breaking bread. God specified the first day and eating in the same assembly to the exclusion of multiple observances (i.e. eating in different assemblies). The Lord's Supper is "church action" and "assembly worship." The text of Acts 20:7 teaches us

that the church came together for the purpose of breaking bread (Please look to the inspired wording in I Corinthians 11 and to Chart #2 again). The saints were WRONG when they ate separately. No matter how good the "intentions", the specifics of the Supper require eating together in the same assembly.

Do these "few" make up a congregation within themselves? If so, we have an example of "a congregation within a congregation". Where is this "congregation's" treasury? On some Sundays there is no "congregation within a congregation" because all ate the Lord's Supper together when the disciples came together to eat in the morning assembly. Where is the Bible authority for the "few" to partake in an assembly later in the day at a given congregation, when the church met in a previous assembly for the purpose of breaking bread and ate the Lord's Supper?

Objection #13 - "What would be wrong with a separate service just for those who were absent when the Lord's Supper was served earlier? Couldn't they just go into a room and eat the bread and drink of the fruit of the vine? These are not partaking in an assembly with other saints looking on as non-participants."

Reply:

God's instruction includes the specific authority to "eat together" the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7; I Cor. 11:33). The disciples came together (i.e. at the same place at the same time) to eat. Remember that the Lord's Supper was observed in the New Testament as "church action" and "assembly worship" (i.e. assembly worship, when the disciples came together in one place for the purpose of eating). Such is not the case when a "few" eat in a classroom after the Lord's Supper has been served earlier in the day. As we have learned, the Lord's Supper is scripturally observed in the assembly on the first day of the week when the disciples come together to break bread. Thus, the Supper is once per week per given local congregation. (Notice also the point about "a congregation within a congregation" mentioned in the reply to Objection #12 above).

Objection #14 - "If you are going to be so detailed with the 'specific examples' of the Bible, you will be forced into believing the "one cup" doctrine."

Reply:

I believe in the one cup of the New Testament. The cup, by metonymy, is the fruit of the vine. The Bible is specific about the fruit of the vine, therefore there may only be one cup. The Bible is not specific, however, about the literal drinking vessel (i.e. the container). Thus, proper establishment of Bible authority teaches us the distinction between the container and that which is contained.

The container is an "aid" to carry out the requirements of God concerning the drinking of that which is specified: the fruit of the vine. Likewise, the exact "hour" in which to partake on Sunday is not specified, but an hour will have to be chosen in order to carry out the specific requirements of the disciples coming together to eat on the first day of the week.

Objection #15 - "In the Old Testament, if someone missed the Passover, they were allowed by God to observe it on the 2nd month the fourteenth day (See Numbers 9:1-11). This shows that a second serving of unleavened bread and fruit of the vine would be authorized (for a local congregation) for those who missed the earlier service when those present observed the Lord's Supper."

Reply:

Numbers 9 is a very good passage to study with regard to this subject. Careful Bible students will observe by reading verses 1-14 that God did authorize some people (i.e. those who met His criteria as found in this text) to observe the Passover if they missed the first opportunity. But what does this Old Testament passage teach us? A

person who missed the Passover for the reasons mentioned had God's approval to observe it the 2nd month the fourteenth day! This is an example of pointing to "book, chapter and verse" for what someone could do with regard to the Passover, but NOT the Lord's Supper. They had a specific revelation from God to do this! In the New Testament, we have specific, limiting authority for the church to come together to eat and eat the Supper together! If one can find a passage in the New Testament similar to Numbers 9, I could not contend that God has been specific about eating together! (What if Numbers 9 had not been written? What would the people who missed the Passover have been authorized by God to do?) Notice that in Numbers 9 that they had to "wait" for the instruction of the Lord before they could act on His authority. What a great lesson for us today!

Old Testament passages do not authorize New Testament activity. They do give us valuable insight with regard to many things, including the specific nature of God's revelation and the respect that we should have for the "silence of the scriptures". What about the person who missed both the first AND second opportunities to observe the Passover? Would it be alright for them to observe it on the 3rd month the fourteenth day? "By what authority" would such action take place?

The burden of proof in authorizing the "Second Serving" in the New Testament dispensation still remains...Numbers 9 notwithstanding! In other words, where is the passage in the New Testament (similar to Numbers 9:1-14) that authorizes one participating in a "Second Serving"? God has revealed to us "all truth" and "all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (John 16:13; 2 Peter 1:3) for this age. There is the conspicuous absence of "book, chapter and verse" representing Biblical authority for the "Second Serving" activity! If a passage such as Numbers 9 could be found, then the objection would stand.

The person that misses the observance of the Lord's Supper when the disciples come together to break bread is in a similar situation to the person who would miss both the first and second opportunities to observe the Passover. Respecting the silence of the scriptures and not desiring to proceed outside the pattern, one would have to wait for the next scriptural opportunity to observe either the Lord's Supper or the Passover (i.e. in the case of the Supper, the next first day of the week when the disciples come together to break bread or, in the case of the Passover, the next year on the 1st month the fourteenth day).

So, the passages authorizing the observance of the Passover on the second month the 14th day by those who missed it for the reasons mentioned in Numbers 9:1-14 are a glaring contrast to the absence of such a passage establishing authority for the "Second Serving" today! We must have Biblical authority for what we do in religious matters; if we can't authorize something, let's not act in that area.

Please note the chart:

Lessons from the Passover

THE PASSOVER

Leviticus 23:5

Numbers 9:1-14

?? ?? ?? ?? ??

*1st Month
14th Day*

*IF Unable to eat
for God's Stated
Reasons: Can Observe
2nd Month 14th Day*

*Person who misses
BOTH 1st & 2nd
opportunities to
eat the Passover*

THE LORD'S SUPPER

Acts 20 & I Cor. 11

?? ?? ?? ?? ??

*The church
comes together to eat,
tarrying & eats together on
the first day of the week*

*A saint misses the
coming together to
eat, tarrying, and eating
together assembly.
The saint
"eats separately"
in a later assembly
in that church on that
same day.*

**BOTH ARE
WITHOUT
AUTHORITY
TO EAT!!!**

13

Before moving on to the next objection, please consider another thought along this line: Think of the feast of Pentecost. If a Jew missed the first Passover for the reasons God stated in Numbers 9, and he ALSO missed observing Pentecost, could he simply wait for 50 more days after the "second month the fourteenth day" and then observe a "Pentecost"? Why, or why not? Would it be a "generically authorized liberty" to observe a "Second Pentecost"? What would be the proper establishment of Bible authority in this matter? What would the silence of the scriptures bear out on this matter? Wouldn't he just have to wait until the next year's Pentecost to observe the feast? Think about it.

Objection #16 - "The 'hermeneutical approach' you are taking to this example in Acts 20:7 being a 'specific' one will force you into only observing the Supper in an 'upper room' because both the institution of the Supper by Christ AND the Acts 20:7 examples were in an 'upper room'."

Reply:

Careful consideration should be given to any objection to our approach in studying and interpreting the Bible. But what if the argument were TRUE? What would that argument PROVE? If the argument were true, wouldn't it simply mean that we would have to observe the Supper in an upper room? It certainly would not prove the practice of the "Second Serving" as being authorized, now would it? It takes Biblical authority from God's pattern to authorize a practice as being scriptural. I readily admit that "all the details" in an exclusive example are not necessarily limiting. The proper discernment of the sum of God's Word determines that. But now to the objection.

Is an upper room specified as the place for observing the Lord's Supper? John 4:20-24 points out that worship will not be limited to Jerusalem, but with the changing of the law people will be able to worship God everywhere. We are NOT limited to where the church may decide to come together on the first day of the week for the purpose of breaking bread, but we are told that we are to eat together (at the same time, the same place,

the same assembly). Just as the type of lighting used in the meeting at Troas was a lawful expedient "to see" as they worshipped God that day, so is the place (i.e. an upper room) a lawful expedient "to meet" to worship God. Today, we may choose electric lights in order "to see" to worship God and rent the basement of a warehouse for the local church "to meet" as lawful expedients.

Objection #17 - "The expression 'tarry one for another' is talking about what is done within ONE ASSEMBLY and doesn't even address two assemblies by the same congregation on a given Sunday. I Corinthians 11:33 is not referring to the number of assemblies but of the order that is to exist in ANY assembly."

Reply:

We appreciate the fact that the objection tries to deal with the phrase "tarry one for another". It gives the impression that the objector realizes some of the significance in God's requirement to wait and eat together the Supper. But, the objector asserts that it's OK to do something in TWO assemblies (serve the Lord's Supper) by ignoring the fact that the instruction of I Corinthians 11:33 was for the specific assembly (the appointed time) when the church came together to eat! The instruction in Acts 20:7 and in I Corinthians 11 is restricted to one assembly in that it requires the church to come together for the purpose of eating, tarrying and eating the Supper together (which must be accomplished in the same, that is in ONE, assembly) The objection assumes that which it is burdened to prove!

The objection has a major flaw in it. Note the phraseology in the last sentence "...but of the order that is to exist in ANY assembly." This assertion is not true at all! Paul, the inspired writer, gives the Divine Order to be followed in THE assembly "when ye come together to eat" (i.e. the assembly when the church comes together for the purpose of eating the Lord's Supper). See the mistake in the reasoning? In other words, when you come together for the purpose of eating the Lord's Supper (same place, same time, same assembly) tarry (wait) and eat together.

See the comments in the reply under Objection #10. When the disciples come together to break bread on the first day of the week (in THAT assembly) the saints are to tarry for one another and eat together. This is in direct harmony with the passages under consideration. God specified THE ASSEMBLY for scriptural observance; the "coming together to break bread assembly."

This objection seems to assert that it is WRONG to eat separately in the SAME assembly, but somehow it is RIGHT to eat separately by eating in MULTIPLE assemblies! By what authority could one make such an assumption, or reach such a conclusion? The assertion in the objection seems to forget that in God's pattern the disciples came together (as a church) FOR THE PURPOSE of breaking bread ONCE on the first day of the week! They were told to tarry and eat together. Eating together requires the same place, the same time, the same assembly. This cannot be accomplished in MULTIPLE assemblies! God's Word is specific and limiting. We should stop there. We are not to proceed beyond that which is authorized.

I Corinthians 11:33 refers to ONE specific assembly alright, THE ASSEMBLY for the purpose of breaking bread. Two or more assemblies are simply not authorized FOR THE PURPOSE of breaking bread.

Objection #18 - "There is only ONE assembly under consideration in Acts 20:7 and in I Corinthians 11. We have authority to worship God more than once on Sunday, so we can serve the 'Lord's Supper' in each service on that day."

Reply:

The conclusion reached above is not true! It doesn't NECESSARILY FOLLOW that such is the case. Even if we grant sentence number one in the objection, we don't have to unavoidably conclude what is stated in

sentence number two above. What if we applied this type argumentation to the "day" on which we have authority to eat the Lord's Supper? It would go something like this: *"There is only ONE day of the week under consideration in Acts 20:7. We have authority to worship God on other days of the week, so we can eat the Lord's Supper on those days as well!"* Can you see how specific authority excludes? If specific authority didn't exclude, then we *could* scripturally eat the Lord's Supper on days other than the first day of the week. But that's not the nature of specific authority. The first day of the week is specific and so is the disciples coming together for the purpose of breaking bread and eating together the Supper.

Since there is no Bible Authority "to eat separately" in the *same assembly* per I Cor. 11, where would one find the authority "to eat separately" by eating in *different assemblies* on the same day? There needs to be encouragement for study on the essentiality of the church eating the Supper "together" and not separately!

As to the last statement in the objection above, it is true that the church can worship God multiple times on the first day of the week (and even daily, for that matter)! But since God has been specific about when and how often the Supper may be eaten by the use of specific authority in Acts 20:7 and in I Corinthians 11:20-34 and has NOT been specific about when or how often preaching, singing and prayer may be engaged in by a local congregation, then the parallel breaks down! There are specifics that God's Word applies to His Supper that do NOT apply to other acts of church worship. Also, please see the reply to Objection #6.

Objection #19 - "The Bible says , 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them.' This passage teaches, along with all the other passages on the Supper, that so long as you have a few disciples coming together to eat the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week, they can do it with God's approval."

Reply:

The conclusion reached above is made on an assumption that Matthew 18:20 can properly be linked to the "Second Serving". Some brethren would even try to use this passage to allow the Lord's Supper to be taken outside of any assembly of the local church! While it is true that whenever disciples meet in the name of the Lord (i.e. by His authority), He is in the midst of them; it is not necessarily true that activities are automatically blessed as being scriptural just because two or three disciples meet to do something and say it's "in the name of the Lord" (Please read Matthew 7:21-23)!

Think about the reasoning behind this argument for a moment. Apply it to singing in the assembly. If two or three disciples come together in the name of the Lord to sing a few songs on Sunday evening, can they scripturally sing while the rest of the saints in the assembly do not participate? Why not? Isn't God "in the midst of them"? See how this alone doesn't make it right? Apply this reasoning to Christians giving as they have prospered to the treasury of a local congregation per I Cor. 16:1,2. If two or three disciples come together in the name of the Lord to give on Wednesday night, can they do so with God's approval? Why not? Isn't God "in their midst", (even though it is not the first day of the week)? Does the mere fact that two or three disciples gather in the name of the Lord for some purpose somehow make an act scriptural in and of itself? Of course not!

Similarly, when we add up the sum of God's Truth on the Supper, we rightly discern that such is to be done when the church comes together on the first day of the week for the purpose of breaking bread and does so together, and not in a segmented fashion spread out in the same assembly, or over multiple assemblies, or in "shifts". For two or three disciples to purpose to do something contrary to the pattern regarding the Supper would not make it blessed by God, any more than two or three disciples purposing to give to the local church's treasury on Wednesday evening contrary to the pattern would be blessed by God! Bible Authority needs to be established for all our activities (whether in *or* out of assemblies).

In the absence of Bible Authority for a practice, we should refrain or cease from participating in it. Please consider that this would include refraining from waiting on the table and participating in the prayers in any unauthorized serving. Similar to an unscriptural song being led in an assembly, we should refrain from participating and not cause any disorderly disturbance. We should study with our brethren with good attitudes and come to agreement on God's Pattern, realizing that it will take time for some to grow into a proper understanding of God's Will on this subject.

Objection #20 - "What if the church decides to come together to break bread in BOTH the morning AND the evening services on Sunday? All the faithful saints can partake at the morning service which is 'for the purpose of breaking bread' and in the evening service (which is also 'for the purpose of breaking bread') all the faithful saints can partake. Those who are at BOTH services will simply eat TWICE. All the 'component parts' of the pattern would be present if this practice were followed."

Reply:

Where is the Bible authority for a church to come together to break bread TWICE on the same first day of the week? Where is the Bible authority for a saint to scripturally eat the Supper TWICE on the same first day of the week? (NOTE: I realize that preachers and other saints traveling to various congregations on the same first day have this to deal with. I am simply asking for the Bible authority to eat the Supper multiple times on the same day. I can provide authority to eat ONCE, so I eat ONCE. If you eat more than once, where is your AUTHORITY?) Please consider that this approach to Bible authority seems to me to allow "Multiple eatings" in the SAME ASSEMBLY by saints eating the Supper if they are allowed "multiple eatings" in DIFFERENT ASSEMBLIES on the same day since the "hermeneutic" that usually is used to bring forth this conclusion is that God is "generic" with regard to frequency when He said, "as oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup". Why LIMIT eating of the Supper to "the first day of the week" then, if the "frequency" is not limited by this "hermeneutic"? We are afraid, for there are brethren today preaching lessons on "How to Establish Bible Authority" who teach that the first day of the week is "a" scriptural day to eat the Supper, but NOT the ONLY scriptural day! Let's get back to the New Testament teaching and practice and teach God's Truth!

I appreciate the fact that those who take this (or a similar) position see the requirement to eat the Supper together in the assembly on the first day of the week when the church purposes to gather to break bread. Just because the church "decides" to come together TWICE on the same first day of the week does not (in and of itself) make the practice authorized! Properly Establishing Bible Authority would be what would authorize the practice. Given the specific nature of the pattern, I would not venture beyond what is revealed and could not recommend the practice advocated in Objection #20. Think about it.

Objection #21 - "The 'absurdity' of a position can sometimes show how wrong a position really is. Sometimes churches grow so large that they have to have 2 services in the auditorium at different times to hold the saints until a larger auditorium can be built. If the position is true that the Lord's Supper is to be eaten once per Sunday by a local church in the SAME ASSEMBLY, then all those taking in the 2nd assembly are wrong!"

Reply:

The TRUE "consequences" of any position we might study are just that: true consequences of a particular belief or practice. We find this a very interesting approach to "proving" the "Second Serving" as being authorized! However, this has been mentioned by many in conjunction with other argumentation in efforts to "disprove" the belief that God specified the church to come together to eat (once), tarry for one another (in THAT assembly) and eat together (same time, same place, same SINGLE assembly) on the first day of the week.

Where is the authority to "halve" a local flock or congregation as mentioned in the above objection? Which of the two "flocks" is the eldership of that local work over? Does the "fact" that they "share the same treasury"

make this "arrangement" scriptural? Certainly not! Does the fact that this practice (i.e. of "halving a congregation") until a newer and larger auditorium can be built has been engaged in by several well-meaning brethren over the years make it RIGHT? Certainly not! Where is the BIBLE AUTHORITY to break up a flock like that? Paul said, "Wherefore, my brethren, when ye COME TOGETHER TO EAT, tarry one for another" (I Cor. 11:33).

Maybe a larger auditorium should have been RENTED, or some other scriptural arrangements should have been made while a larger auditorium was being built, but such does NOT authorize the Second Serving and change God's Word on the subject!

I contend that if you can "halve" a congregation as mentioned in the objection above, you could simply contend for an eldership that oversaw "house assemblies" that were spread out across an area on the first day of the week and let them share a "common treasury and eldership" and we could call them a "single local church"! Who believes it??? Brethren making this contention need to see that this is a consequence of *their* position and yet many don't believe and teach that such "multiple house assemblies" making up a "single local church" under the oversight of a "single eldership" are authorized! WHY NOT? (Note: But some other folks, I am afraid to say, do believe in some arrangements that mimic this!) Let's get back to having Bible Authority for our actions and teaching!

BEWARE! There is NO BIBLE AUTHORITY for a church "to decide" to break into two groups and "worship separately" as far as scripturally eating the Lord's Supper is concerned (Acts 20:7; I Cor. 11; 2 John 9). No matter how good the intentions are, whether or not a church is trying to "save money", or WHATEVER the human reason may be! God requires that a local church do this TOGETHER. You CANNOT fulfill the requirement of eating the Supper TOGETHER by "halving a local church" and having the two groups meet and eat in separate assemblies!

The BIBLE CLASS ARRANGEMENT, however, is a different matter. While this arrangement is authorized by GENERIC authority (I Tim. 3:15), such an arrangement CANNOT and MUST NOT ever take the place of the "coming together into one place" of the church (See Acts 20:7,8; I Cor. 11:17,18,20,33,34) *mandated* by God Almighty! There are NOT multiple flocks when the church divides the assembly and enters Bible classes to teach. However, the church may NOT observe the Lord's Supper scripturally while engaged in Bible Classes, because the church is not "together in one place" (according to the meaning of the passages we have mentioned).

When an eldership tells the church, "All those families with last names A through M assemble at 10 AM Sunday to break bread, and all the rest whose names start with N through Z assemble at noon to break bread, we ask, "Where is the authority to divide up a church like this?" I find none.

Objection #22 - "If you can have a 'Second Giving' you can have a 'Second Serving'."

Reply:

Wouldn't we have to Properly Establish Bible Authority for "both activities" listed above before we could proceed? Doesn't *every practice* have to be authorized by God's Word on "that particular subject" (Col. 3:17; 2 John 9)?

The objection above would be true if God's Word had the same instruction revealed with regard to both giving and the Lord's Supper. It is TRUE that both are restricted to the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; I Cor. 16:1,2). But here is a question for all to consider. Given the "sum of God's Truth" on the "giving" found in I Cor 16:1,2 and related passages, could a "box" with a slit in the top be available for the saints to "lay by in store" into the treasury of the local church and saints could place their contributions in as long as it was the first day of the

week? Now "giving" like this would *not even require an assembly* of the church when you really study this matter, would it? You see, God's instruction on "giving" is His pattern on giving, His Word on "singing" is limited to singing, the pattern on the Lord's Supper is His Will on eating scripturally, and so on. Think about it. Giving and the Lord's Supper are NOT parallel with regard to "God's Word requiring it be done in the same assembly, at the same time, at the same place" now are they? Is there a passage in the New Testament about "tarrying" for one another prior to "giving"? God has specified that giving into the local treasury be done on the first day of the week (I Cor. 16:1,2). Let's be careful with God's Word.

What if I am wrong on my present understanding of "giving" as mentioned above? What if you disagree with me and believe otherwise? Does that change God's Word on the subject of the *Lord's Supper*? Certainly not! Don't be deceived concerning the Lord's Supper by passages or references to giving.

Objection #23 - "The passages in Acts 20 and I Cor 11 neither state or imply that there was only one assembly in which the saints broke bread. The number of times is not specified and is therefore a liberty. Also, the passage does not say that 'all' the disciples who assembled ate the Lord's Supper. So, the observance of the Lord's Supper in only one assembly on the first day of the week and by all the disciples assembled is an assumption rather than the teaching of the Scriptures."

Reply:

There are at least three things that must be answered in this objection (1) do the passages state or imply that the saints ate together in one assembly?, (2) are we dealing with specific or generic authority? and, (3) must "all" the disciples who assemble eat the Supper?.

1. Notice the objection's implication. **Where is it ever inferred or implied that the disciples ate in MULTIPLE assemblies???** Is there ANY INFERENCE that they EVER "ate separately" and were acceptable? NO! The "disciples came together to break bread" in Acts 20:7. Did they do it? Did they "do" what the passage states they came together to do in THAT assembly? Where is the second, or another assembly for the purpose of breaking bread in this passage? Where is the authority to "eat separately"? God's Word is specific. Yes, the I Cor. 11 passage teaches that in THE ASSEMBLY "when they came together to eat" they were to tarry and eat together!

Let's take this "reasoning out for a test drive" that asserts, for example, "Acts 20:7 never states or implies that they communed in only one assembly" by looking at a FALSE, but parallel argument regarding first day of the week ONLY observance.

FALSE PARALLEL ARGUMENT #1

- a. In Acts 20:7 we read that "...upon the first day of the week..." the disciples ate the Lord's Supper.
- b. The "first day of the week" is just "one" of 7 days of the week.
- c. Acts 20:7 neither states nor implies that they communed ONLY on the first day of the week.
- d. THEREFORE, we may eat also on Monday - Saturday???

See the problem with the above reasoning in the false argument? Yes, the saints came together, tarried one for another, and scripturally ate together the Lord's Supper in Acts 20:7. The "sum of God's Truth" on the subject of the Supper is "proof" that this occurred. Beware of false reasoning that might teach you otherwise. The same "type" reasoning, applied to the first day in the example in Acts 20:7, could lead you to endorse "daily" observances of the Supper.

2. Eating together is taught by EXAMPLE - Acts 20:7; and by UNAVOIDABLE CONCLUSION - I Cor. 11:17-34. Eating together in the same assembly IS "specific". The Bible teaching on the subject LIMITS the number of times to ONE assembly wherein the saints eat together.

IF the objection is true, would it not follow that we could take numerous times in the same assembly? Why not? Could we not, then, eat the Lord's Supper four times in the 11 o'clock assembly on the first day of the week, for example? Could it not be served four times in the same assembly? Please read the objection again in light of the Bible teaching on the subject.

3. Concerning "all" the disciples eating, we have dealt with this before in several of the objections above (See particularly Objection #9). The church is to come together to break bread, tarry, and eat together the Supper in the same assembly. If there are saints who do not eat in the assembly that is AUTHORIZED for the Supper, then so be it. This is NOT the same as what is happening with the "Second Supper" for those who missed that morning. **There is a vast difference in: (1) Acts 20:7 authorizing the church to gather together to eat the Lord's Supper and (2) in ASSERTING that generic authority authorizes "the offering of a Supper to those who were absent" in the earlier assembly that day!**

It does NOT follow that *every single solitary saint of a congregation* must be present in order for there to be a scriptural observance by the church of the Lord's Supper. It also does NOT follow *that every single solitary saint in the assembly* when the church comes together to break bread must eat in order for the observance to be scriptural. But this is NOT the same as "a second opportunity for those absent that morning to break bread"! Where is the authority for a saint to eat separately, in differing assemblies, the Lord's Supper? Where is the authority for a "solo" or "fragmented" observance? There is no authority for the practice.

Objection #24 - "Since the Scriptures authorize the observance of the Lord's Supper every first day of the week when the disciples assemble, and since the Scriptures do not specify how many times the Lord's Supper may be served on the first day of the week or how many of the assembled saints must eat, then the practice of serving the Lord's Supper on Sunday night to those who could not assemble on Sunday morning is a generically authorized liberty!"

Reply:

Specific authority excludes. Since God's Word is specific about eating together in the same assembly, the objection fails to be true in its conclusion. Properly Establishing Bible Authority is essential in this matter! Watch closely the wording of the objection above and read the following. The Scriptures actually authorize the observance of the Supper every first day of the week in the assembly when the disciples come together to break bread (Acts 20:7).

Notice how the wording of the objection above stops "just short" of what the passages on the Lord's Supper fully teach. The Scriptures are specific about eating the Lord's Supper TOGETHER each first day of the week (Acts 20:7; I Cor. 11:33). This LIMITS the servings to ONE per congregation per week wherein the saints are to eat TOGETHER. Offering a "Second Supper" to those "absent" from the "coming together to break bread assembly" in a later assembly on the first day of the week is without Biblical authority.

We might ask a few interesting questions to those who believe Objection #24. Their practice of "not eating" in the second assembly with those who were absent who do eat is puzzling to those who believe the practice is NOT the LORD's Supper. **Is the number of times an INDIVIDUAL SAINT to eat on the first day of the week a "generically authorized liberty"? Is the number of servings of the elements of the Supper in the SAME ASSEMBLY a "generically authorized liberty", as well? Why, or why not? Reasoning please.**

When "eating together" is specifically established from God's Word, it is then properly understood that such is NOT a "generically authorized liberty" to engage in the "Second Supper/Serving/Observance"!

Objection #25 - "The instruction involving tarrying and thus eating together was given because there were factions at Corinth. It is ok to eat the Supper separately as long as you don't have factions."

Reply:

To argue that separate observances on the same day in the same church are "authorized" if there are no factions in the local work is an assertion lacking in scriptural foundation! Where is the positive Bible authority to support that teaching? Please notice 2 more FALSE PARALLEL ARGUMENTS that should help us see the error in the reasoning in Objection #25.

FALSE PARALLEL ARGUMENT #2

A. God says speak the same thing, let there be no divisions among you, be perfectly joined together in the same mind...in I Cor. 1:10.

B. Some folks at Corinth were saying, I am of Paul, I am of Cephas, I am of Apollos...

C. THEREFORE: It will be ok to be divided, NOT speak the same thing, NOT be joined together in the same mind SO LONG AS the reason is NOT BECAUSE you are saying "I am of Paul, I am of Cephas and I am of Apollos..."???

FALSE PARALLEL ARGUMENT #3

A. God says, What? Have you not houses to eat and to drink in? See I Cor. 11:22

B. The Corinthians were "hungry, and another is drunken" in this matter. See I Cor. 11:21b.

C. THEREFORE: It will be scriptural for the church to eat a common meal so long as no one is hungry or drunken?

The above arguments are not true! They do not follow! One cannot argue away "eating together" and contend for "eating separately" merely in the absence of factions in light of God's requirement: "Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another." (I Cor. 11:33).

CONCLUSION

"The Scriptures authorize a given local church to come together to break bread, tarry, and eat together the Lord's Supper in only one assembly on the same first day of the week."

Where is the Bible authority for a Christian to eat the Lord's Supper "separately"? Where is the authority to partake of the bread and the fruit of the vine when the disciples have not assembled to break bread? The practice of "offering the elements of the Supper to those who missed in a later assembly" is unscriptural. The New Testament pattern points to the fact that the disciples came together, as a church, upon the first day of the week for the purpose of breaking bread. They were instructed when they came together to eat, to wait for one another. We have Bible authority for observing the Supper together (the same assembly, the same place, at the same time) given Acts 20 and I Corinthians 11. The New Testament pattern simply does not authorize a saint eating "solo" in an assembly wherein the church has not purposed to come together to eat the Lord's Supper. We must have Bible authority for our every deed!

Throughout this booklet we have been forced into affirming a "negative". (This is true whenever we affirm that any practice is "not authorized"). Let us ever realize that the true burden of proof lies upon the shoulders of

those who practice the "Second Serving" of the unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine. Just asserting that such action is authorized does not prove the matter.

Trying to cast this subject in the realm of "opinion" will not "settle" the issue. Many try to do such today, but always without scriptural proof. When God has been specific, we have no alternatives. The early saints ate together, this excludes separate observances.

Notice the following scriptural elements of the Lord's Supper (not comprehensive):

1. The church sets the appointed time to gather for the purpose of breaking bread on the first day of the week.
2. The disciples meet for that purpose.
3. Specifically, unleavened bread and grape juice are prepared and ready.
4. The saints tarry, or wait for one another until the appointed time to eat.
5. A prayer blessing the bread is offered, the bread is broken, distributed and eaten.
6. A prayer blessing the cup is offered, the contents are distributed and drunk.
7. This concludes the scriptural observance of the Lord's Supper.

Compare this to the practice of some churches:

1. The church sets the appointed time to gather for the purpose of breaking bread on the first day of the week.
2. The disciples meet for that purpose.
3. Specifically, unleavened bread and grape juice are prepared and ready.
4. The saints tarry, or wait for one another until the appointed time to eat.
5. A prayer blessing the bread is offered, the bread is broken, distributed and eaten.
6. A prayer blessing the cup is offered, the contents are distributed and drunk.
7. This concludes the scriptural observance of the Lord's Supper.
8. The church "includes in the plan or purpose of the second assembly to offer the bread and grape juice to those who missed the earlier assembly and the eating of the Lord's Supper."
9. A question is asked, "Is there anyone here who wishes to partake?"
10. A second prayer is offered for the bread, the bread is distributed, and a saint eats alone.
11. A second prayer is offered for the cup, the contents are distributed, and a saint drinks alone.
12. The assembly is dismissed.

We ask the reader to realize that the following is true of churches that have multiple observances. The "Second Supper" is being offered to either:

- a. those who were absent, OR**
- b. to all who are present in the second assembly.**

IF "a", where is the authority for that practice? If "b", where is the authority for that practice (See Objection #20)? The disciples are to eat together in the same assembly!

We have examined the specific nature of the disciples coming together for the purpose of breaking bread on the first day of the week. We have no right to act outside the pattern of God's Word. We have tried to examine every argument that good brethren have made in efforts to justify the "Second Serving". Many brethren are continuing to work and worship together while studying this and other issues over which there is disagreement. Some churches meet only once on the first day of the week (they certainly have the right to do this and don't have an "issue" as far as the "practice" of multiple servings to deal with). Other churches have the "Second Serving" and those who believe it right participate and those who don't believe it is scriptural, refrain from participation. There are other churches meeting multiple times on the first day of the week that "eat the Lord's

Supper together in the same assembly", the assembly that the church decides will be "for the purpose of breaking bread" (Acts 20:7; I Cor. 11:17-34).

This writer encourages everyone to study and investigate God's Word on all Bible subjects. Brethren should be able to dwell together with the proper attitudes and work on this issue and on other subjects over which there is disagreement. Study and pray that we might attain unto agreement on God's pattern on all subjects over which there is division of belief and practice. Let not this subject be an exception!

INDEX

INTRODUCTION

SUBJECT

- The Practice Examined
- Bible Authority
- "Faith" or "Opinion"?
- Fellowship
- Several Differences Exist on This Subject
- An Exegesis of I Corinthians 11:17-34
- The Importance of the Supper
- Is Eating Together Required?
- Scriptural Tarrying
- Are We Following God's Will?

OBJECTIONS

- 1 "There really is no 2nd Serving; the table is merely left spread..."
- 2 "Sunday evening is STILL the first day of the week"
- 3 "You cannot deny a saint the RIGHT to eat the Lord's Supper"
- 4 "What gives the church the right to decide when...?"
- 5 "What if one is sick and has scriptural reasons for being absent?"
- 6 "This position requires you to do away with any 2nd SERVICE"
- 7 "COME TOGETHER simply requires being in an assembly"
- 8 "The Lord's Supper is an INDIVIDUAL act of worship"
- 9 "According to this position, ALL must be present to eat"
- 10 "If tarry means wait to eat, you are wrong in eating in the AM"
- 11 "The preacher who preaches for two churches on Sunday"
- 12 "Those meeting Sunday night come together to break bread"
- 13 "How about going into a separate room?"
- 14 "To be so specific, you'll have to believe the 'One cup' doctrine"
- 15 "The 2nd opportunity to observe the Passover authorizes it"
- 16 "You'll have to believe 'upper room' is specific also"
- 17 "'Tarry one for another' only addresses one assembly"
- 18 "Only one assembly is under consideration in Acts 20"
- 19 "Where two or three are gathered in my name"
- 20 "The church decides to come together twice and eat twice"
- 21 "The church that is too big for her auditorium and meets twice"
- 22 "If you can have a Second Giving you can have a Second Serving"
- 23 "The number of times to serve the Supper is not specified; the passage does not state or imply that all the saints in an assembly ate in one assembly"

- 24 "It is a generically authorized liberty"
- 25 "It is only wrong to eat separately if you have factions"

CONCLUSION

CHARTS

- 1 "The Practice Examined"
- 2 "The Assembly FOR THE PURPOSE OF Breaking Bread"
- 3 "Establishing Bible Authority"
- 4 "There IS a Bible Answer!!!"
- 5 "Eating Together"
- 6 "Scriptural Tarrying ENDS...When Scriptural Eating BEGINS"
- 7 "Changing the Lord's Supper to Another Supper"
- 8 "Acts 20:7, Our LIMITING Example For:"
- 9 "We HAVE Bible Authority for...There is NO Bible Authority for"
- 10 "The CHURCH Assembles to Partake"
- 11 "Authority for Churches to Meet & Eat"
- 12 "Is It GENERIC or SPECIFIC?"
- 13 "Lessons from the Passover"

INDEX

3/28/98 Edition - 1/26/2000 Address Change - 10/4/2000 URL change - ***END OF BOOKLET***