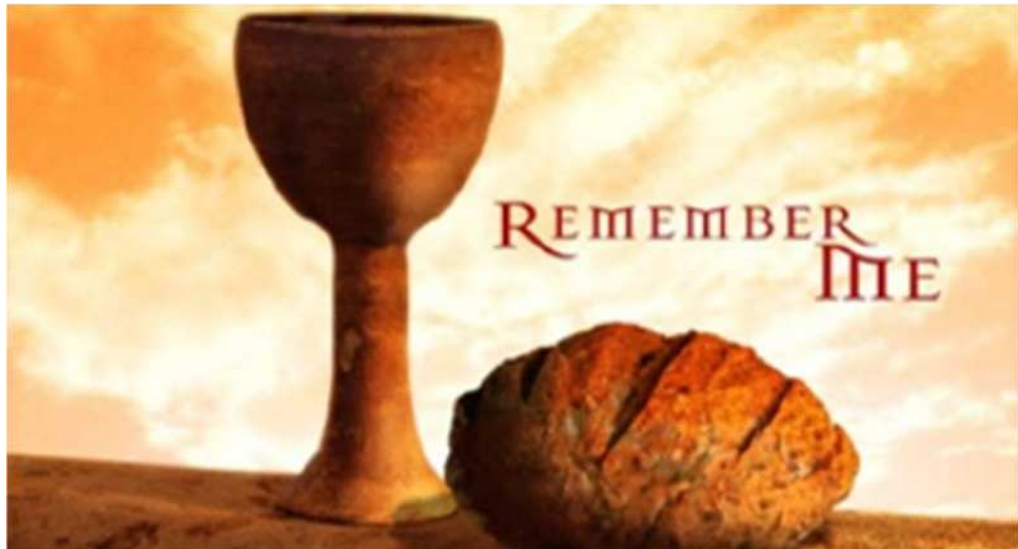


STEP BY STEP
Part One in a Series of Eight



1. The Lord's Supper And The
Christian

THE SUPPER

'caring for **PEOPLE** for **PEOPLE** matter to God' Romans 5:8

FOR NO OTHER REASON

INTRODUCTION

There are many beliefs and practices concerning the Lord's Supper practised in the religious world today.

What would God have us do with reference to it? Some do not practise it at all. Some practise it only a few times per year. Some say that it is not for all but only for a few. What is the biblical teaching on the Lord's Supper?

WHY PARTAKE?

1. Acts 2:42 'They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.' When the church was established we find that it was one of the four things mentioned that the early Christians were devoted to.

It is our observation that whenever Christians will be devoted to these four things, then spiritual health and vitality is seen and where there is a weakness in any of the four it usually results in a weakness in that Christian.

2. Luke 22:19-20 'And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.'

If for no other reason, the Christian would want to partake in the Lord's Supper because Jesus instituted this feast as a memorial and commanded His disciples to partake of it in remembrance of Him. Every sincere Christian would want to do this because Jesus wanted us to.

UNWORTHY MANNER

3. 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 'For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.'

Paul makes it clear that in partaking we are making a statement of faith. We are not only commemorating His death but also making a statement of faith about His return. There is no more eloquent testimony of faith for the Christian than to partake of the Lord's Supper, which proclaims the death of our Lord until He returns.

4. 1 Corinthians 11:30 'That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep.'

A failure to partake or partaking in an unworthy manner (see later) results in detrimental spiritual consequences for the Christian.

Paul states that some of those Corinthian Christians are spiritually sick and some have even died spiritually as a result of neglect of proper participation in the Lord's Supper. This places the celebration of the Lord's Supper as the heart of Christian worship.

COMMUNION WITH CHRIST

5. 1 Corinthians 10:16-17 'Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all share the one loaf.'

Two vital thoughts contained in the Lord' Supper are participation or communion with Christ and participation or communion with other Christians. In celebrating the Supper, we are communing with Christ, joining together with Him and hence enhancing and confirming our fellowship together with Him.

Further it is the fullest expression of our fellowship with one another. When we share the emblems together there could be no greater expression of our oneness together. We are one because we are one with Him. And hence communion is possible between man and man because both are communing with Him.

HOW TO PARTAKE:

Since the Supper is the very heart of our worship, then it follows that it is something that we would wish to partake of in an appropriate manner.

6. 1 Corinthians 11:27-29 'So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup. For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves.'

Note carefully the wording of this passage. It is not partaking as unworthy people that is warned against. None of us are worthy. It is partaking in an **unworthy manner**, which is discouraged.

JESUS DIED FOR ME

BUT WHAT IS A WORTHY MANNER THEN?

Note that there are two points made in this passage:

A. Examine oneself. **B.** Discerning the body.

A. It is appropriate at the point of approaching God around the table to examine oneself.

Before we can have a proper appreciation for what Christ has done on the cross we must remind ourselves that it was because of our own personal sin that Jesus had to die.

How can we ever truly appreciate the love of Christ and the sacrifice of Christ unless we see our need to be cleansed?

It becomes real to us only when we realise that Jesus truly died for **ME!** Although the Christian may wish to do this more often, it is enjoined on us to examine self at the time of presenting oneself to the table.

B. The second phrase may be slightly more difficult as it can be looked at in two ways.

We must discern the body! On one level, the 'body' can be thought of as the church. For the church is the Body of Christ. **Ephesians 1:23.**

Hence in partaking we are both communing with all others who are saved in Christ, and also considering them by our faithfulness. My faithfulness around the table has a profound effect on others in the church. Hence we are declaring ourselves as part of the Body of Christ by our partaking.

THE GIVING OF THE LIFE OF JESUS

Also, we might conclude that it is a literal reference to the physical body of Christ.

For example, we see that in partaking of these simple emblems of bread and fruit of the vine we see in these emblems the very body and blood of Christ. Another example, they may be the humblest of symbols but they do signify to us something so precious as to be priceless, the very body and blood of the Lamb of God.

Hence in partaking we are considering the giving of the life of Jesus the Son of God. We are focusing on the sacrifice and making the cross our focal point as we enter into a new week of service to Christ.

WHEN TO PARTAKE:

Much diversity of practice is seen throughout the religious world.

But what was the Biblical practice?

7. 1 Corinthians 11:18 'In the first place, I hear that when you **come together as a church**, there are divisions among you, and to some extent I believe it.'

In the midst of the discussion on the Lord's Supper in **chapter 11**, Paul simply describes this as happening when they '**assemble as a church**'.

1 Corinthians 16:1-2 'Now about the collection for the Lord's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. **On the first day of every week**, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.'

Later in the epistle he refers to this time as the most appropriate time to gather in the collection and says this is '**on the first day of every week**'.

THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK

8. Acts 20:7 'On the **first day of the week we came together to break bread**. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight.'

On his third missionary journey, Paul stops in the city of Troas where he waits for seven days till he has opportunity of meeting with the Christians there. He describes this meeting as '**on the first day of the week when we gathered together to break bread**'.

It becomes clear that the practice of the early church was to gather together each first day of the week (**Sunday**) to celebrate the Lord's Supper.

9. Please Read 1 Corinthians 11:23-32.

Some have objected to the above Scriptural example of breaking bread each Lord's day on the grounds that, '**taking it so often will destroy its significance for us**.' Of course it can! But it need not!

We sing each time we gather together. **Should we refrain from singing lest it become too commonplace to sing? What about praying? Are we praying too often if we pray at each service?**

Of course the idea is ludicrous. Paul makes it clear that we are to partake in a worthy manner and the example of the early church under the guidance of the apostles was to meet together to celebrate the supper each Lord's Day.

CONCLUSION

It is clear that the sincere Christian will make a strong commitment to celebrating the Lord's Supper every Lord's Day. No committed Christian would willingly absent themselves from the table and the opportunity of communing with one another, with the Lord Jesus Christ, and proclaiming our faith in the One who died, rose again, and is coming back.

EVALUATION SHEET

Please go ahead and fill in the evaluation sheet attached.

CONTACT DETAILS

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This study was written by © Alastair Ferrie

EVALUATION SHEET

Step by Step Lesson 1

(Please type or write your answers within the lines provided)

Name:

Home Address or Email address:

QUESTIONS:

(Please reply with your answers via e-mail or a separate sheet of paper.)

Please give one short answer in your own words (Even though there may be many possible answers) to the following questions:

Why do Christians partake of the Lord's Supper? _____

How do Christians partake of the Lord's Supper? _____

When do Christians partake of the Lord's Supper? _____

FOOD FOR THOUGHT:

1. Think about how a weakness in any one of the four activities mentioned in Acts 2:42 will affect a Christian's life.

2. And how practising the four will contribute to your spiritual growth in Christ when you become a Christian.

SENDING YOUR ANSWERS

Once we have received your evaluation sheet we will send you the **next study** in the series.

Please return your completed evaluation sheet as an email attachment to info@the-scriptures.co.uk