



Conducted by
Alf Marsden

"What should be the main ingredients of the Breaking of Bread Service?"

By 'ingredients' I take it that the questioner has in mind those aspects of praise and worship which most assemblies of Christ normally engage themselves in, so I shall proceed along those lines. I think it might also help if I gave a little background to illustrate the importance of the Breaking of Bread Service.

THE BREAKING OF BREAD SERVICE

Why do we have a Breaking of Bread Service? (sometimes called the Lord's Supper, or the Eucharist). The simple answer is, I suppose, because the Lord Himself ordained it. We hold it on the Lord's Day, and this is the first day of the week, Sunday. A special honour was reserved by the Apostles for Sunday or Resurrection Day. It was on the first day of the week when Jesus appeared to His disciples. Luke 24: John 20: 1-26.

Pentecost, of course, was the Jewish harvest festival held on the 50th day after the 2nd day of the Passover. See Lev. 23:11, 15. The Holy Spirit fell on the disciples on the first day of the week. The Christians at Troas in Paul's time seem to have regarded that day as the stated one on which they were to assemble to break bread. Acts 20:7. On the same day the Christians were to lay by in store money which they were to give to charitable work. 1 Cor. 16:2. We remember, of course, that Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper after eating of the Paschal Feast. The object was to keep Him in remembrance (His body symbolised in the bread; the new covenant in His blood symbolised by the cup). Luke 22: 19, 20. It was to 'show forth His death till He come'. 1 Cor. 11:25, 26.

I have given this brief resume to show that the first day of the week was a very important day both for the Lord and the Apostles. The Breaking of Bread on this day was for remembrance, thanksgiving, prayer, and celebration (of the resurrection), and so on. Today, when we meet on the first day of the week for the Breaking of Bread, all of these 'ingredients' must be attended to, and we do despite to the Lord if we try to alter it in any way.

THE 'INGREDIENTS'

The Service should be held every Lord's day and all Christians who can should attend. Even though we meet corporately in our various assemblies, the Service is intensely individual and personal; we are saved individually and we walk individually, but the fellowship with other saints is of incalculable benefit. So we praise, pray, worship and give thanks both corporately and individually.

Each assembly is autonomous. This has given rise to the fact that there are differences in

the way that some assemblies administer the Feast. Some use one cup, others more than one, while others have individual containers for the wine. As regards the Bread, some use wafers, others a baked bun of some description. The principle is that there should be a 'joint sharing', and each assembly must decide in its collective wisdom which method best expresses the principle. In my opinion, there should be no acrimonious debate or discontinuance of fellowship inter-assembly; the Lord will sort it out at the end. We can rest assured that Satan benefits most from seeing the Lord's Body torn apart by internal strife.

Mutual ministry extends across a wide area of the Church's work. I remember the time when mutual ministry meant, in some people's minds, 'mutual mouth' i.e., the ministry of preaching and teaching from the platform; that is part of mutual ministry, of course, but there is obviously more than that. We minister to each other in what we call 'the prayers of the Church', and I think we would all agree that any brother in this part of the worship-service has the right to unburden his heart in prayer of behalf of other Christians. We also minister to each other in visitation, help when in need, consolation when trouble strikes, and in so many other ways; this surely is the essence of fellowship in the Church; long may we maintain it. In our assemblies we want to develop the 'thinking Christian', and the 'leave it to him' attitude is anathema to most thinking Christians. I would like to remind readers of what the post-Pentecostal converts did (see Acts 2:42).

Every Lord's Day, as we get out of our cars and engage ourselves in pleasantries and small-talk, we must disabuse our minds of the idea that we are meeting in order to demonstrate our compliance with God's command; we should always have at the fore-front of our minds that our primary objective is to worship God and His Christ, and that every activity we engage ourselves in should be to that end. 'To worship' means 'to adore', and to adore indicates to our minds that we approach with the utmost respect and reverence; it seems that these very desirable elements are missing in many respects. There is a general hubbub before the Service starts, and we do not seem to get the contemplative mood that we ought to have. The Lord has promised to be with us in Spirit when we meet in His name, but if He appeared before us on one Lord's Day, I wonder what our reaction would be? As we saw that patient and loving face, perhaps smiling a little sadly at us, but always in love; and as we saw the marks of suffering inflicted by unthinking and uncaring men; would we not want to prostrate ourselves before Him and cry, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me do?" But surely the Spirit-filled life must always understand that He is ever present in Spirit, both in our Meetings, and in our personal lives. Why should our reactions be different? This is a great puzzle to me. I would like to leave you with two trite sayings. One is that "familiarity breeds contempt"; most Christians would hold up holy hands in horror at the mere suggestion that they were in any way contemptuous of the Lord, but perhaps our actions say something different. The other one is, "absence makes the heart grow fonder"; I'm not too sure that this applies across the physical/spiritual divide.

We usually praise God by singing hymns and spiritual songs. This is an avenue for elevating God and His Christ, but at the same time it also elevates our own hearts. How often have we been thrilled and inspired by great hymns sung from the heart? I have never understood why some Christians, who seem not to have any vocal or respiratory problems, can stand with mouths closed when the praises to God are ringing in their ears; a great mystery. It is a shout of acclamation, if you will, or it is the quiet and deeply reverent soul reaching out to its Creator. And even when the voice has grown weak and tremulous, the melodies can still come from the heart and race through the mind, and remind us that thanksgiving is not only for this life, but will continue through eternity.

CONCLUSION

So there it is. The 'ingredients' of worship, prayer, praise, and thanksgiving must always be present in the Breaking of Bread Service on the Lord's Day. But remember; everything

must be done 'before God'. If we keep that in mind, then our worship will be designed to please Him.

(All questions, please, to Alf Marsden, 20 Costessy Way,
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IN THE MINISTRY

Who qualifies as a minister? Does the term only apply, as used in the world today? Do priests, vicars, pastors, elders and deacons exclusively come under this calling? For the answer we need look at the origin of the word "minister".

In the Hebrew "minister" comes from the root verb *SHARATH* which had the meaning of, one who serves. In the New Testament Greek an equivalent word is "*DIAKONOS*", a literal meaning is, through (Dia) and dust (Konis). It would have the meaning of one, who became dusty by running in the service of God and fellow humans. This, it may be noted, refers to both men and women. In some of our Bibles, "minister" is translated as "DEACON". A more accurate meaning would be to minister (one who ministers or serves). Indeed a servant.

The finest example of a faithful and true minister is that of our Lord Jesus. You see, a minister provides both spiritual and practical help. Jesus provided this all throughout His earthly ministry. All, the Apostles were ministers. We note Paul was greatly favoured and blessed by becoming the Apostle or minister to the Gentiles.

Part of our ministry is to serve others just as Martha did. In Scripture we find many examples of women witnessing and serving; certainly not an exclusive domain of man. We must realise we all have a share in the ministry: find out what it is and begin to work at it. We all have talents of some sort or another, so use them to the glory of God, and be blessed.

We are here to serve Church, Christ and yes, the brethren. Use your talent, great or small, to its full capacity, in this you will be blessed. It's ordained by God.

Praise the Lord . . .

Andrew P. Sharpe,
Newtongrange.