

# THE EXAMINER



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## The Lord's Supper - By Larry R. DeVore

The Lord's supper is a solemn occasion to remember the death of our Lord and the great sacrifice he made for us on Calvary. It ought to be observed with the seriousness and dignity that befits the occasion. I do not imply that the partaking of the Lord's supper is more important than any other act of worship. They are all equally important. The Christian is to participate in each activity in spirit and in truth (**John 4:24**). The death of Christ was a propitiation (atoning sacrifice, **1 John 2:2**) for us, that God might be able to forgive us our sins and put us into a covenant relationship with him. No other act except the death of the sinless Son of God on the cross could accomplish this.

### Consider the Purpose of the Lord's Supper

The apostle Paul tells us that the purpose of the Lord's supper is to remember his death. In **1 Corinthians 11:25-26**. "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes" (NKJV). We see in **verse 25** that the Lord's supper is a remembrance; a

memorial if you will, of the Lord's sacrifice of himself for us. Man builds memorials and monuments of stainless steel, granite or marble; material he hopes will endure. The Son of God built a memorial that has lasted 2000 years; assembled each week from perishable elements. Unleavened bread and grape juice are not enduring materials. They will mold and become stale. Yet these very elements, prepared weekly by faithful hands, become by faith the body and blood of the Lord in the communion service every first day of the week. The Lord's supper is a lasting memorial, for the purpose of observing (looking back on) the Lord's death on Calvary, and faithful Christians will continue to partake of it "until He comes."

### The Frequency of Observing the Lord's Supper

The "when" of partaking the Lord's supper is found by example of what the early church did. "Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight" (**Acts 20:7**). There is no other example of the early church partaking of the Lord's supper on any

other day of the week. Those who claim they can do so need to cite their authority from Scripture. Divine silence eliminates every day but the first day of the week. We see also that the Lord's supper is a congregational function, rather than an individual one. It is something done "when the disciples came together." I believe this eliminates carrying the communion to shut-ins in hospitals, and private or nursing homes. If one cannot assemble, then he or she is excused from partaking. We can do many things individually; we can sing and pray; study and teach others. But the Lord's supper (and the giving of one's means) is a congregational function or activity. Let us be dedicated to observe the Lord's supper with other disciples, upon the first day of the week.

### The Manner of Observing the Lord's Supper

The manner in which a Christian observes the Lord's supper should be the attitude he would display in engaging in any act of divine worship. The apostle Paul tells us we can control our thinking (**Phil. 4:8**). So as we observe the Lord's supper, we need to concentrate on Jesus' death for us on Calvary; the suffering, the anguish he went through in order to secure our salvation. Try to block out external distractions, that we may meditate on the greatest sacrifice the world has ever known. A few well-chosen remarks by the one presiding at the table will help each disciple to meditate on Calvary.

### Duties of the One Presiding at the Communion Service

The brother who presides at the serving of the Lord's supper can do a great deal to make the service meaningful to the participants. This should involve something more than simply reading **Matthew 26:26-29** or **Luke 22:17-20**, where Jesus instituted the supper. This is fine, but tells us little or nothing about why he was instituting the supper. There are many passages that dwell on his suffering and death that would be more appropriate for the communion service. Some of these would be: **Psalm 22; Hebrews 2:9-17; 7:22-27; 9:24-28; 1 Peter 1:18-21; 2:21-25**. The one in charge, or "presiding" at the service should be neatly dressed and well prepared to lead the congregation in a meaningful participation of the Lord's supper.

### Duties of Those Who Serve the Communion

Those who serve the congregation are important to an orderly and meaningful communion service. They should also be neatly dressed in their best. A tee shirt and jeans are not appropriate attire to appear before the congregation (unless that is all one has to wear). We are in the spiritual presence of the Son of God, not attending a football game. Neat, clean clothing is essential. The brothers serving should strive to serve the communion in an orderly manner, seeing that no one is overlooked. Those who are serving should not partake of the communion first, but

serve themselves last, at the rear of the auditorium, or where it has been decided in advance. Good judgment and common sense should prevail. The congregation is to be served first, themselves last.

### **Praying at the Serving of the Lord's Supper**

A few words need to be said regarding the prayers offered at the table for the bread and the fruit of the vine. Too often, a brother will pray for everything and anything, and sometimes nearly forget to give thanks for the elements involved. The observance of the Lord's supper is not the time to ask for forgiveness of sins, or to pray for the sick, or for safe travel, etc. These items should be taken care of in the opening prayer. The prayers at the Lord's table should be brief and to the point.

The prayers offered at the Lord's table should keep the congregation's thinking focused on Calvary, and what was accomplished by Jesus on our behalf. The brethren who pray and serve the communion service are vital to making the service meaningful to each disciple. Don't consider this a "little duty" or chore to be carried out. Your faithful service here is extremely important to the proper partaking of the Lord's supper on the first day of the week.- **Via Truth Magazine Vol 43**

**Question: Why is it necessary to celebrate the Lord's Table every week and not, say, once a month or whenever we feel like it?**

Answer: "For though you might

have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Therefore I urge you, imitate me. For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church" (**I Corinthians 4:15-17**). Paul also commanded, "Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ" (**I Corinthians 11:1**). And, "The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you" (**Philippians 4:9**). Thus we learn that the examples recorded in our Bibles are not just illustrations or suggestions. We are expected to follow the approved examples ("as I imitate Christ"). Obviously there are examples in the Bible of people violating God's law. These examples are not binding, in that we are expected not to follow these examples, but learn to avoid making the same mistakes (**I Corinthians 10:6**). "Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. He who does good is of God, but he who does evil has not seen God" (**III John 11**).

### **There are three types of good examples found in the Bible:**

Something is commanded but we find a variety of examples of how that command is carried out. An example would be Christ's command to go into all the world (**Matthew**

**28:19**). As we read we find the disciples: Running (**Acts 8:30**), Riding in a chariot (**Acts 8:28-29,31**), Sailing on a boat (**Acts 13:4**), Walking (**Acts 20:13**), etc. Thus we conclude that no specific way of going is required, but we are required to go. Something is commanded and we find specific examples of how that command is carried out. An example would be the command to give cheerfully (**II Corinthians 9:7**). We find that they gave liberally and willingly (**II Corinthians 8:1-5**), they held nothing back (**Acts 2:44-45**), and they did not count their possessions as their own (**Acts 4:32-35**). Each example show the command being carried out with the same attitude. The lack of variance indicates there is no other way to carry out the command. Something is not specifically commanded, but specific examples exist. Here is what you asked about. "Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight" (**Acts 20:7**).

When Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, he only mentioned that it was to be done, but he didn't mention the frequency. We have one example that does mention the frequency, and that is in **Acts 20:7**. When examining an example it is important to ask whether the stated fact is incidental or important to the subject at hand. In this case we are told that the Lord's Supper was taken on the first day of the week. The phrase is qualified so that we as the readers know that the first day of the week was when the disciples came together to break bread (that is, partake of the Lord's Supper). The word is such that we cannot conclude that the partaking of the Lord's Supper was on the first day of the week by coincidence. This is the day when the disciples took the Lord's Supper. Thus it cannot be ignored. Nor are there any commands or examples in the New Testament that tells us that any other day was used besides the first day of the week. Thus, we conclude that this approved example binds us to only partake of the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week. But your actual question is which first day of the week? Again, the wording is clear, though some would like to make it obscure. If I hired a man and said "Friday is the day we hand out paychecks." Would the man conclude that he gets paid once a year, once a month, or once a week? Obviously he concludes once a week. Why? Because every week has a Friday. Now the disciples gathered on the first day of the week to partake of the Lord's Supper. Should we conclude that they did it once a year, once a month, or once a week? The answer is the same. Every week has a first day, thus the wording means they gathered each first day of the week to remember the Lord's death. To get any other frequency would require adding something to this passage that is not there.- **Via La Vista Church of Christ Bulletin.**