



THE
LORD'S SUPPER
& THOSE
KEPT FROM
ASSEMBLING

*Is partaking of the
Lord's Supper away
from the assembly of
the church authorized?*

THE PATTERN OF ESTABLISHING AUTHORITY

Direct Statement or Command, Approved Example, Necessary Inference

- Jesus on Love – *John 13:34-35*
 - DIRECT STATEMENT/COMMAND – “*A new commandment I give to you*”
 - APPROVED EXAMPLE – “*as I have loved you*”
 - NECESSARY INFERENCE – “*By this all will know that you are My disciples*”

THE PATTERN OF ESTABLISHING AUTHORITY

Direct Statement or Command, Approved Example, Necessary Inference

- Question about circumcision – *Acts 15*
 - DIRECT STATEMENT – James – (*vv. 13-17*)
 - APPROVED EXAMPLE – Paul and Barnabas – (*v. 12*)
 - NECESSARY INFERENCE – Peter – (*vv. 7-11*)
 - DETERMINED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT – (*v. 28*)

THE PATTERN OF ESTABLISHING AUTHORITY

Generic and Specific Authority

- **Generic (inclusive)** – Anything authorized by God includes authority for whatever is necessary and incidental in fulfilling the authorized action.
- **Specific (exclusive)** – Anything specified in the authorized action necessarily excludes all other things. I.e. anything not specified in the authorized action, unless it is necessary and incidental in fulfilling the authorized action, is excluded.

THE PATTERN OF ESTABLISHING AUTHORITY

Generic and Specific Authority

- **Example of Noah's Ark (*Genesis 6:14-16*):**
 - **Specific (exclusive)** – gopherwood, inside and out with pitch, dimensions, window and position, door in its side, number of decks.
 - **Generic (inclusive)** – what tools will be used? How will he get the material to the place of construction?

THE PATTERN OF ESTABLISHING AUTHORITY

Generic and Specific Authority

- **Example of Noah's Ark (*Genesis 6:14-16*):**
- **Music in Worship (*Ephesians 5:18-19*):**
 - **Specific (exclusive)** – singing, psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.
 - **Generic (inclusive)** – song books, memory, song leader (for order).

THE PATTERN OF ESTABLISHING AUTHORITY

The Law of Expediency

- **Expediency** – something which aids the fulfillment of a command, or authorized action given by God.
- For a thing to be expedient it must be lawful –
cf. 1 Corinthians 6:12; 10:23
- Expediencies do not add to or take away from a command.
- Examples of Noah's Ark and Music in Worship.

THE PATTERN OF ESTABLISHING AUTHORITY

Prohibitive Nature of Silence

- **Two Angles for Silence**
 - **Permissive** – God didn't say not to, so we can.
 - **Prohibitive** – God didn't say to, so we can't.
- **Specific (exclusive)** – Anything specified in the authorized action necessarily excludes all other things. I.e. anything not specified in the authorized action, unless it is necessary and incidental in fulfilling the authorized action, is excluded.

THE PATTERN OF ESTABLISHING AUTHORITY

Prohibitive Nature of Silence

- *Hebrews 7:12-14* – the specific of “Levi” prohibited any other than “Levi” not mentioned including “Judah.”
- God communicates through His word – *2 Timothy 3:16-17*
 - God “*revealed...that we may do,*” but when He hasn’t revealed we may not do – *Deuteronomy 29:29*
 - Speak where God speaks – *1 Peter 4:11*
 - Do not go beyond – *1 Corinthians 4:6; 2 John 9*
- EX: Nadab & Abihu – *Leviticus 10:1-3*

THE PATTERN OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Command – *Luke 22:19* – “do this in remembrance of Me”

- **Who?** – Disciples – *Acts 20:7*
- **What?** – Unleavened Bread & Fruit of Vine – *Matthew 26:26-29*
- **When?** – First day of the week – *Acts 20:7*
- **Why?** – To remember, memorial – *1 Corinthians 11:23-26*
- **How?** – Discerning – *1 Corinthians 11:27-29*
- **Where?** – Assembly – *Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:17-22, 33-34*

THE PATTERN OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Where? – Assembly – *1 Corinthians 11:17-22, 33-34*

- “*you come together*” (5x) – (vv. 17, 18, 20, 33, 34)
 - *Synerchomai*; “to come together” (*sun*, ‘together,’ *erchomai*, ‘to come’)” (VINE)
 - “chiefly used of ‘assembling together,’” (VINE)
 - “to come together with others as a group, assemble, gather” (BDAG)

THE PATTERN OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Where? – Assembly – *1 Corinthians 11:17-22, 33-34*

- Addressing abuse of the LS – (v. 17) – for the worse:
- (v. 18) – divisions.
- (vv. 20-22) – “*not to eat the Lord’s Supper*”
 - (v. 21) – division; (v. 22) – common meal.
- (vv. 33-34) – division and common meal.
 - (v. 33) – eat (LS, not common meal); (v. 34) – eat at home (not LS, common meal)

THE PATTERN OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Where? – Assembly – *1 Corinthians 11:17-22, 33-34*

- Note: (v. 18) – “*as a church*” (cf. *1 Corinthians 1:2* – church of God at Corinth – local church)
- (vv. 33-34) – distinction made between where the Lord’s Supper is taken and where to have a common meal.
 - **Lord’s supper** – (v. 33) – assembly “*as a church*” (v. 18).
 - **Common meal** – (v. 34) – at home (i.e. in distinction from an assembly “*as a church*”)
- The “where” being specified as “*when you come together as a church*” excludes any other “where.”

WHAT CONSTITUTES AN ASSEMBLY OF THE CHURCH?

A virtual assembly?

- *Synerchomai*; “to come together” (*sun*, ‘together,’ *erchomai*, ‘to come’)” (VINE) (Used as a literal, physical assembly)
- **Virtual** – not physically existing as such but made by software to appear to do so. (New Oxford American Dictionary)
 - “We are assembling, it is just a virtual assembly” = “We are assembling, it is just not an actual assembly”
- A “virtual assembly” is not an assembly of the church.

WHAT CONSTITUTES AN ASSEMBLY OF THE CHURCH?

Where two or three are gathered? (cf. Matthew 18:20)

- (vv. 16, 19-20) – Lord’s presence regarding “every word may be established.”
- (v. 20) – THE LORD IS IN THE MIDST OF THE 2 OR 3 WHEN ATTEMPTING TO RESTORE THE SINNER.
- (vv. 16-17) – Distinction between the “two or three” and the “church.

When the local church schedules a time and place to physically gather as a whole for worship? YES (1 Cor. 11:18)

WHAT WE ARE NOT SAYING...

The Local Church is the Authority

- Christ is the authority – *Ephesians 1:22-23*
- It is the “*Lord’s Supper*” (*1 Corinthians 11:20*) – it belongs to Him, so we are to do it in exactly the way He instructs.

The Building is of Significance

- It is not – *Acts 7:48; 1 Corinthians 16:19* (church in house); *John 4:21-24*
- **Distinction** – assembly “*as a church*” and any other type.

LIMITATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE “PRESENT DISTRESS”

Paul’s “Judgment” in the “Present Distress” of *1 Corinthians 7:25-28*

- (v. 25) – not commandment, but judgment (“*advice*,” *2 Cor. 8:10*)
 - Take it or leave it – (v. 28)
 - (vv. 26-27) – remain as he is, married or unmarried.
- About liberty, not binding pattern – *1 Corinthians 9:5 (8:9; 9:12)*
- Is an established pattern in scripture a liberty? Can we alter any parts of the pattern? (No – *2 Timothy 1:13; Hebrews 8:5*)

ARGUMENTS FOR PARTAKING OUTSIDE OF THE ASSEMBLY

What about people like Paul, the Ethiopian Eunuch, and Cornelius the centurion?

- Paul in *Acts 20:5-7* was on a ship on the Lord's Day.
- What did they do when there was not an assembly of the church to attend? WE SIMPLY DO NOT KNOW.
- Silence does not authorize – *Hebrews 7:14; Deuteronomy 29:29*
- God would have told us if He wanted us to know!

ARGUMENTS FOR PARTAKING OUTSIDE OF THE ASSEMBLY

What about the mother in the nursery?

- Is partaking away from the assembly the same?
- *1 Corinthians 11:20* – “*in one place*”
- “*in one place*” – *epi ho autos* – “*together*” (NASB; ASV; ESV); “*at the same place*” (YLT)
 - “The idiom [*epi ho autos*] adds the idea that all assemble ‘in the same place.’” (Lenski)
 - “*autos* denotes ‘the same’ when preceded by the article” (VINE)

ARGUMENTS FOR PARTAKING OUTSIDE OF THE ASSEMBLY

What about the mother in the nursery?

- Is partaking away from the assembly the same?
- *1 Corinthians 11:20 – “in one place”*
- Did she assemble with the saints in the “*one place*” or not?
- Consider *Acts 2:1-2*:
 - “*in one place*” = “*the whole house where they were sitting*”
 - What about a large congregation meeting in a home? Main room not big enough – people in adjoining rooms, and around the corner in the hall?

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- Did she assemble with the saints in the “*one place*” or not?
- If she assembled with the saints in the “*one place*” is she to be left out? (*cf. 1 Corinthians 11:33*)

ARGUMENTS FOR PARTAKING OUTSIDE OF THE ASSEMBLY

What about when Jesus partook with His disciples?

- *Matthew 26:20* – not in an assembly of the church.
- Instituted, not being observed in its intended format. (Instituted on a Thursday.)
 - “*in My Father’s kingdom*” – *cf. Acts 2*
 - Had the kingdom come? – *Matthew 26:29*
- Had He died?

ARGUMENTS FOR PARTAKING OUTSIDE OF THE ASSEMBLY

The Lord's Supper is really an individual act of worship.

- The individual component of the Lord's Supper –
1 Corinthians 11:27-29
- Does the individual responsibility in the Lord's Supper necessarily imply that it can be taken individually away from the assembly? –
NO

ARGUMENTS FOR PARTAKING OUTSIDE OF THE ASSEMBLY

The Lord's Supper is really an individual act of worship.

- Singing:
 - Individuals can sing alone – *James 5:13*
 - Is there a command to sing with others? – *Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16*
 - In collective singing do we have individual responsibilities? – YES
 - But can the individual fulfill the command to “*speak to one another*” by himself? – NO

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- The individual component of the Lord's Supper –
1 Corinthians 11:27-29
- Does the individual responsibility in the Lord's Supper necessarily imply that it can be taken individually away from the assembly? –
NO
- Scripture specifies the “where” of the Lord's Supper as the assembly.
- Can an individual assemble “*as a church*” by himself? – NO

ARGUMENTS FOR PARTAKING OUTSIDE OF THE ASSEMBLY

This is a matter of expediency.

- Expediencies in discussions of authority are matters which pertain to carrying out an established pattern.
- Consider: It is expedient in this “present distress” to observe the Lord’s Supper away from the assembly.
 - Does this alter the pattern? – YES – *Acts 20:7;*
1 Corinthians 11:18 – assembly
 - Then it is not a matter of expediency, BUT A VIOLATION OF THE PATTERN.

ARGUMENTS FOR PARTAKING OUTSIDE OF THE ASSEMBLY

We don't know how long this will last!

- If elapsed time is sufficient to alter the pattern:
 - How long is long enough to change the pattern?
 - What about those shut in?
- Saul's unlawful sacrifice – *1 Samuel 13:8-14* – elapsed time didn't make it lawful.
- Waiting on the Lord requires adherence to the pattern – *Psalms 37:34; 25:4-5*

ARGUMENTS FOR PARTAKING OUTSIDE OF THE ASSEMBLY

I think God will understand we are trying to honor Him and Christ.

- How can we know what God thinks? – *1 Corinthians 2:10-13* (scripture)
- How do we honor God? (*cf. Romans 3:23; 1 John 3:4* – if failure is through lawlessness, then honor is through obedience)
- Some tried to honor, but were wrong – *Matthew 7:21-23; 2 Samuel 7:2-7*

ARGUMENTS FOR PARTAKING OUTSIDE OF THE ASSEMBLY

I think God will understand we are trying to honor Him and Christ.

- Consider Cain – *Genesis 4:3-5*
 - Why was his sacrifice not respected? – *Hebrews 11:4* – not offered by faith. (*cf. Romans 10:17* – not from the word of God)
- How can we observe the Lord's Supper away from the assembly of the church "by faith" when there is no positive authority for the practice? We can't.

ARGUMENTS FOR PARTAKING OUTSIDE OF THE ASSEMBLY

I think God will understand we are trying to honor Him and Christ.

- We must not be guilty of “*self-imposed religion*” – *Colossians 2:20-23*
 - “*will-worship*” (ASV; KJV); “*self-made religion*” (ESV; NASB)
 - *ethelothrēskia* – voluntary (arbitrary and unwarranted) piety, i.e. sanctimony. (STRONG)
 - “voluntarily adopted ‘worship,’ whether unbidden or forbidden” (VINE)

ARGUMENTS FOR PARTAKING OUTSIDE OF THE ASSEMBLY

If you don't partake because you are kept from assembling aren't you sinning by not partaking at all?

- Do we sin when we are kept from assembling, therefore kept from partaking of the Lord's Supper, because of inclement weather?
- What about when we are too ill to come?
- Biblical principle – *Luke 14:1-6* – Jesus' words when healing a man on the Sabbath.

A LOGICAL CONSEQUENCE

We could justify a change of day as well.

- Why do we know the Lord's will on the "when" of the Lord's Supper? (*cf. Acts 20:7* – the approved example.)
- If ONE approved example of the "when" is enough to exclude any other:
 - What about 6 approved examples of the "where" (assembly)? – *Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:17, 18, 20, 33, 34*
- IF WE ACCEPT THE ONE CHANGE, WE MUST ACCEPT THE OTHER!



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