

The Lord's Supper and Those Kept from Assembling

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

Introduction

1. Our current adversity (COVID-19) has us revisiting some fundamental matters which are exposed in new light.
2. Perhaps what is being discussed the most among brethren is the partaking of the Lord's supper.
 - a. Since many are kept from assembling due to guidelines and orders of social distancing, shelter in place, and even just cautionary decisions for those who are more at risk, how do we approach the command to remember the Lord's death with His instituted memorial?
 - b. Many are taking the LS in their homes, away from the assembly of the church.
 - c. IT IS A LEGITIMATE AND IMPORTANT QUESTION TO ASK, "IS THIS AUTHORIZED?"
 - i. IF SO, WHERE IS THE BIBLICAL PATTERN?
 - ii. IF NOT, WE SHOULD NOT BE DOING IT, FOR IT IS AGAINST THE WILL OF GOD.
3. A danger during these times – allowing emotions to dictate our decisions.
 - a. None of us like that we are kept from assembling as usual.
 - b. It is hard on everyone.
 - c. However, we must not let the adversity affect our approach to scripture.
4. Paul called Timothy to hold to the pattern – **2 Timothy 1:13**
 - a. Note that this was in a context of adversity – **2 Timothy 1:7-8**
 - b. If anything, adversity calls us to narrow our focus, and strengthen our grasp on the pattern.
5. Consider what can happen when we allow adversity to dictate our approach to Divine pattern – **1 Samuel 13:8-13** – Saul's unlawful sacrifice.
 - a. What was the adversity? – **(v. 5)** – Philistines gathered together to fight with Israel – GREAT NUMBER ("**as the sand which is on the seashore in multitude**")
 - b. State of the people – **(v. 7)** – "**trembling**"
 - c. Pattern? – **(v. 8)** – wait 7 days for Samuel to come.
 - d. Violation? – **(vv. 9-13)** – the adversity did not nullify or alter the pattern, and Saul was held accountable.
6. We need to have faith in times like these, but we must understand that faith is still seated and grounded in God's word **(cf. Romans 10:17)**. WHAT IS NOT FROM THE WORD OF GOD IS NOT BY FAITH!
 - I. The Pattern of Establishing Authority
 - A. Direct Statement or Command, Approved Example, Necessary Inference
 - a. Not fabricated hermeneutics, but the PATTERN OF HERMENEUTICS IN SCRIPTURE ITSELF.
 - b. Jesus (teaching on love) **(John 13:34-35)**:
 - i. DIRECT STATEMENT/COMMAND – "**A new commandment I give to you**"

- ii. APPROVED EXAMPLE – “*as I have loved you*”
- iii. NECESSARY INFERENCE – “*By this all will know that you are My disciples*”
- c. Question of Circumcision (**Acts 15**):
 - i. Question at hand – **Acts 15:1** – must you become a Jew and keep the Law of Moses to be saved?
 - ii. **Using Command, Example, Necessary Inference to show such is not the case (false doctrine):**
 - 1. DIRECT STATEMENT/COMMAND – James – **Acts 15:13-17** – Prophet Amos quoted – GENTILES ARE CALLED BY GOD’S NAME. (Meaning they don’t have to be a Jew, but can stay a Gentile.)
 - 2. APPROVED EXAMPLE – Paul and Barnabas
 - a. **Acts 14:27** – door of faith opened to Gentiles – preaching of the gospel – EXAMPLE.
 - b. **Acts 15:12** – such is an APPROVED EXAMPLE because of the miracles which validated such.
 - 3. NECESSARY INFERENCE – Peter – **Acts 15:7-11** – HS falling on Gentiles, he NECESSARILY INFERRED they are gospel subjects as they are, WITHOUT BECOMING JEWS.
 - a. Peter drew a necessary conclusion – NOT DIRECTLY STATED – **Acts 11:15-18**
 - b. NOTE: such was enough to convince those who questioned him. **(v. 18)**
 - iii. NOTE: This was not a decision THEY made, but one THEY DETERMINED THE HOLY SPIRIT MADE – **Acts 15:28** (Letter to Antioch, and circulated among brethren all over)
 - d. WE MUST FIND AUTHORITY FOR ALL THAT WE DO BY AT LEAST 1 OF THESE 3 WAYS.
- B. Generic and Specific
 - a. Some may say – “WELL, WE DO A LOT OF THINGS WITHOUT BIBLE AUTHORITY” – they do not understand the dual nature of authority.
 - b. **Generic (inclusive)** – Anything authorized by God includes authority for whatever is necessary and incidental in fulfilling the authorized action.
 - c. **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.
 - d. **Implications:**
 - i. A thing may be authorized even though it is not specifically mentioned. (Generic – inclusive).
 - ii. A thing may be unauthorized even though it is not specifically condemned. (Specific – exclusive).

- e. **Example of Noah's Ark (Genesis 6:14-16):**
 - i. **Specific (exclusive)** – gopherwood, inside and out with pitch, dimensions, window and position, door in its side, number of decks.
 - ii. **Generic (inclusive)** – what tools will be used? How will he get the material to the place of construction?
 - f. **Music in Worship (Ephesians 5:18-19):**
 - i. **Specific (exclusive)** – singing, psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.
 - ii. **Generic (inclusive)** – song books, memory, song leader (for order).
- C. The Law of Expediency
- a. A PART OF GENERIC AUTHORITY.
 - i. “whatever is necessary and incidental in fulfilling the authorized action”
 - b. **Expediency** – something which aids the fulfillment of a command, or authorized action given by God.
 - c. For a thing to be expedient it must be lawful:
 - i. **1 Corinthians 6:12; 10:23** – All things that are lawful are not expedient. **“EXPEDIENT” – ASV**
 - 1. The inverse would have to be true – **For anything to be an expedient it must be lawful.**
 - ii. Expediencies do not change what is carried out according to the command. They do not add.
 - 1. **If something nullifies, replaces, or changes that specified in a command or authorized action of God it IS NOT an expedient. IT IS AN ADDITION.**
 - 2. *Something cannot be an aid to fulfilling a command or authorized action of God if it changes the command or authorized action rather than fulfilling it.*
 - d. **Example of Noah's Ark:**
 - i. **Generic (inclusive)** – what tools will be used? How will he get the material to the place of construction?
 - ii. **Expediencies** – Saw to cut wood? Strong animal to haul wood?
 - e. **Example of Music in Worship:**
 - i. **Generic (inclusive)** – song books, memory, song leader (for order).
 - ii. These are expediencies – STILL JUST SINGING.
- D. Prohibitive Nature of Silence (PERHAPS THE MOST IMPORTANT POINT FOR OUR SPECIFIC QUESTION OF THE LS OUTSIDE THE ASSEMBLY)
- a. Two Angles for Silence

- i. **Permissive** (*false*) – God didn't say not to, so we can? (Childish – EX: child to parent.)
 - ii. **Prohibitive** – God didn't say to, so don't.
 - b. **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.
 - i. Therefore, just because the Lord does not specifically exclude something does not mean it is authorized.
 - c. Expressed in **Hebrews 7:12-14**:
 - i. **(vv. 12-13)** – need for a change in law in order for Jesus to serve as High Priest – BECAUSE IT WOULD BE UNLAWFUL UNDER THE LAW OF MOSES FOR HIM TO DO SO.
 - ii. **(v. 14)** – Since God specified the tribe of Levi **(v. 11)**, but said nothing about Judah, then Judah was excluded from the priesthood.
 - d. How does God communicate to us what He wants?
 - i. Inspired Scripture – **2 Timothy 3:16-17**
 - 1. NOTE: PLENARY VERBAL INSPIRATION – **Galatians 3:16** (difference between even singular and plural)
 - ii. When God DOES NOT SPEAK ON A MATTER? – **Deuteronomy 29:29**
 - 1. **Revealed** – **“THAT WE MAY DO ALL THE WORDS OF THIS LAW”**
 - 2. **Secret** (not revealed) – THAT WE MAY NOT DO.
 - 3. **Implication** – what is not revealed, i.e. disclosed by God to observe (negatively or positively), belongs to God, i.e. **it is not a matter of our prerogative to do.**
 - iii. Speak where God speaks, silent where God is silent – **1 Peter 4:11**
 - iv. Anything else is going beyond what is written, beyond the doctrine of Christ – **1 Corinthians 4:6; 2 John 9**
 - e. Example of acting on silence – **Leviticus 10:1-3** – **“which He had NOT commanded them”**
- II. The Pattern of the Lord's Supper (COMMANDED IN **LUKE 22:19** – **“DO THIS IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME”** – **1 CORINTHIANS 11:24-25**)
 - A. Who? (DIRECT STATEMENT)
 - a. Disciples – **Acts 20:7**
 - b. Christians – **Acts 11:26** – disciples called “Christians.”
 - B. What? (APPROVED EXAMPLE OF JESUS, NECESSARY INFERENCE OF UNLEAVENED BREAD)
 - a. Unleavened Bread and Fruit of the Vine – **Matthew 26:26-29** (Feast of Unleavened Bread – **Luke 22:1** – Passover)
 - C. When? (APPROVED EXAMPLE)

- a. First Day of the Week – **Acts 20:7**
- D. Why? (DIRECT STATEMENT)
 - a. To Remember, a Memorial – **1 Corinthians 11:23-26**
 - b. **"DO THIS IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME" (LUKE 22:19).**
- E. How? (DIRECT STATEMENT)
 - a. Discerning – **1 Corinthians 11:27-29** – the Lord's body.
- F. Where? (APPROVED EXAMPLE)
 - a. Assembly – **Acts 20:7** – **"when the disciples came together to break bread"**
 - i. Not the only place the example of the assembly is mentioned.
 - b. **1 Corinthians 11:17-22, 33-34**
 - i. **"you come together"** (5x) – **(vv. 17, 18, 20, 33, 34)**
 - 1. *Synerchomai*; "to come together" (*sun*, 'together,' *erchomai*, 'to come')" (VINE)
 - 2. "chiefly used of 'assembling together,'" (VINE)
 - 3. "to come together with others as a group, assemble, gather" (BDAG)
 - ii. Addressing abuse of the LS:
 - 1. **(v. 17)** – for the worse.
 - 2. **(v. 18)** – divisions.
 - 3. **(vv. 20-22)** – **"not to eat the Lord's Supper"** (implication THAT IT SHOULD BE, BUT THAT'S NOT WHAT YOU'RE DOING – **vv. 23-26**)
 - a. **(v. 21)** – division.
 - b. **(v. 22)** – common meal.
 - 4. **(vv. 33-34)** – division and common meal.
 - a. **(v. 33)** – eat (LS, not common meal)
 - b. **(v. 34)** – eat at home **"lest you come together for judgment (condemnation)"** – COMMON MEAL TO BE DONE AT HOME, NOT WHEN YOU COME TOGETHER.
 - iii. **"as a church"** – **(v. 18)** – SPECIFIES THE GATHERING.
 - 1. As a church?
 - 2. **1 Corinthians 1:2** – church of God which is at Corinth. (local, physical gathering)
 - 3. **(vv. 33-34)** – distinction made with WHERE THE LS IS TAKEN, AND WHERE COMMON MEAL IS EATEN.
 - a. **(v. 33)** – LS when come together **"as a church"** (**v. 18**).
 - b. **(v. 34)** – common meal when together **"at home"**
 - i. NOT MERELY A DISTINCTION OF PLACE, BUT OF PURPOSE.
 - ii. I.E. A SETTING THAT IS NOT AN ASSEMBLY OF THE CHURCH.

c. **DISTINCTION BETWEEN ASSEMBLING AS A CHURCH AND A GATHERING THAT IS NOT “AS A CHURCH.”**

4. **PHYSICAL BUILDING IS IRRELEVANT – TYPE OF ASSEMBLY IS NOT.**

iv. **WHAT IS NOT EVER MENTIONED BY CEI – OBSERVANCE OUTSIDE THE ASSEMBLY.**

v. **SINCE THE “WHERE” IS SPECIFIED AS BEING “WHEN YOU COME TOGETHER AS A CHURCH” ALL OTHER “WHERE” ARE EXCLUDED.**

1. Remember, you can't find authority for another “where” from silence.
2. It must be specifically mentioned through – command/statement, approved example, necessary inference.

III. What Constitutes an Assembly of the Church?

A. A Virtual Assembly?

- a. *Synerchomai*; “to come together” (*sun*, ‘together,’ *erchomai*, ‘to come’)” (VINE)
 - i. Quite obviously a PHYSICAL COMING TOGETHER.
- b. “We are assembling, it is just a virtual assembly.” (Self-contradictory statement)
 - i. Virtual means NOT REAL, NOT ACTUAL.

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

- a. **Matthew 18:20** – does this verse indicate an assembly of the church?
- b. Context:
 - i. **Matthew 18:15-20** – speaking of instructions regarding restoring a brother who has sinned against you.
 1. **(vv. 16, 19-20)** – Lord's presence regarding “every word may be established.”
 2. **(v. 20)** – THE LORD IS IN THE MIDST OF THE 2 OR 3 WHEN ATTEMPTING TO RESTORE THE SINNER.
 - ii. **Matthew 18:16-17** – DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE 2 OR 3 AND THE CHURCH.
- c. An assembly of the church may just be 2 or 3, but that is only if the church is that small.
- d. 2 or 3 as a SEGMENT of the CHURCH AS A WHOLE – NOT AN ASSEMBLY OF THE CHURCH.

C. When the local church schedules a time and place to physically gather as a whole for worship?

- a. YES – **1 Corinthians 11:18** – **“when you come together as a church”**

IV. What We Are Not Saying

A. The Local Church is the Authority (of the Lord's Supper)

- a. This is not a question of the administration of the emblems, but the observance of the memorial.

- i. No faithful Christian holds the sacramental view of the LS.
 - 1. Not subscribing to the notion that the “holy church” must consecrate the emblems and administer them.
 - ii. There is no specific instruction regarding where we get the emblems. (Only what the emblems are – un. Bread, fruit of vine)
 - b. Rather, this is an effort at full submission to Christ as the only authority – **Ephesians 1:22-23** – He is the head of the church.
 - c. Called **“Lord’s Supper” (1 Corinthians 11:20)** – IT BELONGS TO HIM.
 - i. Ergo, His will on the matter is paramount.
 - ii. HE SPECIFIED THE ASSEMBLY – EXCLUDES ALL OTHER PLACES.
 - B. The Building is of Significance
 - a. There is no spiritual significance inherent within any physical structure – **Acts 7:48**
 - b. Churches met in the homes of members – **1 Corinthians 16:19**
 - c. The physical place is not important – **John 4:21-24**
 - d. Distinction at hand:
 - i. Difference between an assembly **“as a church”** for worship, and any other.
 - ii. **1 Corinthians 11:18** – **“come together as a church”**
 - iii. **1 Corinthians 11:33-34** – **“let him eat at home”**
 - e. Seems to be an inconsistency in:
 - i. Dividing the church into smaller groups, or segments of the church, to meet at the building at different times to partake of the LS, therefore, satisfying 10 or less rule, and social distancing.
 - ii. Is that smaller group assembly an assembly “as a church?” No, but a purposefully limited SEGMENT of the church.
 - iii. If the building is of no significance (which position we hold) then this is no different than a small group partaking at home.
 - V. Limitations in the Context of the “Present Distress”
 - A. Some have appealed to Paul’s advice on marriage during their “present distress” as validation for doing things slightly different for a limited period of time until normalcy returns.
 - a. This is an inconsistent approach to the passage.
 - b. IT DOES NOT REGARD ALTERATIONS TO ANY BINDING DIVINE PATTERN.
 - B. Paul’s “Judgment” in the “Present Distress” of **1 Corinthians 7:25-28**
 - a. **(v. 25)** – not a commandment, but a judgment.
 - i. **“judgment”** – translated **“advice”** in **2 Corinthians 8:10**.
 - ii. Commandments are not optional.
 - iii. Thus, this is a “take it or leave it” situation. **(v. 28)**
 - b. **(v. 26)** – remain as he is? In what way?
 - i. Sin? – Paul would never say that!
 - ii. **(v. 27)** – Marriage – unmarried, remain that way. Married, remain that way.

- c. Marriage is a liberty – **1 Corinthians 9:5** – using as an example to make the point that he also has a right to receive financial support.
 - i. Context – LIBERTIES – **1 Corinthians 8:9**
 - ii. **1 Corinthians 9:12** – he forgoes his right.
- C. Is the pattern established by command/direct statement, approved example, or necessary inference a liberty? Are there any parts of the pattern we can choose to “take or leave?” – **2 Timothy 1:13** – HOLD FAST THE PATTERN – **Hebrews 8:5** – MAKE ALL THINGS ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN.
 - a. The “where” of the LS observance is no more a matter we can alter than the “when” – **“on the first day of the week.” (Acts 20:7)**
- VI. Arguments for Partaking Outside of the Assembly
 - A. What about people like Paul, the Ethiopian Eunuch, and Cornelius the centurion?
 - a. What did Paul do when he traveled to a city without a church?
 - i. Or when traveling to Troas? – **Acts 20:5-7**
 1. **“stayed seven days” – (v. 7) – “first day of the week”**
 2. Apparently arrived on a Monday.
 3. **(v. 6)** – sailed for 5 days – Thursday-Monday.
 - ii. What did Paul do on the ship on the Lord's Day?
 - b. What did the Ethiopian eunuch do when he went back to Ethiopia where there was no church?
 - c. What did a man like Cornelius do, who was centurion soldier, when he was likely stationed in a place with no church?
 - d. ANSWER: WE SIMPLY DO NOT KNOW.
 - i. The scripture is silent.
 - e. SILENCE DOES NOT AUTHORIZE:
 - i. **Hebrews 7:14** – if the Lord spoke nothing concerning then it isn't authorized.
 - ii. **Deuteronomy 29:29** – DON'T WE THINK IF GOD WANTED TO SUPPLY US WITH AN EXAMPLE FOR US TO FOLLOW THAT HE WOULD HAVE?
 1. God knows what these men did but did not tell us.
 2. What he did tell us – **Acts 20:7** – **“disciples came together to break bread”**
 - f. Same argument for mechanical instruments in worship – **Colossians 3:16**; **Ephesians 5:19** – where does it say NOT TO use mechanical instruments?
 - B. What about the mother in the nursery?
 - a. Is partaking of the LS outside of the assembly of the church the same as the mother partaking in the nursery?
 - i. NO.
 - b. **1 Corinthians 11:20** – **“in one place”**
 - i. **“in one place”** – *epi ho autos* – **“together”** (NASB; ASV; ESV); **“at the same place”** (YLT)
 - ii. “The genitive absolute states that this abuse occurs in connection with the gathering of the congregation; and the idiom [*epi ho*

autos] adds the idea that all assemble 'in the same place.'
(Lenski)

- iii. "autos denotes 'the same' when preceded by the article" (VINE)
- c. Did the mother in the nursery assemble at the "one place," or "same place" as the church (v. 18) for the purpose of worship?
 - i. **"in one place"** – *epi ho autos* – **Acts 2:1**
 1. **"in one place"** = **"where they were sitting" (v. 2)**
 2. **(v. 2)** – **"the whole house"** = **"where they were sitting"**
 3. *Epi ho autos* – evidently was used to signify the entire house, rooms and all.
 - a. Was one in an adjacent room "in one place" with the others?
 - b. The "one place" was made equal to "the whole house where they were sitting."
 - ii. CONSIDER: Assembly of church in a house. Number too big for biggest room, and some are in a hall around the corner. Are they "together in one place?"
 - iii. NOT a distinction of "line of sight" or "physical walls" but an assembly "in one place."
- d. If she has assembled in the "one place" as the church is she to be left out of the observance? – NO – (v. 33 – **"wait for one another"**)
- C. What about when Jesus partook with His disciples?
 - a. Jesus and His disciples did not constitute an assembly of the church when they first partook – **Matthew 26:20** – sat down with the twelve.
 - b. NOTE:
 - i. Institution, not observation in its intended regular setting – THURSDAY
 - ii. **Matthew 26:29** – not take again until kingdom – KINGDOM NOT YET ESTABLISHED.
 1. Kingdom purchased with blood – **Acts 20:28** – not shed yet.
 2. Did disciples partake between His death and ascension? – NO – **"IN MY FATHER'S KINGDOM"** – **CF. ACTS 2**
 - iii. Memorial of His death – HE HADN'T DIED YET.
- D. The Lord's Supper is really an individual act of worship.
 - a. The individual component of the Lord's Supper – **1 Corinthians 11:27-29**
 - i. NOTE – **"whoever," "a man," "himself," "him," "he"**
 - ii. It is possible for one to be observing the Supper with others in an assembly, but to be guilty of what Paul is saying while the others are not.
 - b. Does the individual responsibility in the Lord's Supper necessarily imply that it can be taken individually away from the assembly? (NO)
 - c. Individual VS church:

- i. There are things individuals can do that the church cannot, and vice versa.
 1. **James 1:27** – point established in discussions of church support of human institutions.
 - a. Call for an individual.
 - ii. Singing:
 1. Individuals can sing alone – YES – **James 5:13**
 2. Is there a command to sing with others? – YES – **Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16**
 3. In collective singing do we have individual responsibilities? – YES – **“making melody in your heart to the Lord,” “singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord”**
 4. But can the individual fulfill the command to **“speak to one another”** by himself? NO.
 - iii. Can an individual by himself assemble as a church? – NO
 1. Are two or three gathered necessarily an assembly of the church? – **Matthew 18:16-17** – distinction made, so no.
 2. Who/what can assemble?
 - a. The church – YES
 - b. An individual by himself – NO
 - d. Just because taking the Lord's Supper is something with individual reflection and responsibility does not negate the fact that Scripture specifies the assembly as the place it is observed.
- E. This is a matter of expediency.
- a. Expediencies in discussions of authority are matters which pertain to carrying out an established pattern.
 - i. Therefore, for a thing to be expedient it must be lawful.
 - ii. It is only an expediency if it carries out the pattern without adding to it or taking away.
 - b. Consider: It is expedient to assemble virtually during this present distress.
 - i. NOTE: Difference between “the best we can do,” and what is “expedient for carrying out the command.”
 - ii. Are we assembling when we tune in to a livestream? – NO – it is virtual, i.e. not actual.
 - iii. We are kept from assembling during this “present distress” in the same way as inclement weather – we are no more assembling now than we are then.
 - iv. If it is an expedient to keeping the pattern now THEN IT IS ALWAYS. (But since it causes an alteration of the pattern it is not.)
 - c. Consider: It is expedient in this “present distress” to observe the Lord's Supper away from the assembly.
 - i. Does this alter the pattern? – YES – **Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:18** – assembly

- ii. Then it is not a matter of expediency, BUT A VIOLATION OF THE PATTERN.
- F. We don't know how long this will last!
- a. Logic requires consistency.
 - i. When we are discussing what to do in spiritual matters, we must follow our thoughts to their logical end for consistency.
 - ii. If it leads to a place of clear violation, we must abandon the thought.
 - b. If the elapsed time is sufficient for an alteration of the pattern:
 - i. Then how long is long enough for the alteration to occur?
 - ii. What about those who are shut in and unable to assemble? Are they consistently provided the Lord's Supper?
 - c. Saul's unlawful sacrifice – **1 Samuel 13:8-14**
 - i. **(v. 8)** – waited 7 days but Samuel didn't come – HOW LONG?
 - ii. **(v. 11)** – excuse – you did not come “within the days appointed”
 - iii. **(vv. 13-14)** – he failed to keep the commandment of the Lord.
 - d. WAITING ON THE LORD REQUIRES ADHERANCE TO HIS WORD – **Psalm 37:34; 25:4-5**
- G. I think God will understand we are trying to honor Him and Christ.
- a. “I think God will understand” is a presumptuous statement unless followed by a “thus saith the Lord” from scripture.
 - b. How do we know what God thinks? – **1 Corinthians 2:10-13** – by inspired scripture only!
 - c. How do we honor God?
 - i. Consider the failure – **Romans 3:23** – fall short of God's glory – fail to honor Him – BY SINNING.
 - ii. What is sin? – **1 John 3:4** – violation of law. (pattern)
 - iii. Therefore, we can only honor God, or give glory to Him, BY KEEPING HIS LAW/WORD/PATTERN.
 - d. **Matthew 7:21-23** – they tried to honor Christ but failed.
 - e. David and Nathan had good intentions in proposing to build God a house – **2 Samuel 7:2-7** – God never said anything about it, so David didn't have authority.
 - f. What was wrong with Cain's offering? – **Genesis 4:3-5**
 - i. **(v. 5)** – God didn't respect his offering.
 - ii. “Cain didn't offer it with sincerity?” – where do we read that?
 - iii. “Cain didn't think his offering would bring God honor but offered it anyway?” – where do read that?
 1. **(v. 5)** – why would he react so strongly if he went in knowing God would not be pleased?
 2. OUR THOUGHTS AND INTENTS DON'T MAKE SOMETHING RIGHT.
 - iv. **Hebrews 11:4** – offered by faith vs not by faith.
 1. **Romans 10:17** – faith comes by hearing God's word.

2. Cain's was not respected BECAUSE IT WASN'T ACCORDING TO WHAT GOD HAD TOLD HIM.
 - g. How can we observe the Lord's Supper outside the assembly "by faith?"
 - i. Must be able to find authority for such in the word of God. **(Romans 10:17)**
 - ii. No direct statement/command, example, necessary inference?
 - iii. IF NOT, YOU CANNOT DO IT BY FAITH, AND GOD WILL NOT RESPECT IT.
 - h. We must not be guilty of "self-imposed religion" – **Colossians 2:20-23**
 - i. **"will-worship" (ASV; KJV); "self-made religion" (ESV; NASB)**
 - ii. *ethelothrēskia* – voluntary (arbitrary and unwarranted) piety, i.e. sanctimony. (STRONG)
 1. "voluntarily adopted "worship," whether unbidden or forbidden" (VINE)
 2. IF IT IS "UNBIDDEN" (not revealed by God) IT IS "SELF-IMPOSED RELIGION."
- H. If you don't partake because you are kept from assembling aren't you sinning by not partaking at all?
- a. Do we sin when we are kept from assembling, therefore kept from partaking of the Lord's Supper, because of inclement weather? NO
 - b. What about when we are too ill to come? NO
 - i. Etc.
 - c. Biblical principle – **Luke 14:1-6** – Jesus' words when healing a man (therefore, doing work) on the Sabbath.
- VII. A Logical Consequence of Ignoring the Assembly Component of the Lord's Supper
- A. We could justify a change of day as well.
 - a. Why do we KNOW beyond a shadow of a doubt that the first day of the week is the Lord's will on the "when" of the Lord's Supper?
 - i. **Acts 20:7** – the approved example. (ONLY SCRIPTURE WITH THE SPECIFIC DAY MENTIONED)
 - b. If ONE approved example of the "when" is enough to exclude any other:
 - i. What about 6 specific approved examples of the same "where" (assembly)? – **Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:17, 18, 20, 33, 34**
 - c. IF WE ACCEPT THE ONE EXCEPTION, WE MUST ACCEPT THE OTHER!

Conclusion

1. This is not a question of personal opinion, but a matter of establishing and holding to the pattern of sound words. **(cf. 2 Timothy 1:13)**
2. Anything we do must be done by faith or it is sin, and that must come from the established word of God **(cf. Romans 10:17)**.
3. Let us not alter the pattern of our Lord due to our "present distress," but wait on Him by holding fast to His word **(cf. Psalm 37:34)**.
4. Remember, in these times we are undergoing a test from our God **(cf. 1 Peter 1:6-7)**.