

"THE MEANING OF THE LORD'S SUPPER"

Introduction:

Something called "communion" is practiced by nearly all groups making up Christendom. They partake of "bread" and "wine" daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly or yearly. Some groups never do. But what is its true meaning? Is it really that important? Should Christians be faithful in observing it? If so, how often and in what way? Let's look at what the Bible says.

I. TERMS USED FOR THIS PRACTICE.

- A. Acts 2:42. What did the early Christians continue doing as a regular practice? (See also Acts 20:7; I Cor. 10:16)
- B. I Cor. 11:17-22. What was the practice called when the church "came together?"
- C. I Cor. 10:15-17. How do you suppose the word "communion" came to be used in connection with this practice?

II. THE ELEMENTS USED IN ITS OBSERVANCE.

- A. Matt. 26:26-29; I Cor. 11:23-28. What two ingredients were used when Jesus instituted this practice? (Note: What does Jesus call the "contents" of the cup in verse 29?)
- B. I Cor. 10:16-17; What do the "cup" and "bread" symbolize? (Note: Why do we assume these ingredients are only SYMBOLIC instead of ACTUAL?)

III. THE MANNER IN WHICH IT IS TO BE OBSERVED.

- A. I Cor. 10:16. What is meant by the words "which we bless"? (See the NIV on this; also, Matt. 26:26)
- B. I Cor. 11:27. What is the significance of the phrase "in an unworthy manner?"
- C. I Cor. 11:28. What is the significance of the phrase "let a man examine himself?"

IV. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PARTAKING OF THE CUP AND BREAD.

- A. I Cor. 11:24-25. Who is to be remembered when we partake of the cup and bread?
- B. I Cor. 11:26. What is said to be "proclaimed" in the partaking of the cup and bread?
- C. I Cor. 11:29. What does it mean to "discern," "judge" or "recognize" the body of Christ? (See NIV)
- D. Matt. 26:28. In drinking of the cup, what is said about the blood it represents?
- E. I Cor. 11:27-34. What is the danger of partaking of the Lord's Supper in an inappropriate manner? (See verse 17-22 for a description of inappropriate partaking).

V. THE FREQUENCY OF PARTAKING.

- A. Acts 2:42. What is said about how frequently the early church partook of "the breaking of bread"?
- B. I Cor. 10:14-22; 11:17-34. In view of the detailed attention given to the Lord's Supper by Paul, what does this say about its importance?
- C. Acts 20:7. On what day did the early church partake of the Lord's Supper? (See I Cor. 16:1-2 for evidence of a WEEKLY assembly of the church).
 - 1) "But every Lord's day do ye gather yourselves together, and break bread, and give thanksgiving after having confessed your transgressions" ("The Teaching of the Twelve", about A.D. 120, The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids, MI, Vol. 7, page 381.
- D. I Cor. 11:26. What is said about when Christians would cease partaking of the Lord's Supper?

Other discussion questions:

1. Do you think the observance of the Lord's Supper is being given its proper significance among the various churches today?
2. In what way(s) do you think it should be observed more carefully?
3. How important is the Lord's Supper to you? Does the frequency that you partake harmonize with Scriptural teaching?