

the Lord's Supper at *every* meal they ate together and believing that we should accept that as a precedent for today is not clearly indicated in any way in the Scriptures. However it *is* clearly indicated that those believers *did indeed* meet together *every* first day of the week and that the Lord's Supper was the reason for that meeting.

The frequency and time of observance of the Lord's Supper has become quite a big issue in recent years due to the desire of many to have "the Lord's Day meeting" on Saturday evening instead of, or in addition to Sunday. In order to begin such a practice however, a "case must be made and sold" to Christians that will allow alternative times *other* than the "...*first day of the week...*" to be Scripturally acceptable times to observe the Lord's Supper.

The Scriptures seem to be quite clear as to the appropriate time Christians are to observe the Lord's Supper. It's unfortunate that the "new hermeneutics" (method of interpreting the Scriptures) of today's culture is demanding that churches and individuals re-evaluate what seems to be so obvious. While we have spent most of this article discussing the appropriate *time* to partake of the Lord's Supper, that's only a small part of the greater issue. The real question to which each of us must be accountable to God is whether or not we partake in the way prescribed by Christ and the apostles. That *includes much more* than a discussion of time alone.

*"Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." (I Cor 11:27-30 KJV)*

Christians must comprehend mentally that the bread and fruit of the vine of which they are partaking *is in remembrance* of their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Focusing on anything other than that is failing to discern the Lord's Body and is therefore eating and drinking damnation to themselves. Jesus Christ instituted the Lord's Supper so that Christians would have a special time to remember His sacrifice on the cross. His very words were "...*do this in remembrance of me*" (Luke 22:19). It is a time to commune with *Him*. It's a time to be in a state of intimate sensitivity and receptivity to *Him*. It's a time set aside to recognize that He gave His life so that we could be saved. While there is surely a time for us to fellowship with each other, the Lord's Supper is the time He instituted for us to contemplate the great gift He gave to us. Let us pray that we all partake in a worthy manner.

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# DILIGENCE

*"We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure." — Hebrews 6:11*

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## The Lord's Supper

A topic that has received a lot of additional attention over the last few years is the observance of the Lord's Supper by Christians. Our own interest was recently piqued concerning this subject by the class we are currently attending. As with almost anything addressed in Scripture, a desire for change is appealing to anyone who for any reason, classifies a given practice as church tradition instead of Biblical teaching. So, even though space is limited we want to attempt to outline a few positions held concerning the time and frequency for observing the Lord's Supper and the proposed reasons for each of those positions. We'll list the Scriptures that those holding the particular view being discussed might use to attempt to justify their belief.

### Every day or more than once a day —

*"And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, (Acts 2:46 KJV)*

*"For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." (I Cor. 11:26 KJV)*

*"<sup>20</sup>When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper. <sup>21</sup>For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. <sup>22</sup>What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I praise you not...<sup>34</sup>And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation" (I Cor 11:20-22 and 34 KJV)*

Those who profess that the Lord's Supper may be observed at *least* once a day, every day, believe that the meals that were being shared daily *included* observance of the Lord's Supper. These meals are commonly referred to today as the "Agape" or "Love Feasts." However in the last Scripture listed above, we see from Paul's comments to the Corinthians that "mixing" common meals with observance of the Lord's Supper was a problem that the Corinthians needed to correct and Paul chastised them for it. Their emphasis had shifted from observance of the Death, Burial and Resurrection of Jesus the Christ to the fulfillment of the sensual desires of those observing the meal. As Paul states, "*Do you not*

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*have houses in which to eat and drink?” (NIV) We don’t have room in this article to engage in a thorough discussion as to the differences of opinion concerning the phrase “...breaking bread...” and its use in these and other verses. It is clear that the Lord’s Supper as well as simply sharing a common meal together are both referred to as “...breaking bread.” Therefore daily partaking of the Lord’s Supper becomes quite easy to justify if one chooses to rely solely on Acts 2:46.*

### **Sunday, the first day of the week —**

*“And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.” (Acts 20:7 KJV)*

*“Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.” (I Cor 16:1-2 KJV)*

*“I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,” (Rev. 1:10 KJV)*

This is obviously the most common practice among churches of Christ both now and through history — apparently all the way back to the days of the Apostles. Those who practice and profess this belief have concluded that a specific day of the week — Sunday, is to be recognized as the day to observe the Death, Burial and Resurrection of Jesus the Christ. Aside from the fact that the first Scripture listed above clearly states that “...the disciples came together to break bread...” on “...the first day of the week...”, the second Scripture speaks of the first day of the week as if there was an *understanding* that since the saints would be gathering together anyway to partake of the Lord’s Supper they should use the convenience of that time to “...lay by...in store...”. John also, in his writing in the book of Revelations seems to give some sort of special significance to a specific day by referring to it as “*the Lord’s Day*” — at least it warranted a special note that the particular time of that event was “...on the Lord’s Day.”

It may be important here to also note that observance of the Lord’s Supper on the first day of the week is a practice that every believer should *desire* to do in order to remember Christ’s sacrifice for him/her. It’s not a legalistic “get your hand stamped” requirement but is an *opportunity* for believers to know that no matter where they are in the world, saints *will* be meeting together on that day to partake of the Supper and they need only to find where fellow believers are gathering in order to participate in that Scriptural practice.

### **Only on special Sundays —**

*“For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come.” (I Cor. 11:26 KJV)*

This belief requires no specific time or frequency but accepts that the phrase “...as often as ye eat...” (or “...whenever you eat...” in the *New International Version*) is a *release* from observance of the Lord’s Supper every first day of the week. Practicing this belief generally provides for the scheduling of “special services” monthly or even quarterly to avoid the possibility that observance every week might become repetitious and lose its meaning. It seems that this practice fails to take into account the previous Scriptures we have read regarding observance on “*the first day of the week.*”

### **Saturday evening —**

*“On Saturday evening we gathered together for the fellowship meal. Paul spoke to the people and kept on speaking until midnight since he was going to leave the next day.” (Acts 20:7 Today’s English Version)*

The belief that it is acceptable to observe the Lord’s Supper on Saturday evening (in lieu of or in addition to Sunday) can be justified by accepting either one of two different beliefs. The first of course, is accepting that every (or any) day is appropriate and that there is no Scriptural requirement to observe the Lord’s Supper on the Lord’s Day. We’ve already discussed that belief earlier in this article. The second — and a bit more complicated — is accepting the theory that the author of Acts wrote the verse above with the Jewish method of time keeping in his mind. A Jewish-calendar day does not begin at midnight, but rather at or near sunset. The translators of the version of the Bible listed above obviously concluded that this was indeed the case and chose to allow the verse to read “*On Saturday evening...*” (It is important to note here that of the thirty different translations of the Bible that we checked, the TEV is the *only* one that uses this phrase, and that the very same Greek words are translated as “Sunday” in the TEV in Luke 24:1; John 20:1 and I Cor 16:2). This however does not stop one who wishes to justify a Saturday observance of the Lord’s Supper since such a one would conclude that Luke’s reference here in Acts to “*the first day of the week*” (*all other translations except TEV*) would have begun late Saturday evening anyway. This would seem to be quite a stretch since we don’t begin a new day at sunset and *our* first day of the week is of course Sunday. (A side note here is that this is a perfect example of how many of the modern translations of the Bible can easily put forth certain agendas that the translators may wish to promote to further whatever their particular cause or belief might be. Notice too that the TEV uses “*fellowship meal*” instead of “*break bread*” as most other versions do).

Influence on the time of observance of the Lord’s Supper is unfortunately too often determined more by religious leaders who are more interested in adapting to the current culture in order to increase attendance, than by the Bible itself. That’s why we see various denominations observing what they believe to be the Lord’s Supper on Saturday evening or perhaps only once a month or less or even daily for that matter. Choosing to accept that the early believers engaged in