

Communion Kits

By Paul R. Blake

(A fellow evangelist recently asked: "A man who is a disabled resident at the Veteran's Home asked one of our members who has been going to visit him if he would bring the Lord's Supper to him on Sunday afternoons. He is wondering if it is right to do that or not.")

Communing with the Lord is a remarkably unique activity. While most things we do in service to the Lord are either individual or collective responsibilities, communion has elements of both. We commune as individuals with the Lord, but we cannot commune apart from the collectivity. Taking the communion items to the sick at home or in hospital, or communion by a family or a few friends while out camping over a weekend are all practices that developed from misunderstanding the truth about the Lord's Supper: that is, while we partake as individuals, we cannot do it apart from the assembled church.

Jesus placed the Supper in the Kingdom (Church). "16 for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God... 18 for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes... 30 that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom" (Luke 22:16, 18, 30). The Lord's Supper was observed when the Kingdom (church) came together for the purpose of eating the Lord's Supper. "Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread..." (Acts 20:7)

1Corinthians 11:17-34 regulates the action of partaking in the church when the church was assembled to partake of the Lord's Supper. The context and instructions are limited to a church assembled for the purpose of eating the Lord's Supper. "17 Now in giving these instructions I do not praise you, since you come together not for the better but for the worse. 18 For first of all, when you come together as a church... 20 Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper. 21 For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of others; and one is hungry and another is drunk. 22 What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? ... 33 Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another."

The only scriptures that address partaking of the Lord's Supper speak of it being eaten by the church as a collectivity. There are no texts that speak of individuals eating it alone in a hospital, nursing home, or sick in bed at home. In Acts 20, Paul and company waited a week at Troas after leaving Philippi so they could eat the Lord's Supper with the assembled church. If it's acceptable for a few to pull off the road on a Sunday, open a communion kit, eat the Lord's Supper, and then continue on their journey, then why did Paul and his companions wait at Troas to eat with the church on Sunday when they came together to commune with the Lord?

A second misunderstanding regarding the communion is the misguided belief that the communion service is somehow more special, important, or sacred than the rest of our worship. Some even believe that the Lord's Supper somehow confers Divine affirmation of their fellowship with God, or gives them immunity or pardon from sins, or some other denominational concept. While communion may be the most solemn act of worship, it is certainly not more important than the others. This kind of thinking has led some to believe that communion is the only truly necessary thing that they do on the Lord's Day. They will stay until the communion service is over and leave before the worship period ends, as if to say, "I've taken the communion; I've done my duty this week. The rest of worship is optional."

Whatever just and acceptable reason that prevents one from assembling when the disciples come together to worship, also fully excuses that one from assembling with them when they come together to commune with the Lord. If I am in hospital and cannot come to sing, pray, give, and study, and I have the faith that God understands the limits of my flesh, then I must accept that God accepts my inability to attend to commune. Therefore, to have someone bring a communion kit to me while I am sick and unable to attend is a pointless exercise, because I am

not assembling to commune when the church assembles for that purpose; I am not practicing communion in the New Testament way; and, therefore I am not communing with the Lord, regardless of what I believe about it. I am simply going through a ritual created by men with misguided consciences. There is no Biblical instruction that authorizes carrying the communion to those who are sick or in hospital or invalid. God knows the limits of our bodies and understands when we are incapable of assembling to commune.

This, Too, Shall Pass

“It is said that an Eastern monarch once charged his wise men to invent him a sentence to be ever in view, and which should be true and appropriate in all times and situations. They presented him the words: 'And this, too, shall pass away.' How much it expresses! How chastening in the hour of pride! How consoling in the depths of affliction” (*Abraham Lincoln, Address, Wisconsin State Agricultural Society, September 30, 1859*).

Think About It

- Judas heard all of Jesus Christ's sermons.
- Happiness is a perfume you cannot pour on others without getting a few drops on yourself.
- Stewardship is what a man does after he says, 'I believe.'

Satan's Play

Doubt: makes you question God's Word and His goodness.

Discouragement: makes you look at your problems rather than at God.

Diversión: makes the wrong things seem attractive so that you will want them more than the right things.

Defeat: makes you feel like a failure so that you don't even try.

Delay: makes you put off doing something so that it never gets done. (*The Life Application Bible; Tyndale House, 1991, p13*)

A Moments Wisdom

(Taken from the walls of the Strum home)

- Live in such way that those who know you but don't know God, will come to know God because they know you.
- Life doesn't come with an instruction book. That's why we have fathers.
- Because two people fell in love.
- Grow old with me. The best is yet to be.
- Always kiss me goodnight.

Top Ten Ways You Can Tell When You Have Been Preaching Overseas Too Long:

1. You're not sure how to answer the question, "Where are you from?"
2. You read National Geographic and recognize someone.
3. You marvel at the cleanliness of gas station bathrooms.
4. You consider a city 500 km away to be "very close".
5. You watch nature documentaries and think about how good that animal would taste if it were fried.
6. You can cut grass with a machete, but don't know how to start a lawnmower.
7. You have friends in 29 different countries and sort them by continent.

8. Fitting 15 or more people into a car seems normal to you.
9. You refer to gravel roads as highways.
10. You don't think that two hours is a long sermon.

Yes, it seems humorous and those who preach overseas would give an all too familiar chuckle over this, but these preachers and their families really do live gracefully with difficulties that would send most of us into paroxysms of murmuring. I bear a great deal of admiration for them and pray that the Lord will bless them and their work with many souls. So should you.
(prb)