

## True Church (6)- A Family Around the Table

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(1 Corinthian 10:16-17)

### I. Introduction

- A. When I was a kid, our the supper table was an-all-but-sacred family event
  - 1. Dad was usually late getting home from work, but we had supper together
    - a. Wednesdays, it was fish at Howard Johnsons before church (*all can eat*)
    - b. But usually Mom made dinner, and we were expected to eat together
      - 1) We didn't watch TV (*even TV dinners*). I didn't appreciate that then
      - 2) Sometimes we had friends over to eat, but we always ate together
  - 2. Suppertime wasn't just family time, it was sometimes the only family time
    - a. Dad had business; only time we knew we'd see him was supper & church
      - 1) Sometimes supper was debriefing, "*So... what did you do today*"
      - 2) Supper was more than just a time for food— it was a time for family
    - b. We tried to keep that tradition with our girls (*even the part with Dad late*)
  - 3. We are so busy (*especially the kids*) that its hard to keep this supper ritual
    - a. It's easier to just eat on the run at different times and at different places
    - b. Is the decline of family suppertime a factor in the decline of family?
  - 4. Maybe we need to try harder to bring back family evening mealtime
- B. That's what we want to talk about this morning—our family supper as a church
  - 1. There is something about the ritual of family supper that bonds us together
    - a. So there is something about the Lord's Supper that bonds us together
    - b. The word "*communion*" isn't in the NIV or most of the newer versions
      - 1) They use "*participation*" or "*fellowship*" or "*sharing*" for *κοινωνία*
      - 2) But maybe the old "*communion*" emphasizes better idea of **common**
  - 2. Let's face it, Lord's Supper is a bit strange if you aren't used to the church
    - a. I remember an unchurched person complaining about lousy refreshments
      - 1) They could tell the church was a bit poor—couldn't afford a piano
      - 2) But a pinch of cracker and a tiny cup of juice? *That's pretty pitiful!*
    - b. Symbolism is the thing— sharing (communion) the body/blood of Christ
  - 3. I want to talk about family supper and the idea of sharing or communion

## II. Our Communion with Christ (1 Cor 10)

### A. The context here is Paul's discussion on meats offered to idols (1 Cor 8:1)

1. OK, this isn't a huge issue for us, but we don't live in ancient Corinth
  - a. Portions of pagan sacrifices went to support the pagan priest (*like in OT*)
  - b. If most meat sold at the market supports paganism, **then do you buy it?**
    - 1) When Bush Gardens opened, some refused to go. (*Like I do now*)
    - 2) Should Christian spend money at *King of American* [Belgian] *Beer*?
2. Paul's answer takes three chapters—which shows how ticklish issue is
  - a. **Basic Point:** Eat anything at the market without asking question (10:15)  
(*This is one point of scripture that we have down pat; just watch us at potlucks*)
  - b. **Caveat:** If someone is offended (*is pulled to the pagan*), decline to eat
3. But if it's OK to eat pagan ham, what about going to a pagan temple?
  - a. That's a pig of a different color— "*dear friends, flee from idolatry*" (14)
  - b. To participate in a pagan feast isn't about food but fellowship
  - c. We aren't to participate (κοινωνία) with demons or pagan gods (10:20)

### B. **Point One:** Communion is participation with body/blood of Christ (10:16)

1. In this act of communion, we share or participate in the act of the cross
  - a. We take on ourselves and for ourselves the reality of the Christ event
    - 1) We again come in contact with the body that He sacrificed
    - 2) We are again baptized in the blood of the cross that saves us
  - b. In this act of eating and drinking, we reenact the message of the cross
2. The exact nature of this holy event has been debated across the years
  - a. **Luther:** Sacramental union where Christ is "*in, with, and under*" the host
  - b. **Calvin:** Spiritual union where "*Spirit truly unites things separated in space*"
  - c. **Wesley:** Saw an "*Instrumental grace thru which is the real presence of Christ*"
3. We can sense in all this a struggle to "*unscrew the inscrutable*" of mystery
  - a. For many of us, the Lord's Supper never really has been very mysterious
    - 1) We tend to see it as basically **visual aide** or **memory device** (*Zwingli*)
    - 2) Irony: We see something happening in baptism, but not communion
  - b. Paul sees baptism and communion as a participation with Christ at cross

- C. **Point Two:** There is another communion participation going on ([1 Cor 10:17](#))
1. Communion is also a proclamation of our unity and our community
    - a. There is one loaf; we are one body; communion proclaims community
      - 1) Some don't break the bread into trays until after prayer—one loaf
      - 2) Some have bite size to make easier on older—that's community too!
    - b. Communion proclaims that we come to the cross, so we come together
  2. We haven't always stressed this proclamation of unity in communion
    - a. In fact, sometimes we've stressed everything but union in communion
      - 1) We've stressed **forms** of communion, and argued over multiple cups
      - 2) We've stressed **frequency** of communion, and argued about the day
      - 3) We've stressed the **formula** of communion-- wine vs grape juice
    - b. We've missed point! What you can't do in communion... is **ARGUE!**
  3. In the next chapter, Paul makes this familiar statement ([1 Cor 11:27-29](#))
    - a. Many assume that the “*unworthy manner*” here refers to moral living
      - 1) Years ago, a brother gave a table talk where he hit this verse hard
      - 2) “*Don't eat if this week you've been drunk, shoplifted, lied, lusted...*”
    - b. Paul isn't talking about our lives (*no one is worthy*) but **how** we eat
      - 1) In context of [1 Cor 11](#), “*unworthy manner*” is division and disunity
      - 2) **Background:** Agape meal that preceded communion (like Passover)
        - a) The rich were feasting and drinking while the poor had nothing ([11:21](#))
        - b) Then had communion? Paul, “*Do you despise the church of God*” ([11:22](#))
    - c. That is a communion without “*honoring the body of Christ*” (NLT)
    - d. F. F. Bruce, in *Paul: The Apostle of the Heart Set Free*, puts it this way  
*To eat and drink "without discerning the body" meant quite simply to take the bread and cup at the same time as they were treating their fellow Christians uncharitably in thought and behavior.*
  4. Lord's Supper is communion with Christ and with the family of Christ
    - a. Yes, in communion, we go back to the cross—but we go there together
      - 1) In Lord's Supper, we commune or share in the miracle of the cross
      - 2) But we do so within a community of believers, a community of cross
    - b. We come to affirm Jesus, but we also come to affirm our brothers/sisters
    - c. Let these words focus communion in 2 directions ([Come Share the Lord](#))

### III. The Lord's Supper

- A. We've talked about it, so eat our family Supper... together.
1. **BREAD:** Begin passing the bread—but HOLD IT until everyone is served
    - a. What's the first thing people notice as different when they visit here first?
    - b. I mean besides dynamic preaching. *Probably it's our cappella singing*
    - c. Secondly, maybe its communion every week (*most have it monthly/quarterly*)
      - 1) We're a "*Community of Cross.*" What better way to stress cross?
      - 2) I don't want to argue this is the only way, but this is our way
    - d. This is the body of Christ—symbol, participation, power (**PRAYER**)
  2. **CUP:** Begin passing the cup—but HOLD IT until everyone is served
    - a. There is a problem doing communion our way—it can become ordinary
      - 1) It can become a ritual—do it by rote, don't really focus, phone it in
      - 2) That's why we occasionally have services that focus on communion
    - b. But remember our illustration as communion as the church's family meal
      - 1) The power in having a family supper each night is **the each night**
        - a) Every family meal isn't great—neither the food nor the company
        - b) But it's power is that it is a daily, regular time to be together
      - 2) Part of the power of communion— come to the cross each week
    - c. This is the blood of cross where Jesus gave life to give life (**PRAYER**)

### IV. Invitation

- A. We come to the cross as people of the so we can bear the cross (**Luke 9:23**)
1. What does it mean to carry our cross? This isn't burden (*my cross to bear*)
  2. What it means is that we will live this crucified life like Jesus daily
    - a. When insulted and tempted to strike back, you don't because He didn't
    - b. When a lie will get you off hook, you tell truth because He died for truth
    - c. When tempted to succeed by hurting others, you don't for died for them
    - d. When tempted to be selfish with time/money, you give because He gave
    - e. When hurt by someone's words or action, you forgive because He did
- B. Truly remembering the cross changes us into image of the one who died there
- C. That is the challenge this morning, and that is the invitation as well