

# WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CHURCH MEMBER?

## What Does It Mean To Be Part Of A Church?, Part 3

### Acts 2:41-47

#### 1. What Is A Local Church?

- "... a local church is a group of Christians who regularly gather in Christ's name to officially affirm and oversee one another's membership in Jesus Christ and his kingdom through gospel preaching and gospel ordinances." *Leeman, Jonathan (2012-04-30). Church Membership: How the World Knows Who Represents Jesus (9Marks: Building Healthy Churches) (pp. 52-53). Crossway. Kindle Edition.*

#### 2. What Is A Church Member?

- "church membership is a formal relationship between a church and a Christian characterized by the church's affirmation and oversight of a Christian's discipleship and the Christian's submission to living out his or her discipleship in the care of the church." *ibid (p. 64)*

#### 3. How Did The Church Begin?

- a. The Church Was A "Mystery" In The Old Testament
  - 1) Old Testament Clues (Gen 12:3; Isa 42:6-7)
  - 2) New Testament Unveiling (Eph 3:2-6; Col 1:24,26)
- b. Christ Predicted The Church (Mt 16:18)
- c. The Church Could Not Function Until Christ, The Head, Was Resurrected (Eph 1:20-23)
- d. Spiritual Gifts Would Become Operational After Christ's Ascension (Eph 4:7-12)
- e. The Church Began When The Holy Spirit Arrived At Pentecost (Acts 2:1-5)
- f. The Church Was Immediately A Purposeful Institution (Acts 2:41-47)

#### I. Church Members Are Identified Through \_\_\_\_\_ (41)

<sup>41</sup> Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church that day—about 3,000 in all.

#### II. Church Members Are Devoted To Study The \_\_\_\_\_ Together (42a)

<sup>42a</sup> All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching,

#### III. Church Members Share \_\_\_\_\_ Together – Spiritually, Materially, Socially (42b)

<sup>42b</sup> and to fellowship,

#### IV. Church Members Commemorate Their \_\_\_\_\_ Salvation Together Through Communion (42c)

<sup>42c</sup> and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper),

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<sup>42d</sup> and to prayer. <sup>43</sup> A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders.

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<sup>44</sup> And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. <sup>45</sup> They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need.

#### VII. Church Members \_\_\_\_\_ Together Regularly With Praise (46-47a)

<sup>46</sup> They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity—<sup>47</sup> all the while praising God

#### VIII. Church Members Enjoy Giving And Receiving \_\_\_\_\_ (47b)

<sup>47b</sup> and enjoying the goodwill of all the people.

#### IX. Church Members Are Focused On Church \_\_\_\_\_ (47c)

<sup>47c</sup> each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.

[http://thomrainer.com/2012/01/25/i\\_am\\_a\\_church\\_member/](http://thomrainer.com/2012/01/25/i_am_a_church_member/)

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#### IX. Church Members Are Focused On Church Growth (47c)

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Joshua Harris, *Stop Dating The Church*, profiles commitment (pp. 67ff)

- a. You Join
  - "I'm here...tentatively...at least for the immediate future...I think."
  - "I'm here, all of me, and I trust God with my future."
  - Jim Elliott: "Wherever you are, be all there."
- b. You make the local church a priority.
  - Cites student: "For me, choosing the right school followed choosing the right church." (p. 70)
- c. You try to make your pastor's joy
  - "First, embrace, obey, and love God's Word personally. Noting makes a pastor happier than to see a member of his church growing in godliness." (p. 71)
  - "And take it upon yourself to protect your pastor by praying for him and by refusing to engage in slander against him."
- d. You find ways to serve

- "Serving is spending yourself – energy, time, and gifts – for something outside of yourself." (p. 71)

**1 Peter 4:10** As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

- Serving helps you to own the church – belong, commitment
- e. You give
- "Money is a tangible return for what we have invested of ourselves – in time, abilities, business choices, and other personal resources." (p. 74)
- f. You connect with people
- "doing life" with each other
  - pursuing relationships with church outside of the church building
  - fellowship
- g. You share you passion

### 3. How Did The Church Begin?

#### a. The Church Was A "Mystery" In The Old Testament

- *musterion* = that which is hidden and intended to be revealed in time

##### 1) Old Testament Clues (Gen 12:3; Isa 42:6-7)

**Genesis 12:3** "And in you [Abraham] all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

**Isaiah 42:6-7** "I, the LORD, have called You in righteousness, and will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, as a light to the Gentiles, to open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the prison, those who sit in darkness from the prison house."

##### 2) New Testament Unveiling (Eph 3:2-6; Col 1:24,26)

**Ephesians 3:2-6** "If indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you, how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel"

- the mystery, unknown to Old Testament Jews, is that the Gentiles will be fellow heirs with Israel in the dispensation of grace

- “Though there is a continuity between the redeemed of all ages..., there is a discontinuity because redeemed today are placed in the body of Christ and not in some sort of Israel. Similarly the redeemed before Abraham’s day (like Enoch and Noah) did not belong to Israel, yet they belonged to the family of God. So there are pre-Israel redeemed (pre-Abrahamic saints) and post-Israel saints (Christians in the body of Christ).” (Ryrie, p. 400)

**Colossians 1:24,26** “The church...the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints.”

**b. Christ Predicted The Church (Mt 16:18)**

**Matthew 16:18** “I will build My church”

- “He did not say that He would continue to add to something already in existence, but that He would do something not yet begun.” (Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, p. 399)

**c. The Church Could Not Function Until Christ, The Head, Was Resurrected (Eph 1:20-23)**

**Ephesians 1:20-23** “which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places...And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”

**d. Spiritual Gifts Would Become Operational After Christ’s Ascension (Eph 4:7-12)**

**Ephesians 4:7-12** “But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift. Therefore He says: ‘When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.’ (Now this, “He ascended”—what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.) And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ”

**e. The Church Began When The Holy Spirit Arrived At Pentecost (Acts 2:1-5)**

**Acts 2:1-5** “When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. <sup>2</sup>And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup>Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. <sup>4</sup>And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. <sup>5</sup>And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven.”

**f. The Church Was Immediately A Purposeful Institution (Acts 2:41-47)**

**Acts 2:41-47** <sup>41</sup>Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. <sup>42</sup>And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. <sup>43</sup>Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. <sup>44</sup>Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, <sup>45</sup>and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. <sup>46</sup>So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, <sup>47</sup>praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved."

**I. Church Members Are Identified Through Baptism (41)**

<sup>41</sup> Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church that day—about 3,000 in all.

**A. The Meaning Of Baptism Is Identifying With Christ's Death And Resurrection**

1. **Literally** – Baptism means **"to dip", "to immerse", or "to sink."** The New Testament word is *baptizo* which was used of dipping a cloth into dye, dipping a pitcher into water, or dipping an object into wax. (Luke 16:24; John 13:26; Revelation 19:13)
2. **Symbolically** – Baptism is symbolic of **"identification"**.

Type Of Baptism	Scripture	Identification
<b><i>Israel's baptism into Moses</i></b>	1 Corinthians 10:2	Identified with Moses
<b><i>John The Baptist's baptism</i></b>	Matthew 3:6,11	Identified with repentance of sin
<b><i>Jesus' baptism</i></b>	Matthew 3:13-16	Identified as the Messiah
<b><i>Holy Spirit's baptism</i></b>	1 Corinthians 12:13	Identifies with the Body of Christ (Church)
<b><i>Believer's baptism</i></b>	Romans 6:3-8	Identifies with death, burial and resurrection of Christ

**B. The Message Of Baptism Is A Public Testimony Of Salvation**

*A bride and groom wear wedding rings as public testimonies to identify themselves as married. The rings are not essential to be married, but is declarative of it. Similarly, the believer's baptism is like a wedding ring – not a requirement for salvation, but a public testimony of salvation.*

1. **An Identification With Christ** – Romans 6 depicts how a the immersion of a believer is a picture of Jesus' death (vv. 3,5), burial (v.4) and resurrection (vv. 4,5,8)
2. **A Public Testimony** – A believer's baptism a testimony to the world, family, friends and church that he/she has put their trust in Jesus Christ as their Savior.

**C. The Motive For Baptism Is An Act Of Obedience**

1. **Baptism Is Not A Prerequisite For Salvation** - Salvation is a prerequisite for baptism (Acts 8:36-38). Salvation is by the grace of God through faith alone, not by works like baptism (Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5).

a. Salvation is totally God’s work, not man’s work in any way.

**Ephesians 2:8-9** “For by grace you have been saved through faith and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”

b. Baptism is distinguished from the Gospel.

**1 Corinthians 1:17** “For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect.”

c. In the New Testament, individuals were baptized after they were saved.

**Acts 8:36-38** “And the eunuch said, ‘See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?’ Then Philip said, ‘If you believe with all your heart, you may.’ And he answered and said, ‘I believe...and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.”

**Acts 10:45-48** “And those...who believed were astonished...Then Peter answered, ‘Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?’ And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days.”

*\* Also refer to Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38,41; 8:12-13; 9:17-18; 16:30-34; 18:8; 19:1-7*

d. If someone sincerely had faith in Christ as his/her Savior but didn’t have the opportunity to be baptized, would they still go to heaven? Yes.

**Luke 23:42-43** “Then he (the thief on the cross) said to Jesus, ‘Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.’”

**Note: Why Do Some People Believe That Baptism Is A Requirement For Salvation?**

- They do not distinguish spirit baptism and water (or believer’s) baptism.
  - There are several types of baptism taught in the Bible:

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Jesus' baptism	Matthew 3:13-16	Identified as the Messiah
Holy Spirit's baptism	1 Cor 12:13; Gal 3:26-27	Identifies the believer with the Body of Christ (Church) at salvation
Believer's baptism	Acts 2:38	Identifies the believer with Christ after salvation

- Passages used by people that believe baptism is a requirement for salvation use passages that refer to spirit baptism. (Romans 6:3; Galatians 3:7; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 4:5; Colossians 2:12)
- They do not interpret passages in a consistent manner with the rest of Scripture.

Passage	Inconsistent Interpretation	Consistent Interpretation
Acts 2:38	baptized <b>for</b> ( <i>for the purpose of</i> ) salvation	baptized <b>for</b> ( <i>on the basis of</i> ) salvation
Mark 16:15-16	belief + baptism = salvation	emphasis that belief is necessary for salvation and non-belief is basis for condemnation – baptism mentioned only as an external symbol
Acts 22:6	baptize = washing away of sin	grammatical construction connects "wash away sins" to "calling on his name"
1 Peter 3:21	water immersion removes dirt from flesh	Peter refers to believer being immersed in Christ's death & resurrection
John 3:5	"born of water" = salvation by baptism	water = physical birth, Word of God or another analogy to the Holy Spirit
Titus 3:5	"washing of regeneration" = baptism	washing – done by HS through the Word of God, not water; besides this verse says: "not by works of righteousness which we have don"

2. **Baptism Is Not For Infants** - Since infants are unable to comprehend the gospel of grace or place their faith in Christ, baptism would have no meaning for them. Some denominations see infant baptism as bestowing God's grace on them, but this is not a scriptural teaching. Others see infant baptism as a symbol of the parents dedication of the child to God. FBC has Baby Dedication Services when the parents dedicate themselves and their child to the Lord in a public declaration and prayer, but we do not practice infant baptism.

- the Roman Catholics believe that babies who die without being christened or baptized go to "the Limbo of the Innocent" where a child will live without suffering, but also without God

- infant baptism originated when the Roman Catholic Church wanted to make everyone a Christian, even from birth, by baptizing them into the Catholic Church and putting them under the authority of the Roman Catholic Church

- Reformed Churches adopted this practice with the twist that the baptized baby becomes a member of the "covenant people" and is later confirmed during "Confirmation" by reciting the church's catechism

- the Anabaptist (*ana* = again) was a movement that arose countering the false teaching of infant baptism and rebaptizing genuine believers and were greatly persecuted by both Catholic and Protestant churches

3. ***Baptism Is An Act Of Obedience To God's Command*** - Acts 2:38 contains the Apostle Peter's command "*Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for [as a result of] the remission of sins.*" Matthew 28:18-20 commands the disciples to baptize others.

- ultradispensationalists (ie/ E.W. Bullinger), the Salvation Army and the Quakers deny the relevance of baptism in the life of believers today

4. ***Baptism Is A Testimony Of Our Faith In Christ*** - Scripture consistently places the testimony of baptism after the event of faith in Christ (Acts 2:41; 8:12; 9:17-18; 10:47-48; 16:30-34; 18:8; 19:1-7; Galatians 3:26-27).

#### **D. The Method Of Baptism Is Immersion (Dipping)**

- **Immersion** best depicts the literal meaning of the word. *Baptizo* literally means "to dip". There are other specific Greek words for "pouring" (*ekcheo*) and "sprinkling" (*rhantizo*), but they are never used in the New Testament to refer to the practice of believer's baptism.
- **Immersion** best represents the examples of baptism in the Scriptures. Immersion was done by John the Baptist (John 3:23), Jesus Christ (Matthew 3:16; Mark 1:9-10) and Philip the Evangelist (Acts 8:38-39).
- **Immersion** best symbolizes the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (Romans 6:3-8).
- **Immersion** best represents the practice in the early church. In early Christian writings, *The Shepherd of Hermas* (100 AD) says "So they go down into the water dead, and they come up alive." *The Letter of Barnabas* (130 AD) describes baptism as "the water bath." The earliest reference to any other mode of baptism is 150 AD (*The Didache*).

## **II. Church Members Are Devoted To Study The Bible Together (42a)**

<sup>42a</sup> *All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching,*

- The Wycliffe Bible was the first translation of the English Bible. John Wycliffe was responsible for initiating the translation, which was finished by John Purvey in approximately 1388 A.D.
- In approximately 1228 A.D., the Bible was divided into chapters by Stephen Langton.
- In approximately 1448 A.D., the Old Testament was divided into verses by R. Nathan.
- In approximately 1551 A.D., the New Testament was divided into verses by Robert Stephanus.
- A Bible in the University of Gottingen is written on 2,470 palm leaves.

- Smallest Bible published was the “Mite Bible” published by Oxford University Press in 1896. Pages: 28 x 41mm (1.62 x 1.12”); 900 pages long; 13 mm (0.5”) thick
- According to statistics from Wycliffe International, the Society of Gideons, and the International Bible Society, the number of new Bibles that are sold, given away, or otherwise distributed in the United States is about 168,000 per day.
- Of 6,500 languages spoken in the world, 2,167 languages have some or all of the Bible (355 complete Bibles, 850 New Testaments).
- 4,333 languages are without any Bible part of the Bible translated
- A number of verses in the Bible (KJV) contain all but 1 letter of the alphabet: Ezra 7:21 contains all but the letter j; Joshua 7:24, 1st Kings 1:9, 1st Chronicles 12:40, 2nd Chronicles 36:10, Ezekiel 28:13, Daniel 4:37, and Haggai 1:1 contain all but q; 2 Kings 16:15 and 1st Chronicles 4:10 contain all but z; and Galatians 1:14 contains all but k.
- There is no word more than six syllables in the Bible.

#### **Sources for Statistics:**

Tim Dowley (editor), *The Crossway Illustrated Bible Handbook*, p. 224

Paul Lee Tan, *Encyclopedia Of 7700 Illustrations*

[http://www.amazingbible.org/Documents/Bible\\_Desk/bible\\_statistics.htm](http://www.amazingbible.org/Documents/Bible_Desk/bible_statistics.htm)

[http://agards-bible-timeline.com/q10\\_bible-facts.html](http://agards-bible-timeline.com/q10_bible-facts.html)

[http://sites.silaspartners.com/partner/Article\\_Display\\_Page/0,,PTID34418|CHID629816|CIID1418176,00.html](http://sites.silaspartners.com/partner/Article_Display_Page/0,,PTID34418|CHID629816|CIID1418176,00.html)

### **A. Eat It: The Bible Is Spiritual Food For Your Spiritual Life**

**1 Peter 2:2** <sup>2</sup>like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation,

**Colossians 3:16** <sup>16</sup>Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

### **B. Search It: The Bible Is A Treasure Trove Of Spiritual Gems**

**Acts 17:11-13** <sup>11</sup>Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.

### **C. Obey It: The Bible Gives Wise Answers For Everyday Problems**

**Psalms 119:97-104** <sup>97</sup>O how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day. <sup>98</sup>Your commandments make me wiser than my enemies, for they are ever mine. <sup>99</sup>I have more insight than all my teachers, For Your testimonies are my meditation. <sup>100</sup>I understand more than the aged, because I have observed Your precepts. <sup>101</sup>I have restrained my feet from every evil way, that I may keep Your word. <sup>102</sup>I have not turned aside from Your ordinances, For You Yourself have taught me. <sup>103</sup>How sweet are Your words to my taste! Yes, sweeter than honey to my mouth! <sup>104</sup>From Your precepts I get understanding; Therefore I hate every false way.

- Love The Word (97a)
- Meditate On The Word (97b)
- Depend On The Word To Give You Wisdom To Deal With:
  - Difficult People (98)

- Difficult Circumstances (99-100)
- Difficult Temptations (101-104)

- ***Reading the Bible is not riding on a cruise, but rowing your own kayak.***

### **Pick A Plan**

- Set a goal to read through the Bible, OT, NT, or Psalms & Gospels. Or listen to Bible via CD or MP3 or even online. Your choice!
- CD's and MP3's of Audio Bibles have a running time of 76 hours
- 76 hours divided by 365 days = 12.5 minutes per day

### **III. Church Members Share Their Life Together – Spiritually, Materially, Socially (42b)**

<sup>42b</sup> and to fellowship,

- Fellowship = Gr. *koinonia* - used 60x in NT- comes from the root word which means "to share, to have in common"
  - *koinonia* is used more than just in a material sense, but mostly in a spiritual sense
  - finding our commonness in Christ
  - sharing our common struggles with each other
- Tolstoy - "You cannot have a brotherhood without brothers."
- John Loftness: *What is fellowship as defined in the New Testament? Just this: participating together in the life and truth made possible by the Holy Spirit through our union with Christ. Fellowship is sharing something in common on the deepest possible level of human relationship—our experience of God himself. (Why Small Groups)*
- C.J. Mahaney: *Genuine fellowship isn't practical in a crowd of 200 or 2,000. That's why I feel so strongly that churches must create small groups where Christians can develop intimate relationships, where they can "know and be known." A church following a biblical model will not just "have" small groups. It will not merely "offer" small groups. Rather, it will be built with small groups.*
- Four purposes of small groups
  - Sanctification – accountability
  - Mutual Care
  - Fellowship
  - Experiencing & Expressing Gifts of the Holy Spirit
- our commonness in Christ makes us a family
- our jobs are in the need meeting business
- the church is not a country club, we're a hospital
- IE/ Bruce Larson, *Dare To Live Now*, "The neighborhood bar is possibly the best counterfeit there is to the fellowship Christ wants to give His church. It's an imitation, dispensing liquor instead of grace, escape rather than reality. But it is a permissive, accepting, and inclusive fellowship. It is unshockable, it is democratic. You can tell people secrets and they usually don't tell others, or want to. The bar flourishes not because people are alcoholics, but

because God has put into the human heart the desire to know and be known, to love and be loved, and so many seek a counterfeit at the price of a few beers.”

Q: What can you contribute - time, energy, concentration, money, possession - to meet the needs of someone struggling?

- the most difficult for most of us is time
- when all that is needed often times is a listening ear

#### **IV. Church Members Commemorate Their Common Salvation Together Through Communion (42c)**

<sup>42c</sup> and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper),

##### **A. The Pictures Of Communion**

###### 1. Breaking Of Bread

**Acts 2:42** “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the *breaking of bread*, and in prayers.”

**1 Corinthians 11:23-24** “For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.”

- the early communion was a meal

###### 2. Communion

*koinonia* = having things in common, sharing

###### 3. Lord's Table – the Lord invites us to His table

- not the Baptist table or FBC table or the pastor's table, but the Lord's

**Psalms 23:5** “You prepare a table before me”

###### 4. Lord's Supper

**1 Corinthians 11:20** “Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the *Lord's Supper*”

###### 5. Eucharist – giving thanks, lit. good grace

##### **B. The Past Of Communion**

- The Passover** – instituted in Exodus 12 commemorating God’s protection of Israel during the plague of death in Egypt

### Similarities Of Passover And Communion

	<b>Passover</b>	<b>Communion</b>
<b>Continual Observance</b>	<b>Ex 12:24</b> And you shall observe this thing as an ordinance for you and your sons forever	<b>1 Cor 11:26</b> For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes.
<b>Usage of Bread</b>	<b>Ex 12:18</b> You shall eat unleavened bread	<b>Mt 26:26</b> Took bread, blessed and broke it...“Take, eat; this is My body”
<b>Involvement of Blood</b>	<b>Ex 12:7</b> Take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it.	<b>Mt 26:28</b> For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins
<b>Corporate Celebration</b>	1 lamb per household, some households joined with others, nation celebrated it on one day	<b>Acts 2:46</b> So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart
<b>Pictures of Redemption</b>	<b>Ex 12:26-27</b> It is the Passover sacrifice of the LORD, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when He struck the Egyptians and delivered our households.’	<b>1 Cor 5:7-8</b> For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

- The Love Feast** – the combination of a fellowship meal and communion (Jude 12)

- “The early church attached Communion to a meal not only because the Lord Jesus had done so, but because the Jewish people had always associated the Passover with a meal. The Gentiles likewise included a potluck meal with their religious festivals.” (John MacArthur, *Rediscovering Pastoral Ministry*, p. 353)
- The Corinthian church abused the love feast as the more affluent people came early and ate the good food they brought for the potluck before the poor arrived (1 Cor 11:33-34)

### C. The Purpose Of Communion

- Remembrance – to memorialize the death of Christ**

**1 Corinthians 11:24** “Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.”

- Commonness – to remember the death of Christ with others in the body of Christ**

**1 Corinthians 10:16-17** “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? <sup>17</sup>For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread.”

## D. The Practice Of Communion

### 1. The Regularity

#### a. Daily

**Acts 2:46** "So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness"

#### b. Weekly

**Acts 20:7** "Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread"

### 2. The Elements

#### a. Bread

#### b. Cup

### 3. The Motivation

**1 Corinthians 11:27** "Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged."

- MacArthur lists 5 ways people can be guilty of participating in communion unworthily
  - By ignoring it rather than obeying it
  - By failing to observe it meaningfully
  - By assuming it can save
  - By refusing to confess and repent from sin
  - By having a lack of respect and love for God or His people (*ibid*, pp. 357-8)

## V. Church Members Are Committed To Prayer (42d-43)

<sup>42d</sup> and to prayer. <sup>43</sup> A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders.

### A. The Need For A Praying Church (Acts 12:1-4)

- The Church Is Under Continual Attack From Satan (1)
- Each Believer Is Under Continual Attack From Satan (2-4)

### B. The Portrait Of A Praying Church (Acts 12:5,12)

- **Prayer Was Being Offered Strenuously (5a)**
  - "without ceasing" = lit. "strenuously, with agony"
  - Warren Wiersbe points out that this is the "same word translated "earnestly" in Luke 22:44 when the Lord Jesus prayed with great agony in the garden.
  - wrestling with God until we come under the submission of His will
  - The church was probably agonizing over the fear of maybe losing Peter, as they did James. How can we lose Him? How can God let Peter get arrested? How could God let James be taken? Or Stephen? Could God really work through that corrupt Roman government and prison system? Is God bigger than the Roman Empire?
- **Prayer Was Being Offered Specifically (5b)**
  - they prayed specifically for Peter
  - Q: How would you pray for Peter in this case?
    - 1) Release - if it was God's will
    - 2) His faith while in prison
  - v.6 Peter asleep in prison - at rest - trusting God
    - not fretting looking for legal loopholes
    - not protesting injustice and fighting for his innocence
    - just asleep between two guards who were chained to his arms and legs
  - v.7 angel comes, chains fall
  - v.10 got past 2 guard posts, miraculously open gate
- **God answers prayer!!**

v.12 went to John Mark's mother's house

- **where they were gathered together to pray for Peter**

- God answers prayer sometimes before we're through praying  
- He is sovereign

### **Compare Acts 4:30 with 12:1**

**Acts 12:1** - Satan, through Herod stretched his hand to vex/assault the church

**Acts 4:30** - God stretches His hand to wonderful things when God's people pray (v.31)

- Prayer Was Being Offered Corporately (5c,12)

## **VI. Church Members Are Committed To Giving To Meet Needs (44-45)**

<sup>44</sup> And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. <sup>45</sup> They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need.

### **A. Periodic - "On the first day of the week"**

- Be regular. There could be varied intervals – but the regularity of the act brings a regularity to a spirit of thanksgiving and joy.

**B. Personal** - "let each one of you"

IE/ Many years ago a certain woman was preparing a box to be sent to some box. Eventually this tract reached a Burmese chief and was used to lead him to a saving knowledge of Christ. The chief told the story of his conversion to his friends, many of whom believed. Eventually a church was established there and over 1,500 natives were converted to Christianity. Who gives and how much is given - it doesn't matter. God can use a child's penny!

**C. Planned** - "lay something aside, storing up"

- lay something aside and save
- Gr. word *thesaurizo* where we get our *thesaurus*, a collection or treasury of words

**D. Proportionate** - "as he may prosper"

- as God blesses you, give generously to Him

IE/ A well known philanthropist was asked, "How is it that you give away so much, and yet have so much left?"

"I suppose it's like this" he replied. "I shovel out, and God shovels in, and he has a bigger shovel than I do."

**VII. Church Members Worship Together Regularly With Praise (46-47a)**

<sup>46</sup> They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity—<sup>47</sup> all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.

- English Origin - Anglo-Saxon word - "ascribing worth to someone or something" (Psalm 96:5-8), "Worship"
- Martin Luther: "Worshiping God is nothing else than glorifying God." (*The Theology Of Martin Luther*)
- Greek Origin - *leitourgia* = "service" (Romans 12:1-2)
- Hebrew Origin - Heb. *abad* = "tend it" or "serve it" = describes worship and service to God (Gen 2:15)

WORK = WORSHIP

- for Adam to take care of God's garden was His worship

**Psalm 29:2** "Give unto the Lord the glory due His name; worship the Lord in the beauty of His holiness."

**Philippians 2:10-11** "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

- Church Father Clement of Alexandria describes worship as celebration: “all our life is a festival: being persuaded that God is everywhere present on all sides, we praise Him as we till the ground, we sing hymns as we sow the seed, we feel His inspiration in all we do.”
- Ed Hayes, *The Church*, p. 167: “A worshiping congregation will evidence two essential qualities – understanding of the spiritual life and expression of thankfulness to God....Spiritual devotion and piety will be the results of a well-taught congregation.”
- Regular church worship changed from 7<sup>th</sup> (Sabbath/Saturday) to the 1st day (Sunday) of the week after the resurrection

**Acts 20:7** “Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight.”

**Revelation 1:10** “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day”

- Rev 1:10 - the 1st day of the week was known as “the Lord’s Day”

- Justin Martyr (100-165 AD) “We all hold this common gathering on Sunday since it is the first day on which God transforming darkness and matter made the universe, and Jesus Christ our Savior rose from the dead on the same day.”
- Ed Hayes: “The Old Testament commandment to observe the Sabbath (Exod 16:29; 20:8; 31:15; Lev 23:3) was not repeated in the New Testament. As Willy Rordorf stated, the Sabbath commandment was ‘surpassed in the reality of Christ, in the liberty of the children of God.’ Sunday was observed strictly by the Puritans as the new Sabbath, and to some extent this is retained by those of Reformed tradition....Following the Edict of Milan, Emperor Constantine elevated Sunday to the statutory day of rest in the Roman Empire. Luther and the Reformers accepted the Lord’s Day as the Christian Sabbath, but Luther felt that every day and every hour were suitable for hearing God’s Word. The Lord’s Supper, however, was invariably observed on Sunday.” (*The Church*, p. 170)

- yet worship is to be continuous

**Hebrews 13:15** “Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.”

- Warren Wiersbe: “We do not go to church to worship, because worship ought to be the constant activity and attitude of the dedicated believer. We go to church to worship publicly and corporately.” (*Real Worship*)

## **A. Collective worship reminds us that God is “our” Father, not just “my” Father (Mt 6:9)**

- Leslie Flynn, *Worship: Together We Celebrate*: “This corporate response of celebration does three things for the church:
  - 1) It acknowledges God’s supremacy by affirming who He is and what He has done. It agrees with God, honors Him and says yes to His Word.
  - 2) It rehearses God’s goodness by affiliating with His great plan for the world in natural, personal, and special revelation. (Ps 100)
  - 3) It proclaims God’s truth by accenting that His message is more than just “gospel”; it is the total scope of trust which always has its source in God (Ps 93)

## **B. Collective worship stimulates each other to obedience (Heb 10:24-25)**

**Hebrews 10:24-25** “And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”

- “stimulate” = provoke, excite

ie/ chemistry - mix two chemicals - not useful until a catalyst is added to provoke the other chemicals to do their stuff

## **C. Collective worship provides us opportunities to worship in ways not available individually (Acts 2:42-47 – fellowship, communion, corporate prayer, teaching)**

**Acts 2:42-47** “<sup>42</sup>And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. <sup>43</sup>Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. <sup>44</sup>Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, <sup>45</sup>and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. <sup>46</sup>So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, <sup>47</sup>praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”

- worship is a 7 day a week experience individually
- 1 day a week collectively

## **VIII. Church Members Enjoy Giving And Receiving Good Will (47b)**

<sup>47b</sup> *and enjoying the goodwill of all the people.*

- Good will is opposed to ill will
- Good will involves blessing others and even receiving blessings
- Ie/ Memorial Service – so many devoted to serving

## **IX. Church Members Are Focused On Church Growth (47c)**

<sup>47c</sup> *each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.*

[http://thomrainer.com/2012/01/25/i\\_am\\_a\\_church\\_member/](http://thomrainer.com/2012/01/25/i_am_a_church_member/)

<http://thomrainer.com/2015/09/seven-reasons-why-we-should-not-abandon-the-term-church-member/>