

Serving At The Lord's Table

Lesson 5

One of the main purposes for assembling as the Lord's people on the first day of the week (Sunday) is to partake of the Lord's Supper. We read about saints in the first century that literally waited for several days so that they could be together to "break bread" (Acts 20:4-7). Breaking bread was a New Testament phrase that represented partaking of the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:42). In this supper we have the privilege of reflecting on our Lord and what He did to save us with those who have been saved. In this memorial feast we are proclaiming the Lord's death until He comes. While the Lord's Supper is no more or less important than anything else we do before God in our assemblies, it should be carefully prepared and properly served to those "surrounding" the table.

When a meal is served in a fine restaurant, those waiting on others will take special care to make sure that the preparation and presentation of the meal is superb. When we gather around the table of our Lord and you have been appointed to preside and serve to others the bread and fruit of the vine, it should be done with the deepest considerations. This is especially true, since this meal is in remembrance of our Lord as He gave His body to be crucified and shed His blood to save us. After all, He is gathered with us as we partake of this supper in His kingdom. If the King invited you to sit at His table to eat, that is one thing; but if He invited you to serve Him and others, there should be great care taken in our approach to this area of service. If the supper of our Lord is to be taken in a "worthy" manner, it certainly should be served in the same way (I Cor. 11:27). In the same way that all partakers must examine themselves, so also should the servers (I Cor. 11:28).

There are tendencies for going to extremes in observing this memorial. Some try to make it too formal (uncaring and cold). Others make it too casual (diminishing its significance). It can also become too much of a solemn ceremony (a ritual with little meaning). All of these things can hinder us from keeping the proper perspective in serving at the Lord's Table. This is a time for us (Christians) to remember exactly what Jesus has done to redeem us and make us a part of His body, the church. If we could do this alone, we wouldn't be asked to come together for this purpose. Who wants to eat a meal alone anyway? Let us use this time to eat and drink together in memory of our Savior.

The emblems at the table are symbolic of something much greater than their contents. We are sharing (communing) with one another, an unleavened piece of bread and a glass of grape juice that represent the body and blood of our Lord (Matthew 26:26-29). Ken Cooper wrote that we make a "proclamation of the good news of Christ's death and its significance, our faith and the second coming of the Lord" (I Cor. 11: 26). Often the symbolism gets lost in the ceremony and the significance is forgotten in the solemnity.

If you are scheduled to serve at the Lord's Table, prepare to preside and plan your presentation. The following are some helpful points to keep in mind.

- ⇒ If you are scheduled to serve, make sure that you are seated in a place where you have easy access to the aisle. This will ensure that you can make your way to the front of the auditorium when you are asked to serve.

- ⇒ There should be an orderly way that all of the men selected to serve are to come forward at the appropriate time to stand, and then grab the trays that they will use to serve.
- ⇒ The men should understand that the bread is served first and the fruit of the vine is second. This is the way the Lord instituted the supper to be served and we want to keep the feast the way the Lord handed it down to us (1 Cor. 11:23-25)
- ⇒ When you find that you are standing in front of the congregation for an extended period of time, be sure not to fidget around and distract others from getting prepared to partake. Let's face it, you are standing in view of others and when you take a place of service in front of those assembled, you have to make sure that you are not causing the minds of others to drift away from remembering the Lord. While it is true that you are preparing your mind to partake of the same supper that you are serving, you must remember that you have a dual role as a servant and one saved.
- ⇒ If you are asked to lead a prayer over the Lord's Supper, be sure to keep the prayer related to our purpose in remembering Christ. This is not a time to pray for the sick, world leaders, or the weather. Also be sure to be doctrinally sound in your word choices. People have been guilty of referring to the Lord's Supper as a "sacrament" or the "Passover" and have even used language that would seek to give validation to "transubstantiation" (the bread and grape juice literally become the body and blood of Christ). Be careful! Others have prayed to the Father and thanked Him for dying, when it was His Son that gave His life on the cross. Also keep in mind that you must use the microphone or speak loud enough to be heard by all. If they can't hear you, it doesn't matter if you offer a beautiful prayer. (See our prayer lesson where we spoke about how we pray on behalf of the congregation).
- ⇒ Most of the time, the women of the local church will prepare the emblems. Many thanks to those who help us to be prepared. Don't ever take that for granted. If you are designated to serve during the Lord's Supper, it may be wise to take a moment to make sure the bread and fruit of the vine are prepared and are in place. This can be a huge embarrassment otherwise. The one appointed to take care of the emblems could be sick, out of town, or forgot it altogether. If this happens, call on the help of your brethren to assist you in making secondary preparations.
- ⇒ Try to make very little noise with the trays as you are removing them from the table and returning them. The clanging of glasses or the sound of trays coming together can be a huge distraction to the memorial service. Try to use both hands at all times. Once you begin passing the trays, pay careful attention to those who need assistance. You don't want someone fumbling the trays when you could have helped them as they partake of this supper.
- ⇒ Don't confuse the Lord's Supper with the collection. While both of these are a part of what we do in our assembly, they have no direct connection. If there is no break between the Lord's Supper and the collection, then there is no way of letting those who are present know that we consider them to be two distinct parts of our service together.
- ⇒ Make sure that you work well with the other servers. You will benefit from moving smoothly and somewhat in unison with one another.

- ⇒ It is also important to remember that when you serve the emblems that you are also going to partake. Since this is true, make sure that all of the men who have served have had the Lord's Supper and that they have had a moment to reflect, before returning to the front of the auditorium. The entire congregation has enjoyed the opportunity of thinking about the Lord throughout your time of service. Give that same benefit to all of those who serve the emblems.
- ⇒ The men who serve the Lord's Supper must make sure not to overlook anyone. Someone may have stepped out to tend to a child or someone could have arrived late. Be sure that when you conclude the Lord's Supper, that all the members of the church have been served. This may require you to step out of the auditorium to serve the Lord's Supper.
- ⇒ Don't be in a hurry. This is the Lord's day and the feast is in His memory. Jesus said, "Do this in remembrance of me".
- ⇒ If something happens where a tray is dropped accidentally or even if there is a small spill. Don't panic. We are all brethren and we can work together to resolve the issue at hand.

Name: _____

Date: ____/____/____

QUESTIONS

Make a list of some helpful ideas for making our time around the Lord's Table more meaningful and organized, so that we can properly remember Jesus:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

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6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

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10. _____

Additional Notes: