

Together

By Mark Hatfield

The Lord's Table that has been prepared with the Lord's Supper would be impossible to appreciate alone. I believe the Lord knew this when He instituted this memorial with His closest companions (Matthew 26:26-28).

Today, when we keep this feast in memory of our Lord Jesus Christ, there is something special about sharing this with those who share our faith. From our new converts that have recently been saved and added to the church by the Lord to those who have been restored to active duty in the kingdom, it is a joy to gather each week and partake of these emblems in memory of the One that we all serve and love. In addition to those we have already mentioned, we appreciate all of the saints who have moved to this area to become a part of this local church so that we can break bread with you while remembering our Lord. If you are a brother or sister in Christ that traveled to be with us today, we are thankful that you will be partaking with us as well. There is something that is truly special about partaking of the Lord's Supper together with fellow Christians.

There is so much significance to be found in eating this bread and drinking this cup together with others who are in Christ. We often speak of surrounding or gathering around the table of the Lord. Imagine preparing a table with a supper that no one came together to eat. What a lonely scenario that would be. When we examine the first century church, it is clear that they were to make it a point to be together when they shared in this memorial. Listen to the New Testament as it reveals the need to be together with other Christians for this Supper:

Acts 2:42, 44

“**They** were continually devoting **themselves** to the apostles' teaching and to **fellowship**, to the **breaking of bread** and to prayer...And all those who had believed **were together** and had all things in common”

Acts 20:4-8

“And he was accompanied by Sopater of Berea, {the son} of Pyrrhus, and by Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia. But these had gone on ahead and were **waiting for us** at Troas. We sailed from Philippi after the days of Unleavened Bread, and **came to them** at Troas within five days; and **there we stayed seven days**. On the first day of the week, when **we were gathered together to break bread**, Paul {began} talking **to them**, intending to leave the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight. There were many lamps in the upper room where **we were gathered together**.”

1 Corinthians 11:17-28

“But in giving this instruction, I do not praise you, because **you come together** not for the better but for the worse. For, in the first place, when **you come together as a church**, I hear that divisions exist among you; and in part I believe it. For there must also be factions among you, so that those who are approved may become evident among you. Therefore when **you meet together**, it is not to **eat the Lord's Supper**, for in your eating each one takes his own supper first; and one is hungry and another is drunk. What! Do you not have houses in which to eat and drink? Or do you despise **the church of God** and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? In this I will not praise you. For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took **bread**; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, ‘**This is My body, which is for you**; do this in remembrance of Me.’ In the same way {He took} **the cup** also after supper, saying, ‘**This cup is the new covenant in My blood**; do this, as often as you drink {it} in remembrance of Me.’ For as often as **you eat this bread and drink the cup**, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes. Therefore whoever **eats the bread or drinks the cup** of the Lord in an unworthy manner shall be guilty of **the body and the blood of the Lord**. But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is **to eat of the bread and drink of the cup**.”

While the Supper of the Lord is certainly an individual responsibility and privilege, without the presence of the Lord and others who have been saved by His death, this meal does not serve the purpose it was intended to serve. Paul said that we proclaim the Lord's death until He comes, when we partake of this Supper. Let me ask you, what purpose is there for a proclamation if there is no one present to receive it? How much encouragement can be gained by proclaiming something to no one but you alone?

Christians did everything together. The family of God is supposed to be together. We are brothers and sisters in Christ and God is our Father. When we get together and truly appreciate what it means to be one in Christ Jesus, the joy that fills our soul is at its fullest. Paul told the Christians in Rome that he wanted to come and be with them. Why? He said in Romans 1:12, “...**that I may be encouraged together with you {while} among you, each of us by the other's faith, both yours and mine**.” That is the definition of true spiritual togetherness.

Christians did so many things “together”. The Bible speaks of Christians gathering together in one place to pray (**Acts 4:31-32; 12:12**). Christians gathered together to talk about all that God was doing among them in helping them to reach people with the gospel (**Acts 14:27-28**). The congregations of the Lord's people would assemble to read letters of exhortation and encouragement (**Acts 15:30-31**). Converts to Christ would open their homes to those of like faith to eat meals (**Acts 2:46; 16:32-34**). All of these meetings together produced further growth and strength among the Lord's people. I believe the same results come from sharing in the Lord's Supper together. Perhaps this is why the writer of Hebrews told us not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together as some were making a habit of doing (**Heb. 10:23-25**). “Together” great things happen!!!

God wanted those who were saved to be together in Christ. We are to focus on the “togetherness” of being a family in the Lord. Paul wrote by inspiration in Ephesians 2:20-22, “having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner {stone} in whom the whole building, being **fitted together**, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being **built together** into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.” Paul would write later in Ephesians 4:15-16, that the whole body is being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies and by the proper working of each individual part. Togetherness is the cause of the growth of the body and it also produces the result of building us up in love. I can’t think of a greater way to apply that text outside of this time that we spend together around the Table of the Lord.

Let us take of the bread and the fruit of the vine and share it together with the Lord and our fellow brothers and sisters. Although you must do a personal examination, this Supper is prepared for togetherness. It is a time of remembrance for all of the saved while we proclaim the Lord’s death in unison. Those who are Christians will now surround this table for the Lord’s Supper. Our prayer is that the proclamation that we herald will be heard by those who are still outside of Christ. Won’t you be encouraged even now to become a part of this family where together we look forward to the time when the Lord comes to take us home so we can surround His eternal banquet table? Let us now break bread together.