

Arrangement For The Lord's Supper (I)



By Maurice Barnett

(I want to refer you to my article in the *Gospel Anchor*, last month's issue, on the local congregation, and encourage you to read that article first.)

The Lord's Supper is an important and prominent activity for Christians. Like everything else we do we must do it correctly. The elements and their significance are important. But, the time, attitude, and arrangement are important also. If the arrangement for eating that meal is *generic* then any option the individual chooses will be proper; no one could judge the choice of any other. A generic of arrangement places the decision *solely* upon each individual to decide for himself. He might decide to eat it with another Christian or two, or alone in his car at a roadside park, or at home before meeting with other Christians on Sunday. When we look at the example of Acts 20:7 we find the disciples coming together on the first day of the week to eat the Lord's Supper. That shows either the carrying out of *specific* instruction to come together to eat, or their coming together to eat was just an option of *generic* authority as to where and how to eat. If it was just an option, and keeping in mind that examples do not limit nor alter *generic* authority, Troas coming together to eat would be of no more significance than an upper room, night time assembly, only one assembly on Sunday, no Bible classes, etc. Their choice of options would only mean it was their choice of options. Others could choose to do it differently. However, I believe their coming together to eat the Supper was a

result of, and so an example of, *specific* instruction.

I believe the Lord's Supper was a memorial meal designed by God to be eaten by a local church assembly, assembled for that purpose. The New Testament teaches that there was a time of week established by God when the disciples were to come together to eat the Lord's Supper together. *We have that instruction and their examples of doing it.*

We have always emphasized, and rightly so, that we are to look at the *pattern* of teaching on any given subject. As one brother has aptly put it, "patterns are not established by assumption concerning some portion of revelation. We must search the total record for a pattern." Error has always thrived on taking only a portion of scripture on a given subject and drawing false conclusions from limited premises. We must guard against that.

I Corinthians 11:26 says, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come." Let's look first at the meaning and significance of "proclaim" in this passage. I recall some author saying that the absence of accurate definition is the very life of religious controversy. Some have tried to brush aside the significance of this passage by shabby exegesis, which makes it necessary to look at the full evidence. When there is controversy over a passage we find it necessary to go into as much detail as necessary to determine truth. When the Apostle Paul used the word "proclaim" in this passage, what did the Corinthians understand him to

mean? To know that we have to see what the word meant then. I ask the reader to bear with me in this.

The original term is *katangelo*, which is a compound of *angelo*, meaning a message or proclamation, and the preposition, *kata* meaning down or down to. *Angello* can be combined with any preposition, each compounded word thus carrying the significance of the preposition used. Some of these distinctions are discussed in the following from the commentary on I John (1:5) by B. F. Westcott, page 15. Several Lexicons refer the readers to this source. "*Angellein* simply **ho bring tidings' the tidings up to or back to the person receiving them. Apan-gellein** to announce with a distinct reference **to the source or place from which** the message comes. *Katangellein* to proclaim with authority, as commissioned to spread the tidings *throughout* those who hear them. In *anangellein* the recipient, **in apangellein the origin, in katangellein** the relation of the bearer and hearer of the message, are respectively most prominent."

This last word listed, *katangelo (katangellein)*, applies to I Corinthians 11:26. It is specific of some proclamation or message that is given from one to another. When we eat and drink the Lord's Supper *we* do the proclaiming by the authority of the Lord; He told us to do it. But, there's more.

Parkhurst Lexicon, page 293, says it means "to declare plainly, openly, or aloud, to proclaim, preach, publish."

Liddell and Scott, page 886, though primarily classical Greek, gives "announce, proclaim, declare," as the meaning, with only a passing reference to the New Testament.

W. E. Vine's Expository Dictionary of N.T. Words, page 888, says, "to declare, proclaim, is translated to proclaim in the R.V., for A.V. to shew, in Acts 16:17; 26:23; I Cor. 11:26, where the verb makes clear that the partaking of the elements at the Lord's Supper is a proclamation (an evangel) of the Lord's death."

The *Critical Lexicon* by Bullinger, page

697, says, "to bring word down to *any one, i.e.* bring home to him; *hence*, to proclaim somewhither. *The word may contain a hint at the unknown contents of the proclamation, as well as an increased emphasis of the verb.*"

The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament by Moulton and Milligan, page 326, says it this way: "the official sense of the word 'make proclamation with authority,' which appears in its NT occurrences (see Westcott on I Jn. 1:5), is very evident in such a psephisma as ... "

There are some among us who argue that the word "proclaim" in I Corinthians 11:26 only means to "celebrate." The word "celebrate" is then defined or implied by them to mean simply "to perform a rite" in commemoration of the death of Christ, which is something one can do by himself.

As authority for such a conclusion, two references are cited by them. The first is Bagster's *Greek Lexicon*, a book that primarily analyzes and lists grammatical word forms with limited definitions of basic words. Bagster says that *Katangelo* means "to announce, proclaim, Ac. 13:38; in N.T., to laud, celebrate, Ro. 1:8." In the first place, Bagster does not cite I Corinthians 11:26. In the second place, the word "celebrate" in Bagster is hardly an adequate explanation in view of the passage cited, Romans 1:8. It says, "First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is proclaimed throughout the whole world." Their "faith was celebrated throughout the whole world"? **Not if we mean to perform some religious rite or ceremony.** The term "laud" might be used, but that takes us back to something declared to others. So, we must look further in regard to this word "celebrate."

The second reference used by these brethren is Thayer's Lexicon, page 330. Thayer is misrepresented by quoting only the following portion of his comments and then drawing a false conclusion. Here's the portion quoted: "with the included idea of celebrating, commend-

ing, openly praising . . . Rom. i.8 . . . I Co. xi. 26." Then the word "celebrating" is lifted out and defined, by statement or implication, as simply something that could be done by oneself. But, that misrepresents what Thayer says. Notice the **above quote: "with the included idea." But, included in what? Well, included in the basic definition of the word he had given previous to that phrase, which is ^fto announce, declare, promulgate, make known; to proclaim publicly, publish.** Any idea of "celebrating" must be within the context of this definition. And, even in **English, in the Random House English Dictionary**, the word "celebrate" may mean "to make known publicly; proclaim, (meaning no. 2).

Let's round out the sense and harmony of all this with Arndt and Gingrich *Lexicon*, page 410. After defining the term to mean "proclaim (solemnly)," it comments "you proclaim (by celebrating the sacrament rather than with words) *the Lord's death* I Cor. 11:26." The "celebrating" is found in what is *done* rather than with *words*, but it must be done in such a way that the meaning of "proclaim" is carried out. And, this is how the word "celebrate" got into the subject in Bagster and Thayer. They did not mean by the word that just a private subjective observance of the elements representing the Lord's death qualifies as proclaiming that death. Certainly we must "remember" the Lord's sacrifice in

THIS »N THAT, from page 6:

year. He was an able student and an interesting proclaimer of the Scriptures. Our sympathy is extended to his family.

PHILIPPIANS, from page 8:

look at the information the students have compiled on Timothy. Relate these, when possible, to the present text under study.

3. Have the students list three or four problems that exist because of the Phil. 2:21 philosophy.

4. Discuss attitudes of Paul which are evident in his discussion here of Timothy.

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our eating, but that is not all there is to the Lord's Supper. This is why the King James translates the phrase "ye do shew the Lord's death." To *show* is to present it to others by what you do rather than what you say. Young's Literal Translation says you "show forth." The Estes translation says "you announce." The Paraphrased New Testament reads, "For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup you are re-telling the message of the Lord's death, that he died for you. Do this until he comes again."

Let's look at the passage again. "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come." "As often as" refers to indefinite repetition of something done. But, it also includes the idea that every time it is done some requirement must be met. As far as this passage is concerned, at whatever interval the Lord's Supper is eaten, every time it is eaten, it is done in such a way that "proclaims" the Lord's death. It is not done *to* oneself, nor *by* oneself alone. Please understand that the only point I am making with this close look at "proclaim" is that more than one person must be involved in some way in the Lord's Supper. We must look further for more of the pattern.

Next month we will conclude this study on the arrangement for the Lord's Supper with a look at the rest of the pattern.

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Assignment

List as many points as you can about Epaphroditus from Phil. 2:25-30.

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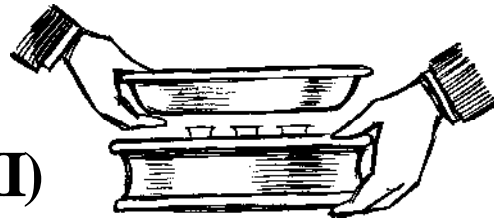
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Arrangement For The Lord's Supper (II)



By Maurice Barnett

The beginning of the Supper in Matthew 26:26-29, Luke 22:19-20 shows Jesus instructing His disciples concerning it. They had already eaten a meal. The attention of all present was then focused on the elements and their significance. The bread was taken first, *given to all* so that all of them ate it. The fruit of the vine was then distributed. The importance of their all drinking was emphasized by Jesus being quoted in the text that *all of you* drink this. The record in these passages forms the basis for all other teaching on the **subject**. *Twenty-seven years later Paul* looks back, in I Corinthians 11:23-25, to what Jesus said and did as the basis for correcting the errors of the Corinthians. It wasn't just the elements and their significance that Paul refers to, but also the proper way the elements were to be eaten. *The proper way of eating was as important as the proper elements were!* We see that clearly in what Paul says to the Corinthians.

The attitude *and* practice of Corinth was wrong. There was lack of respect for the elements, the meaning of the Supper, and for one another. The Lord's Supper looked backward to the sacrifice of Jesus, I Corinthians 11:23-25. It also looked forward to his second coming, and during the intervening time his sacrifice was proclaimed by this meal, verse 26. Seeing the Lord has not returned yet, we must continue the practice as specified.

Before getting into I Corinthians 11, we should realize that there are several parenthetical verses in that chapter,

though none of the usual marks of parenthesis are used. The *Random House Dictionary of the English Language* says that a parenthesis is, grammatically, "a qualifying, explanatory, or appositive word, phrase, clause, sentence, or other sequence which interrupts a syntactic construction without otherwise affecting it, having often a characteristic intonation and indicated in writing by commas, parentheses, or dashes." We might say that a parenthesis is an interruption of the line of thought to explain some particular idea in what was just said before getting back to the main subject. It is important that we understand this in order to see the line of argument Paul makes. Now to I Corinthians 11.

The divisions at Corinth were manifest in their assemblies. In chapter 14 it was over spiritual gifts. In chapter 11 it was the Lord's Supper. I Corinthians 11:19 is parenthetical. It interrupts the line of argument to make a side comment on division. Verses 18 and 20 connect together as the line of argument, as follows: "For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that division exists among you; and I partly believe it. When therefore ye assemble yourselves together, it is not possible to eat the Lord's Supper." What they were eating was not the Lord's Supper and the *way* they were doing it made it impossible *to have* the Lord's Supper.

Two things were wrong about their eating at Corinth. First, they had made a common, ordinary, meal out of their eating. Secondly, they were not even eating that together, as they should have been

if it were the Lord's Supper. Verse 21 says, "for in your eating each one taketh before other his own supper; and one is hungry, and another is drunken." Notice the two errors in that. Paul corrects these errors in the verses that follow in the chapter. His corrections mean that he is giving to them and to us the proper attitude and arrangement for eating.

Where the elements are obtained, or just who provides them, is not specified in scripture. We have to get them somewhere, but it is left to generic option. At Corinth it is specifically said that the members were bringing their own food for the common meals they were eating; some didn't have anything to bring and the others were not sharing. But, seeing that such a common meal substitute for the Lord's Supper was in error, nothing can be concluded from what they did as to the source of the elements. A congregation may provide the elements from a common pool of funds, or they may be provided by some member or members, or any combination of that. For the congregation to purchase the elements from the treasury, and then be eaten by a Sunday assembly of the congregation, does not make a Catholic-like "Church provides the sacraments for the members" situation as some have suggested. If an individual member provided the elements for the Lord's Supper for the congregation it would not make any difference as to the facts of what the Bible teaches.

In verse 22 Paul then says, "What, have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and put them to shame that have not?" In verse 34 he says, "If any man is hungry, let him eat at home; that your coming together be not unto judgment."

A sharp distinction is made between ordinary meals and the Lord's Supper. The Lord's meal was not to satisfy hunger. Only a small amount was taken by each person, just enough to qualify as "eat" and "drink." If they were hungry they were to eat at home. Notice he didn't say they could eat the Lord's

Supper "at home." They met together in an assembly for that, even though the assembly might have been in a private home. I want you to be aware that Paul does not specifically argue nor command that they were to assemble to eat the Supper. It is simply accepted fact that they were to do so. He doesn't have to argue nor correct that matter because the Corinthians had that much right.

Having dealt with the common meal part of the problem, Paul then gives attention to the other error. Be aware that *either one of their errors alone would have made it impossible to have the Lord's Supper. If they had served a common meal and everyone shared the eating in unison they would still not have had the Lord's Supper. Or, if they had the proper elements and no common meal, but did not eat together, they still would have been wrong.* According to verses 27-28, every individual had to approach the Lord's Supper in the same way, knowing what they were doing, why they were doing it, and doing it properly. Verse 27 says, "Wherefore whosoever shall eat the bread or drink the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord." "Unworthy manner" is translated from a single word, an *adverb*, which means just that, "unworthy manner." It modifies "eat" and "drink", *not the elements of bread and cup.* The emphasis is the *manner* of eating and drinking. Bullinger's *Critical Lexicon*, page 838, says, ^{ff}"not suitably, improperly. As an adverb, it properly refers, not to condition, but to manner, not in a becoming manner, in an improper manner, a manner not corresponding to." Just as there were proper elements, there was a proper way of eating them. Suppose that Corinth *had not* substituted common meals in the place of the Lord's Supper and were actually having the bread and drink specified. Would they have been alright then? Could they have eaten it in any manner they chose? No! This passage says that we cannot *eat the bread or drink the*

cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner without dire consequences. How we do it is as important as the proper elements!

Verse 30 is parenthetical, a side comment. Verses 29 and 31 grammatically connect. They contain two ways of saying the same thing. We will put them together here: "For he that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself, if he discern not the body. But if we discerned ourselves, we should not be judged." The words "judgment" and "judged" in the two verses are the same, with the only variation that one is a noun and the other a verb. They mean the same thing. The words "discern" and "discerned" are the same and mean the same thing. The two verses are parallel in their meaning, saying the same thing two ways, but with enough change to give us an important bit of information. Verse 29 says discern "*the body*" while verse 31 says discern "*ourselves*." Just like "judge" and "discern" in the two verses, the "body" of verse 29 refers to "ourselves" in verse 31. The "body" in verse 29 does not mean the bread of the Lord's Supper, nor the literal body of Jesus on the cross. In chapter 12, directly after this, Paul applies the term body to the Corinthian church, likening it to a human body that must have each part (member) working together properly so that "there should be no schism in the body," verse 25. The word "schism" in that verse is the same word "divisions" in 11:18. Chapter 10:16-17 also reflects this use of "body." It says, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a communion of the body of Christ? Seeing that we, who are many are one bread, one body: for we all partake of the one bread." The second used of the word *body*, refers to *Christians*. So, it is not strange to find sandwiched between chapters 10 and 12 the use of the word "body" to refer to the disciples, each time in regard to error and division and twice to the eating of

the Lord's Supper.

So, "the body" in I Corinthians 11:29, by comparison with verse 31, refers to Christians. I realize that the King James, and the New King James both render the statement as "the Lord's body." In that they follow the Receptus and the Majority texts. The American Standard, and others, based on comparison with other texts, omit "Lord's." If "Lord's" is retained we still understand that the local body, the local church, belongs to the Lord, is "the Lord's." (See I Cor. 1:2). The comparison with verse 31 demonstrates what the "body" is referring to, the local body of believers. If some argue that the word "body" in verse 27 evidently refers to the literal body of Christ and must mean that throughout the context I point out that that argument is bad exegesis. In the preceding chapter, 10:16-17, the word body is used in the immediate context both ways. This is true of any number of words used in scripture.

Now, I Corinthians 11:32 is also parenthetical. The logical order of connecting verses is 29, 31 and 33, as follows, "For he that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself, if he discern not the body. But if we discerned ourselves, we should not be judged. Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, wait one for another." The two errors he takes up in verse 21 are corrected. The common meal is put in its proper place, the home, or some such social arrangement. The other error, their not eating together, and just how serious that was, is then corrected in verses 29, 31, and 33. The way, manner, arrangement for eating the Supper was a picture of the oneness of the local church. The point Paul stresses to them is *not just to put the Lord's Supper within the confines of an assembly, but that they were also to eat together*. The *very passages* that teach the one also teaches the other.

Notice also the thread of statements in regard to "judgement" in the verses. In verse 29 it says you eat and drink

"judgment" to yourself if you don't discern the body. In verse 31 it's if we don't discern ourselves we will be judged. In verses 33-34 it says "when ye come together to eat, wait one for another . . . if hungry . . . eat at home, that your coming together be not unto judgment." All that "judgment" that's warned about is a result of their errors, first substituting a common meal for the Lord's Supper, and secondly, a failure to eat it together. This is what is involved in the "discerning" they were to do. It means to make proper decisions after looking at their condition in comparison with truth, then putting things in their proper place.

I point out that what Paul presents to the Corinthians was the uniform practice of Christians from the beginning. Going back twenty-seven years before I Corinthians 11, to Acts 2:42, we read, "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers." "Continued stedfastly" is a double emphasis to show their consistent determination. The fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayers were all by the apostles' teaching, their only source for knowing what was right to do, and how to do it.

The "breaking of bread" in Acts 2:42 was not the common meals they would eat each day, though such common meals are mentioned in verse 46. Otherwise verse 42 would mean that the apostles' teaching was that they were to never miss a meal, that they continued stedfastly in eating every meal every day. Rather, verse 42 refers to the Lord's Supper that they continued steadfastly to eat. Verse 46 refers to their common meals, which they ate at home, as distinct from what they did together. So, notice in verse 46, "And day by day, continuing stedfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking at home, they took their food with gladness and singleness of heart." Notice the clear distinction made between their doing things together in one place, the temple, an area large

enough to meet in, and eating their meals "at home." Since they continued to be together every day, that would include the first day of the week. Since they continued stedfastly, by apostolic teaching, in eating the Lord's Supper, and they were together in the temple on the first day of the week, we must conclude they ate the Lord's Supper together on the first day of the week, seeing that their "together" activities are contrasted so pointedly by the Holy Spirit with eating their common meals *at home.* It is no wonder then that twenty-seven years later another apostle is giving the same instruction, contrasting their common meals at home, and eating of the Lord's Supper by an assembly of the local church, I Corinthians 11, the consistent practice by apostolic teaching for that twenty-seven years.

As far as we know, Paul established the church in Troas. He had been there twice before. The first time on his second journey, Acts 16:8-11, and again on his third journey when he left Ephesus to travel northward, II Corinthians 2:1-13. So, Paul went to Troas for the sake of the Gospel, to preach, and the Lord opened a door to him. He must have been successful in converting some. Troas was privileged to have Paul's personal instruction. Now, about a year after he had been through there on his way to Philippi and then Corinth, he was back. Acts 20:6 says it took five days to sail from Philippi to Troas, and after arriving they waited seven days. Verse 7 then tells us that on the first day of the week when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached to them. Note the necessary implication that Paul did not call a special meeting of the church but rather took the opportunity of the disciples coming together in one place to speak to them. "Break" in Acts 20:7 is an infinitive of purpose. The stated purpose for their assembly was "to break bread."

Notice the usage of this same thing in I Corinthians 11:33, "When you come together to eat, wait one for another." Again, their coming together is simply

an accepted fact; there was no reason to argue that point. Paul is regulating what they were to do in that assembly. This meant they were to eat together, which required some designated time, not something spotted throughout an assembly, nor just one or two doing it. This is specific instruction, not an option of generic authority. They had no choice but to do it this way if they wanted to please God, escaping *"judgment" in the matter. Notice also that the Lord's Supper was a *purpose*, a reason for coming together. This is seen in the consistent use of the Aorist infinitive, "to eat," an infinitive of purpose. It is found several places in I Corinthians 11. Again, "when you came together to eat, wait one for another." They came together for the purpose of eating the Lord's Supper, and were to do it together. Acts 20:7, the disciples "came together to break bread."

This may be seen in other uses of the infinitive of purpose. In Acts 13:44, the whole city was gathered together *to hear* the word. It was the reason for their being there and they all listened together. Acts 15:6, the apostles and elders were gathered together *to consider* this matter. I Corinthians 5:4-5, they were gathered together *to deliver* such a one to Satan. Gathered together to take an action together. So, in Acts 20:7, the disciples gathered together *to break bread*. Now, in all these instances, *did they do together what they came together to do?*

I suppose the silliest objection I have heard from some who should know better is to contend that if we must eat the Supper together then are we saying we must all chew and swallow at the same instant, which they consider an absurdity. That makes "together" a synonym of simultaneous. There certainly are *some* simultaneous events that we engage in, such as singing and praying, listening to the teachers. But, eating the Lord's Supper together does not demand chewing and swallowing at the same instant, though it would be alright if that is

what we chose to do; brethren in Australia do it that way. Because of the orderliness with which our assemblies are to be conducted, each activity is engaged in before going on to another. The Lord's Supper is an activity engaged in by all before going on to another activity. That is still doing it "together." When a family eats a meal at home "together" they don't chew and swallow at the same instant, yet they eat "together". Same thing.

The limitation of the Lord's Supper to a local church assembly is as firmly established by scriptural pattern as "limited benevolence." We do not have a specific command that says "local churches will limit their benevolence to saints only." The subject is not argued in the New Testament as though there was some issue over "saints only" in the first century. Yet, the New Testament still teaches it. On that subject we appeal to the *specific statements* made in regard to "brethren," "the disciples," "saints . . . poor saints," and the like in passages on benevolence. All examples agree with that. We don't find any instruction by statement or example *other than that*. The Lord's Supper arrangement is as firmly established by scriptural pattern as the plurality of elders in congregations. We do not have a specific command that says "congregations must have only a *plurality* of scripturally qualified men as elders." That fact is not argued in the New Testament as though there was some issues over it then. Yet, the New Testament teaches it. We point to *specific statements* in regard to a plurality of elders in congregations, and all examples agree with that. We don't find any instruction, by statement or example, *other than that*. In regard to the Lord's Supper, I have discussed the *specific statements* concerning the proper arrangement of it, and all examples agree with that. In point of fact, *where do you find, by statement or example, any arrangement for eating the Lord's Supper other than what we have detailed in this article?* Look at the *pattern*.