

The Madisonville Church of Christ is proud to offer

- **What Does the Bible Say?**
Sundays at 8:30 a.m. on WFMW (AM 730)
- Clothing give-aways (call church office for days and times)
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THE PAPER PULPIT

A quarterly publication of Bible studies presented by the Madisonville Church of Christ

THE LORD'S SUPPER

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The First Day of the Week

A significant difference between the churches of Christ and other churches is the practice of observing the Lord's Supper every Sunday. Some churches do so only twice every year (at Christmas and Easter), some include other holy days on the calendar, and some have a "Communion Sunday" once every month. The practice of a weekly supper is not what most people today would consider to be the norm in Christianity.

But, what if I told you that ancient Christians, in the earliest days of the Lord's church made the Lord's Supper a regular part of their weekly worship services? The best evidence of this is seen in Acts chapter 20. The first few verses of the chapter record Paul's three-month excursion into Macedonia. In verse six, we see that Paul sailed from Philippi to Troas, where he rejoined traveling companions who had arrived there before him. He stayed for a week in Troas, and preached to the church there at their weekly assembly.

The language of Acts 20:7 indicates that "*the first day of the week*" was "*when the disciples came together.*" That is why the modern church meets for worship on Sunday—not because it is Sunday—but because it is the first day of the week. First

Corinthians 16:2 also indicates that the first day of the week was the day in which the church gathered for its regular assembly. Hebrews 10:25 indicates that ancient Christians understood these regular gatherings to a compulsory exercise. Relevant to this discussion, First Corinthians 11:20 indicates that an observance of the Lord's Supper was supposed to be part of the weekly worship assembly. Paul rebuked the church in Corinth for failing to observe the Lord's Supper, as they were sup-

"And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together..."

—Acts 20:7

posed to do so. Members of the church in Corinth had made the Lord's Supper into a common meal, which was not even shared among all the brethren. Paul reminded them of the emblems and purpose of the supper, as he encouraged them to get back what they ought to have been doing all along.

Does the church where you worship celebrate the Lord's Supper on the first day of every week? If not, then I would like to invite you to consider worshipping with the church of Christ in your community. In accordance with the Biblical pattern, we partake of the Lord's Supper, as a regular part of our weekly worship, just like our brethren did, in ancient times.



Quotable Quotations

“The communion of Christians around the table of the Lord is perhaps the most significant part of public worship, and it is certainly the most unique to the faith.”

—Wendell Willis

“Let it be carefully noted that it was *the bread of the Passover feast* the Lord would not *again* eat with the

disciples until it was fulfilled in the kingdom of God—the church (Mat. 26:26-29). That which they would eat *again* in the kingdom of God was that which they had formerly eaten in the paschal feast—unleavened bread.”

—Guy N. Woods

“The Jews and Romans had different ways of counting time. It matters not to us

how they counted time. We have a time designated as the ‘first day of the week,’ and the Lord’s people are to meet upon that day. Their time was divided into days, weeks, months, and years, as is ours. Their weeks had a first day, and our weeks have a first day. We can know the first day of our week, and can meet to worship on that day...” —H. Leo Boles

“That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.”

—1 Corinthians 11: 23-25

Emblems of the Supper

The common practice in the churches of Christ is for the Lord’s Supper to consist of bread, which is unleavened, and grape juice, which is unfermented. As is the case with most everything that is done in the worship of the Lord’s church, we do this, not because it is our tradition, or because it is our preference, but because of what is written in the Word of God.

We know “*that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread,*” and we know that it was likely the very same kind of bread that He and His disciples had been

eating at the “Last Supper,” but how do we know that it was unleavened? We know this, because this meal took place during “*the feast of unleavened bread*” (Mat. 26:17). This was a time when Jews were to put all leaven out of their houses and eat only bread which was unleavened (Exo. 12:6,18). Leaven is that which causes bread dough to rise. Therefore, unleavened bread is flat bread, which has no airy quality about it. Today, we use what is essentially a cracker, which has no leaven in it, at all. In certain denominations, it is popular to use leavened bread, but this is

not in keeping with the Biblical pattern.

In like manner, the “*fruit of the vine*” (Mat. 26:29) is exactly what the text suggests: unfermented grape juice. The juice of grapes was safer to drink than water and it tasted better, too. We know that this is what Jesus used in instituting His Supper, because alcohol was considered a leavening agent by the ancients and would have been unwelcome at the feast of unleavened bread. Some denominations use wine in their observances of the Lord’s Supper, but this is not in keeping with the Biblical pattern.

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The Purpose of the Supper

Why do Christians eat unleavened bread and drink fruit of the vine on the first day of every week? The obvious answer is, “Because the Lord told us to,” and that is a correct answer. After all, Jesus did say, “*This do in remembrance of me*” (Luke 22:19b). But, there is more to the Lord’s Supper than just going through the motions of observance. There is a purpose behind it that every Christian must understand, if they are going to partake of it “*worthily*” (1 Cor. 11:27-29).

First Corinthians 11 is an account of the establishment of the Lord’s Supper, which runs parallel to those that are given in the Gospels. It is identical to the accounts found in Matthew, Mark and Luke, but it also expands

gives us additional information. In verse 26, the text says, “*For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord’s death till he come.*” This means that the Lord’s Supper is a living memorial of the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, which is meant to endure until He returns to bring the last age of the world to an end.

Like statues and other memorials erected by men to commemorate the valiant deeds and sacrifices of others, the Lord’s Supper is meant to testify to the world about Jesus Christ and the valiant sacrifice He made for all humanity. When we partake of the unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine, our mind are meant to recall the Biblical

account of the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord. It also serves as a reminder that the Lord is coming back to the Earth to judge us all (2 Cor. 5:10).

First Corinthians 10:16 describes the Lord’s Supper as “*communion*” with the Lord. That is why most tend to regard it as a solemn occasion. While it is only one part of a worship service, which also consists of singing, prayer, giving, and preaching, it is a time when God is said to be acting in accord with us. When we fail to commune with God every week, our souls miss something that they desperately need. Don’t just go through the motions of observing the Lord’s Supper, but think about what it really means.

“For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord’s death till he come”

—First Corinthians 11:26

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Web Sites That Won't Waste Your Time...

The **Online Academy of Biblical Studies** is an internet-based school, which offers a curriculum that covers the entire Bible and Bible-related matters. Their site is loaded with video and other kinds of resources for your personal study. Their web address is www.oabs.org.



The **Memphis School of Preaching** is an educational institution devoted to training gospel preachers and their wives. Their site is rich in educational content. Their web address is www.msop.org.

House to House/Heart to Heart is a bi-monthly publication, which is devoted to reaching lost souls with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Its site is rich with educational materials and archived issues. Their web address is www.housetohouse.com.





Madisonville Church of Christ Sunday Morning Bible Study

—9:30 a.m.

Sunday Morning Worship

—10:30 a.m.

Sunday Evening Worship

—6:00 p.m.

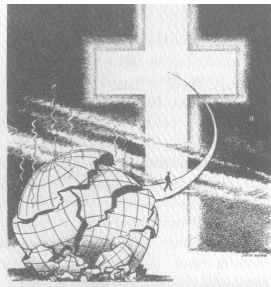
Wednesday Evening Bible Study

—7:00 p.m.

A Christ-Preaching, Bible-Teaching Church

“Communion”

According to Webster’s Dictionary, “communion” is “an act or instance of sharing.” In First Corinthians 10:16, the word is used twice, in reference to the Lord’s Supper. *“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?”* In this verse, “communion” translates a Greek word, which literally means, “joint participation.” This is indicative of what happens when Christians partake of the emblems that represent the body and blood of Jesus Christ, as a living memorial of all that He did for humanity on the cross. How often do Christians simply “go through the motions” of observing the Lord’s Supper, without truly appreciating the remarkable sharing and joint participation that is taking place. First Corinthians 10:17 adds, *“For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.”* The Lord’s Supper is a powerful symbol of Christian fellowship. It is a simple weekly ritual, which binds us to God and to one another. We must learn to fully appreciate it.



Lesson 25

Bible Correspondence Course

By Wendell K. Freeman

What Does The Bible Teach About **HEAVEN**

The search of all men is for happiness. To some it is happiness to have a nice home; to another, it is happiness to have a fine automobile; to another, it is happiness to have a prominent position.

To the Christian, none of these things give the happiness which they seek. The Christian has placed his hope and aim higher, and he is looking forward to eternal happiness in heaven. This lesson is aimed at raising our hopes to a higher plane and causing us to be more concerned with making heaven our home.

Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5:11-12, that we should consider ourselves happy when we are privileged to suffer for the name’s sake of Christ, for when we do so, great is our reward in heaven. Many are they whose blood has been shed for the name of Christ, yet through this suffering there shall come the eternal reward.

The Bible Teaches That . . .

1. WE SHOULD LAY UP TREASURES IN HEAVEN. “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

“But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through, nor steal:

“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” Matthew 6:19-21.

In this passage, Jesus taught in such a way as to leave no doubt. His desire for us is that we seek those things that are above and not the things upon the earth. If only men and women could be brought to a realization of how short life is and how transient the things we possess materially, they would be more concerned with an eternal reward.

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FREE Bible Correspondence Course!

- ◆ A COMPLETE SURVEY OF THE WHOLE BIBLE IN TWENTY-FIVE LESSONS.
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- ◆ AN EXCELLENT AID TO A PERSONAL STUDY OF THE SCRIPTURES.
- ◆ ELEVATES THE IMPORTANCE OF THE BIBLICAL TEXT OVER THE OPINIONS OF MEN.