

THE LORD'S SUPPER

David Halbrook

How long has it been since you have studied the subject of the Lord's Supper? Why not now?

In 1 Corinthians 11:23-26, we learn that the purpose of the Lord's Supper is to remember the sacrifice of Jesus. By identifying this purpose, He ruled out other purposes for this supper.

The unleavened bread and grape juice are the two elements used in this remembrance (Matt. 26:26-29). Though God did not say "Do not use fish and water," by identifying bread and juice, He ruled out all other items.

In Acts 20:7, we read of disciples assembling on the first day of the week to eat this supper. Here, God has revealed the day to "break bread" in memory of Jesus' death. By identifying this day, He ruled out all other days.

The fact that most churches take a collection of money every Sunday but do not eat the Lord's supper weekly reveals that human tradition has become more influential than the Bible in churches today. The Bible ties both of those to the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2). Now, be a doer of the word (James 1:22).

-- *Editor's Note:* If you are only active in evangelism around the time of gospel meetings, then WAKE UP! What can you do when you do not believe that others will come on Sunday or Wednesday to hear teaching? You can teach them, with even a few words or sentences, during daily conversation. You can also use this article in the *Arkansas Weekly* to try to get someone thinking on things above. We can't all do the same thing, but we can all do something. Are you?

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The Exhorter

Acts 11:23 *Exhorted them all... cleave unto the Lord*

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NO PROGRESS WITHOUT PRACTICE

Gary Henry

The trait that distinguishes the adept from the inept is that the adept have done certain things . . . over and over and over, every day, for many years.

It is foolish to think that we can make progress in the habits of godliness by doing nothing more than listening and learning. While these are essential, they are not enough. It takes practice to make progress, and we should not expect that to be any less true in spiritual matters than in those of a worldly nature.

When we meet individuals who have become adept at the disciplines of the godly life, we often suppose that they're just more devout than we are. Or perhaps we think that they're more intelligent or insightful. Or we wish that we could have read the books and heard the sermons that they've read and heard. But when we think this way, we betray an ignorance of the real thing that produces spiritual progress: practice. The trait that distinguishes the adept from the inept is that the adept have done certain things . . . over and over and over, every day, for many years.

Prayer. Not all of our prayers are of equal quality. Keeping in mind a scriptural definition of "good" praying, it must be said that we do not pray as well at some times as at others. Paul mentioned that "we do not know what we should pray for as we ought" (Rom. 8:21), and the disciples asked Jesus, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples" (Luke 11:1).

But how do you make progress in your prayer life? Well, we certainly need to learn all that we can about the principles of prayer, but the time comes when we have to start practicing the art of prayer. It can't be learned any other way than by praying . . . over and over and over, every day, for many years.

Understanding. It would be hard to overestimate the importance of Bible study, but frankly, some people do a better job than others of correctly understanding what the Bible teaches. The Ethiopian eunuch, for example, was reading the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, but he was having trouble understanding what the passage meant (Acts 8:30-34). So we need to work not only on the quantity but also the quality of our Bible study.

But how do you make progress in your understanding of the Scriptures? It can't be done by the simple investigation of hermeneutics; it requires patient repetition of the act of Bible study. You're not likely to find a mature, responsible student of God's word who arrived at that point any other way than by doing Bible study . . . over and over and over, every day, for many years.

Discretion. Isn't it refreshing when we encounter some older Christian who has grown very wise in matters of discretion and discernment? In a good sense, don't we "envy" those who have learned how to size up a difficult situation and see which course of action is best to take? Surely we do, and of all the abilities we need in this life, none is more vital than the ability to take God's general principles, apply them to a specific situation, and discern what God would want done. Paul wrote, "Do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is" (Eph. 5:17).

But how do you learn to be a better decision maker? There is only one way, and the Hebrew writer put his finger on it when he spoke of those "who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. 5:14).

In matters of godliness, then, there aren't any effective shortcuts. Being a beginner is just hard; that's all there is to it. Some time will have to pass before we can be more skilled. But the passage of time will not, by itself, guarantee improvement (Heb. 5:12); we have to actually do the things that need improving – and do them repeatedly. So let's look for every opportunity to practice the things we want to improve. God deserves nothing less than our very best, and the best that we can do won't be done unless we pray and study our Bibles and use our discretion – over and over and over, every day, for many years. (<http://wordpoints.com/brasstacks/articles/periodicals/>)

**21ST CENTURY EVANGELISM:
THE GROWING VS. THE DYING CHURCH**

Steve Rudd (www.bible.ca)

Our traditional method of reaching the lost has two basic components fancy programs and money. The preacher supplies the fancy programs and the members supply the money to run them. Yet, nobody is really doing anything personally to

reach the lost. We have evangelism by proxy. We hire the preacher to do all the work of soul-winning while the members pursue other interest.

Then, the preacher hires the media to invite the lost to our elaborate programs and meetings while personally inviting no one. When we think about being evangelistic, the first thing that pops into our mind is newspaper advertising for a gospel meeting or a correspondence course. We will never be effective in reaching the lost until each member is convicted of their individual obligation to personally share their faith. Any program will be effective when the bulk of the membership is actively involved.

Circle the characteristic that best describes the church you attend.

Growing Church	Dying Church
Reaching the lost is of central importance.	The need for reaching the lost merely proves a good sermon subject twice a year.
All members recognize their personal responsibility to be active, in some way, in the work.	The sentiment prevails: "Why do I have to teach the lost; isn't that the work of the preacher?"
Many members are involved in giving personal invitations.	Members rely on the "newspaper boy" to do the inviting for them.
Members do not rely on the "church building" to attract the lost.	Member's efforts to reach the lost focus on "appearing prosperous" and having a "nice" building.
Members are personally involved in teaching the gospel to the lost.	Members look to the preacher to teach the lost the gospel.
Church tries to develop the talents of the individual members to effectively teach the lost by providing the necessary material and training.	Church does not provide teaching materials or training to aid members in reaching the lost.

Editor's Note: Does this describe us? Does this describe you? This mentality can "creep up" on us if we are not sober-minded and vigilant or it will come very quickly upon us if we are daily focused on things "below" and not things "above" (1 Pet. 5:8; Col. 3:2). If every member was as diligent as YOU are in trying to teach the lost, handing out our newspaper articles, inviting others to read the Bible with you or to study in your home, etc., what would be accomplished? We can't control how many accept our invitations, but we can control how many such invitations we offer. Are you doing your part to prevent this congregation from dying?