

Small Groups Study Guide

1 Corinthians 11:17-34

November 12, 2023

1. Spend time discussing how everyone is doing.
2. Open with a short prayer or popcorn style (where everyone can pray a little bit)
3. Lesson
 - a. Go around and say what Christian denominations you grew up in or have been a part of.
 - i. How did they do communion?
 - ii. How often did they do communion?
 - iii. Who was allowed to participate in communion?
 - iv. Do you know how the DoC handles communion? When can you start taking communion? Do you have to be baptized first?
 - b. Some theology: ways of viewing communion throughout history
 - i. Remembrance: bread remains bread and juice remain juice, just serve as reminders of Jesus' death and resurrection
 - ii. Consubstantiation: elements of Jesus' body and blood are present, but the bread remains bread and the juice remains juice
 - iii. Transubstantiation: the bread and juice literally become the body and blood of Christ
 - c. Scripture

1 Corinthians 11:17-34

New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

Abuses at the Lord's Supper

17 Now in the following instructions I do not commend you, because when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse. 18 For, to begin with, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and to some extent I believe it. 19 Indeed, there have to be factions among you, for only so will it become clear who among you are genuine. 20 When you come together, it is not really to eat the Lord's supper. 21 For when the time comes to eat, each of you proceeds to eat your own supper, and one goes hungry and another becomes drunk. 22 What! Do you not have households to eat and drink in? Or do you show contempt for the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What should I say to you? Should I commend you? In this matter I do not commend you!

The Institution of the Lord's Supper

23 For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body that is for[a] you. Do this in remembrance of me." 25 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." 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Partaking of the Supper Unworthily

27 Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be answerable for the body and blood of the Lord. 28 Examine yourselves, and only then eat of the bread and drink of the cup. 29 For all who eat and drink[b] without discerning the body[c] eat and drink judgment against themselves. 30 For this reason many of you are weak and ill, and some have died.[d] 31 But if we judged ourselves, we would not be judged. 32 But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined[e] so that we may not be condemned along with the world.

33 So then, my brothers and sisters, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. 34 If you are hungry, eat at home,[f] so that when you come together, it will not be for your condemnation. About the other things I will give instructions when I come.

d. Notes

* From NRSV Cultural Study Bible

- i. V. 20-21 The early churches met primarily in homes (e.g., 1 Cor 16.19), including in Corinth (Acts 18.7; perhaps Rom 16.23). Many Corinthian residents lived in apartment buildings' rooms large enough only for sleeping; these rooms were too small to host people, unless in the narrow corridor that connected various apartments. Churches thus met in more spacious homes; the largest of these would have been in Corinth's richer residential area, the Kranion. Although more spacious villas existed, an average wealthy home could recline 9–12 people on three large couches in the triclinium, an elite dining hall; if needed, more people (even as many as 40) could be accommodated in the larger atrium. Whatever the particulars, the wealthier minority of the congregations (1 Cor 1.26) probably hosted the rest of the members spatially; perhaps they also provided some or all of the food and wine.

In contrast to typical Corinthian banquets, the Jewish Passover meal (cf. 1 Cor 5.7) on which the Lord's Supper was modeled was an intimate matter of one or two families. By this period it followed some conventional Mediterranean banquet customs but its focus differed. Its point was not flaunting status but celebrating God's redemption of his people (see notes on Mt 26.17–30).

(In other words, big difference between how the Corinthians might meet and how the disciples had been meeting).

- ii. V. 27-29 11.27–29 unworthy manner . . . without discerning the body. By treating those of lower worldly status as of lesser worth (vv. 21–22), believers in Corinth failed to discern Christ's body in one another (cf. 10.17), and thus demeaned the commemoration of Jesus' sacrificed body.
- iii. V. 34 11.34 eat at home. The urban poor often had limited access to food and cooking in their small rooms; some people cooked on charcoal braziers, but people often ate at cheap neighborhood taverns. Those with more means could eat in their homes before the church gathered. instructions when I come. Letters often promised further instructions when the writer would come; speaking face to face was preferred (e.g., 3 Jn 10, 14).

e. Interacting with the scripture

- i. What questions do you have about the scripture?

- ii. Take a piece of paper and write down in one concise sentence what you think Paul is getting at in today's scripture. HAND OUT PAPER AND PENS. TAKE UP ANSWERS.
 - Read answers one by one and discuss them.
 - iii. How do you feel about taking communion (I'm not asking how you feel about taking it every week)? What memories, thoughts, feelings, etc. does it evoke?
 - iv. How can we make communion more important to younger people? I think to them it just seems like a very foreign thing to do.
- f. TAKE COMMUNION TOGETHER AS A GROUP.
 - g. Pray