Glad Tidings

"And we bring you good of the promise made unto the fathers…" (Acts 13:32)

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Eat At Home

(Jerry Fite)

The church in Corinth was perverting the Lord's supper, making it no more than a common meal. Instead of coming together to remember the death of Jesus by partaking of the unleavened bread, and fruit of the vine, some were *"drunken"* and others due to the division in the church were *"hungry" (I Corinthians 11:21).* Their coming together as a congregation was certainly not for the better, but for the worse *(I Corinthians 11:17).*

In order to correct the problems in Corinth, and protect the spiritual integrity of the Lord's supper, Paul prescribed the Divine remedy: *"If any man is hungry, let him eat at home; that your coming together be not unto judgment" (I Corinthians 11:34).* The "coming together" in a congregational setting was for a spiritual purpose where eating and drinking in memory of the Lord's death was proper. Eating and drinking to satisfy physical hunger or to feed man's social needs had another proper setting: *"What, have ye not houses to eat and drink in..." (I Corinthians 11:22).* Waiting on one another, by kindly receiving each other in the eating of the memorial supper of the Lord, would stop the manifestation of division *(I Corinthians 11:33).* Eating at home or in the social setting of peoples' houses in order to satisfy physical hunger would keep the spiritual purpose for the Lord's supper holy.

Some believe "love feasts" were congregational activities. Early third century *Tertullian* defends love feasts of his time as sacred meetings where the needy is benefited, hymns and Scripture were sung and read, and modesty and chastity instead of drunken licentiousness is the norm (Apol.39). Joseph Thayer places the "love feast" as having a connection with the Lord's supper where "love" was shown *"at which the poorer Christians mingled with the wealthier and partook in common with the rest of food provided at the expense of the wealthy"(Thayer, p. 4).*

Assume for a moment that Thayer is right about what was happening in the early church. If so, the "love feast" in Corinth was just as perverted as the Lord's supper it supposedly preceded. People were remaining "hungry" ... what feast of love allows this? Again, what was the Divine remedy ? It was not to show love by waiting on one another for the common meal, but, if you are hungry, eat at home. If the meal satisfying hunger was being practiced before the Lord's supper, it did not have God's sanction.

Jude speaks of matters pertaining to "love" connected with people "feasting" together, or as we read, *"love feasts" (Jude 12).* Jude does not authorize churches meeting together for "fellowship meals," but warns that those who feast with you in the context of love may be dangerous, like rocks lying below the water's surface. There is nothing revealed here of whether the love feasts were congregational exercises or feasts hosted by wealthy members. But one thing we do know... supposed "love feasts" involved in feeding physical hunger were to be conducted as home as God demands through His apostle Paul.

If we obey God's command as revealed by Paul, we can enjoy the company of united believers as we eat together in the social setting of our houses. We know this was occurring with God's approval in the early church. Luke records that in addition to meeting with one accord in the temple, they were also *"...breaking bread at home...with gladness and singleness of heart" Acts 2:46).*