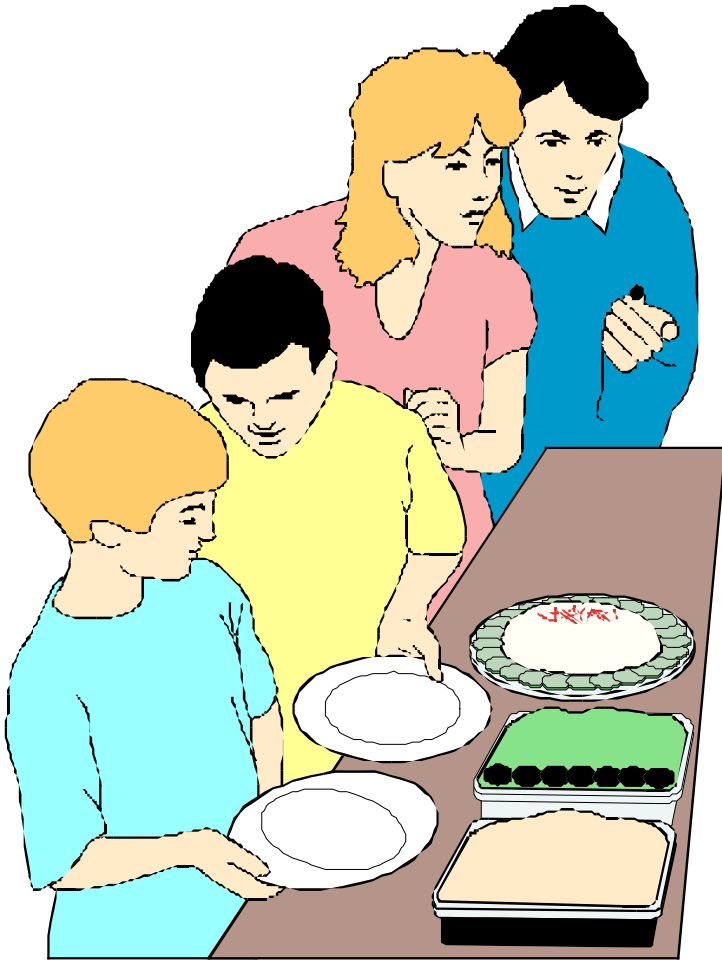




# **“Church Social Meals”**

**Are they a scriptural part of the work of the New Testament Church of Christ?  
Should we continue the practice? Are we sinning against Christ when we do?**

# Congregational Meal



- Church Called
- Church Planned
- Church Funded
- Church Overseen
- Church Supported

# What is the Issue?



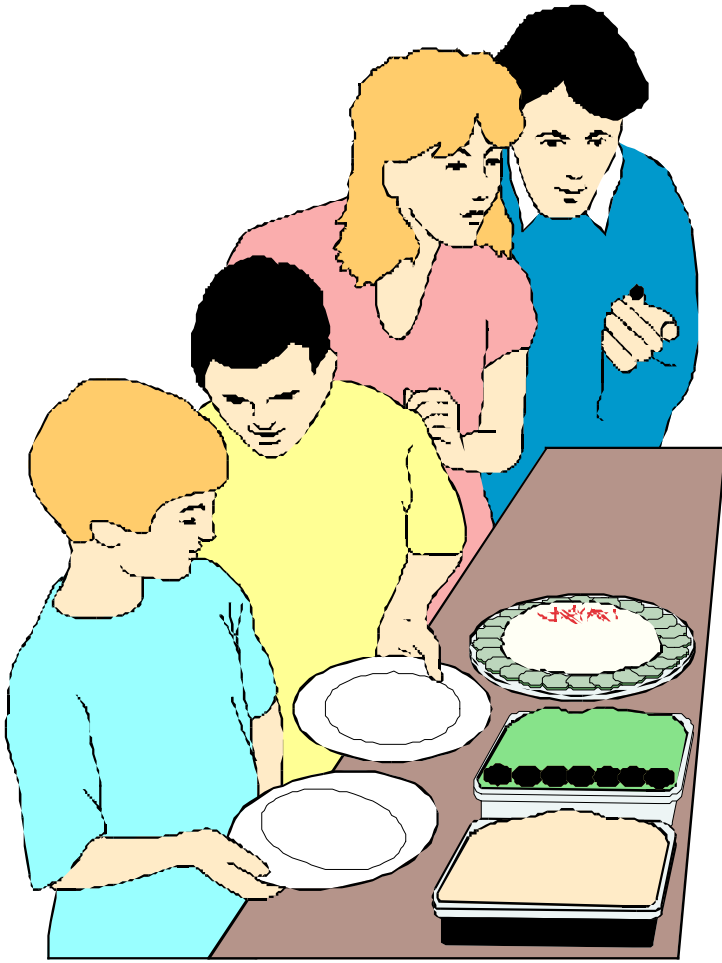
- It is not water coolers
- It is not rest rooms, sinks or refrigerators
- It is not the preacher eating his lunch in the meetinghouse
- It is not the brethren socializing in the foyer

# What Is The Issue?

Whether or not the local church may plan, provide, oversee and pay for some of the social activities of the members of that church as a part of its work.



# What Is The Issue?



- Church Dinners
- Game & Party Rooms
- Ball Teams
- Scout Troops
- “Youth Ministers”
- “Multipurpose” Rooms
- Gymnasiums

# When Is It Sinful?



- When it is disobedience to positive law (1 Jno. 3:4; Gen. 3:1-6).
- When it is an omission of what is commanded (Jas. 4:17; Heb. 2:2).
- When it cannot be shown to be authorized — it is lawlessness (2 Jno. 9; 1 Jno. 5:17; Matt. 7:21-23).

# Old Testament Meals



- Food eaten as part of the OT worship (Ex. 29:31-37).
- Utensils necessary to that worship (Ex. 27:1-8).
- This was a religious service which serves as a type of our fellowship with God and Christ (Heb. 13:10-12).
- You prove more than you are willing to accept (Col. 2:14-16; Gal. 5:3-6).

# Jesus Ate the Passover



- Was the Passover a social meal? (Exo. 13:14-16)
- The Passover no part of the Supper (Lk. 22:20).
- The practice is condemned by Paul (1 Cor. 11:22,34).





# John 6:5-14

- **Jesus fed the multitudes.**
  - a miracle (Mt. 16:9)
  - in the wilderness (Mt. 15:33)
  - act of compassion (Mt. 15:32)
- **Jesus would not feed the bread seekers (Jn. 6:26,27).**
  - Came not for the miracle
  - Came to be fed
- **Is your practice the same as Jesus' practice?**
  - Expedient

# Acts 2:42



- **The Church (Acts 2:47)**
- **Fellowship**
  - never a social meal
  - the Lord's Supper
  - the collection
- **Breaking Bread**
  - Steadfast (1 Cor. 11:26)
  - Believers (1 Cor. 10:16)
  - Context: prayers, fellowship, preaching

# Thomas B. Warren



*"In the breaking of bread... Since all the acts here referred to are religious acts, it is obvious that 'breaking bread' here [in Acts 2:42] refers to eating the Lord's Supper."*

*When Is An Example Binding?*  
p. 155

# “What A Fellowship”



## • Participation

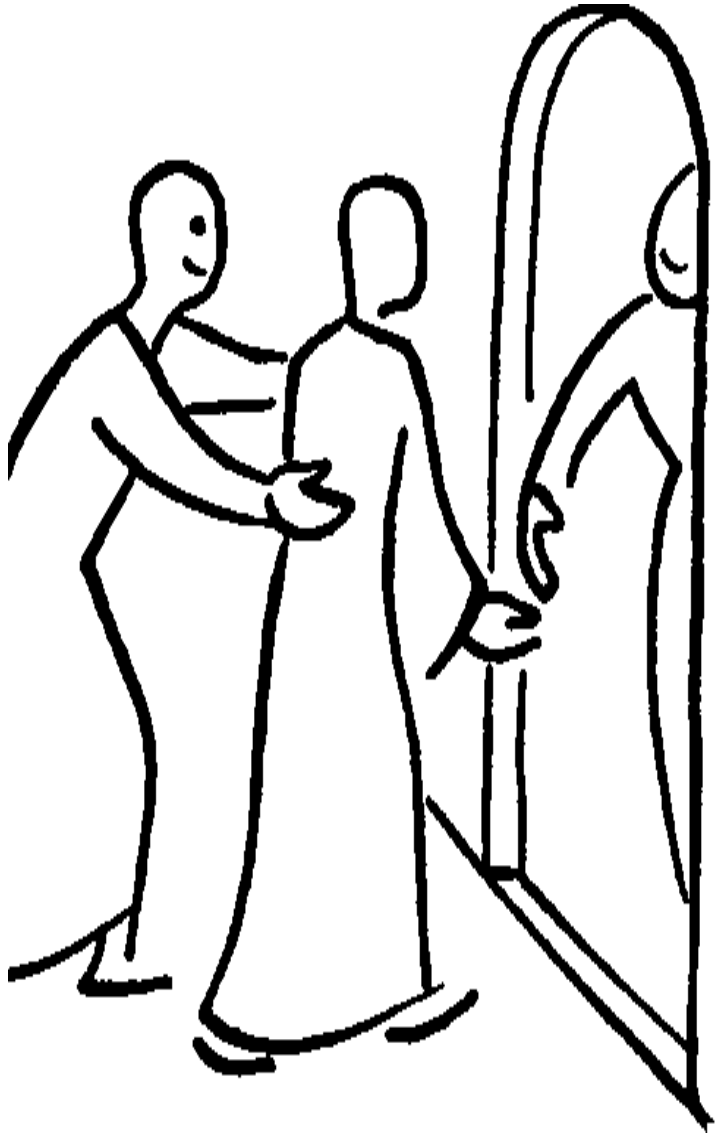
- with Deity (1 Jno. 1:3, 6-7; 1 Cor. 1:9; 2 Cor. 13:14)
- with saints (1 Jno. 1:3; Gal. 2:9; Phile. 17)
- with sinners (1 Cor. 10:20; 2 Cor. 6:14-18; 1 Thess. 5:22).

# “What A Fellowship”

## • Partnership

- in the work of the church (2 Cor. 8:23; Acts 2:42).
- in financing the church (Acts 2:42; 1 Tim. 6:18).
- in preaching the Gospel (Ph 1:5; 4:15; 2 Cor. 8:23).
- in distributing to needy saints (Rom. 12:13; 15:26-27; 2 Cor. 8:4; 9:13).





# Acts 2:46

- The believers (Acts 2:44)
- Assembled in the temple:
  - Preaching
  - Giving
  - Lord's Supper
  - Prayer
- Went home to eat:
  - Not for social purposes (Acts 2:44,45; 4:34-37; 5:42; 6:1-7)
  - Hospitality (1 Pet. 4:9)

# Thomas B. Warren



**“The historian Luke makes it clear that the disciples were eating their ordinary meals in their own homes — not in the Temple ... They did not eat their common meals in the Temple; they did this in their respective homes ... they ate their ordinary meals at home ...”**

***When Is An Example Binding?*  
p. 154**

# Acts 4:32-35



- **A Collection (4:34,37; 5:1)**
  - The fellowship (Acts 2:42)
  - As purposed (Acts 4:32)
  - As prospered (Acts 11:29)
  - First day (1 Cor. 16:1,2)
- **A Distribution (4:35)**
  - “unto every man”
  - “as he had need”
  - made daily (Acts 6:1-4)
- **Where’s the church meal for social purposes?**

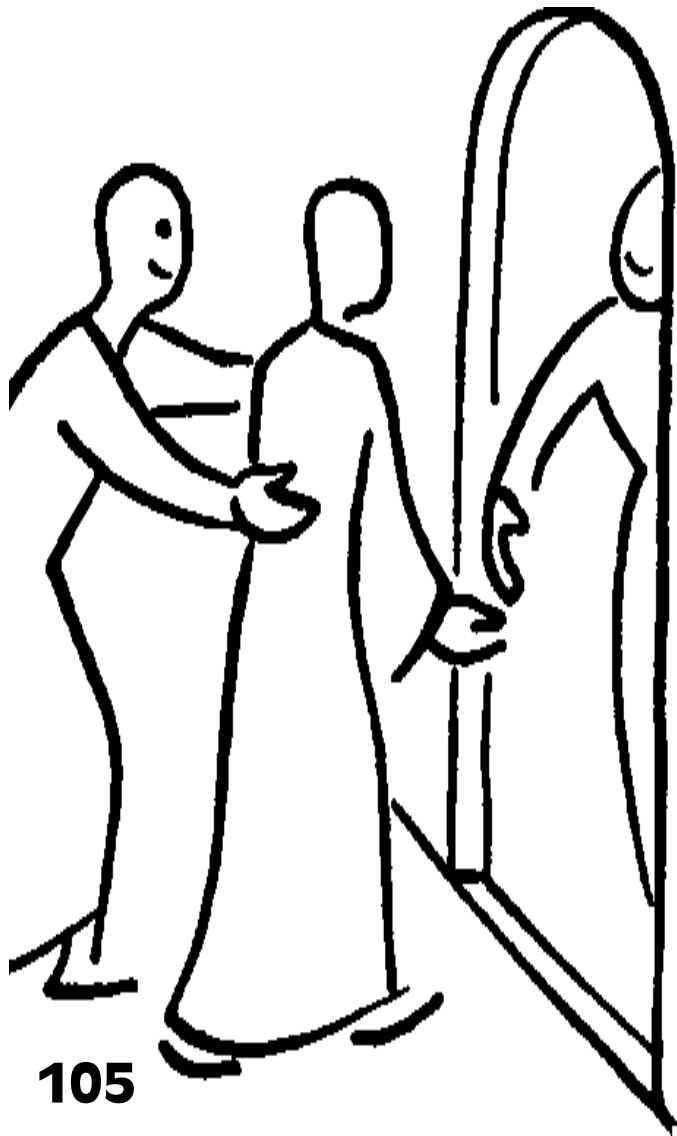


# Acts 6:1-6



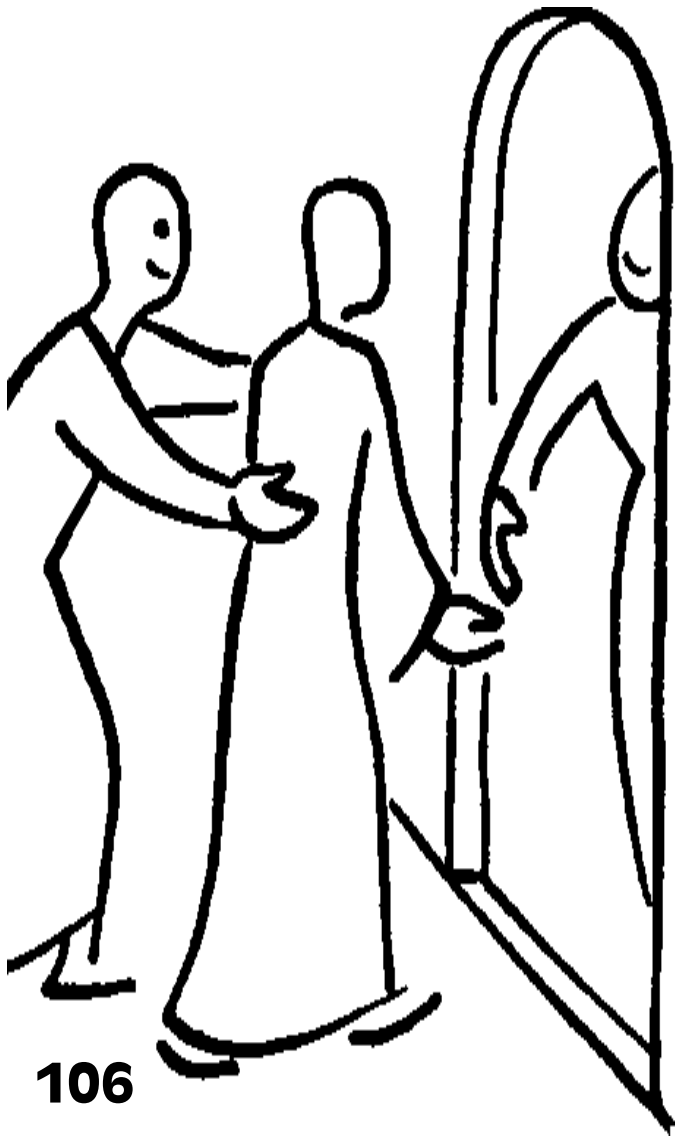
- **The Distribution (6:1)**
  - made daily
  - “unto every man” (4:35)
  - “as he had need” (4:35)
  - involved serving tables (v.2)
- **Some Neglected (6:1)**
  - Grecians
  - Widows (1 Tim. 5:16)
  - The Seven app’t’d. (vv. 3-6)
- **Where’s the church meal for social purposes?**

# The Church in Your House

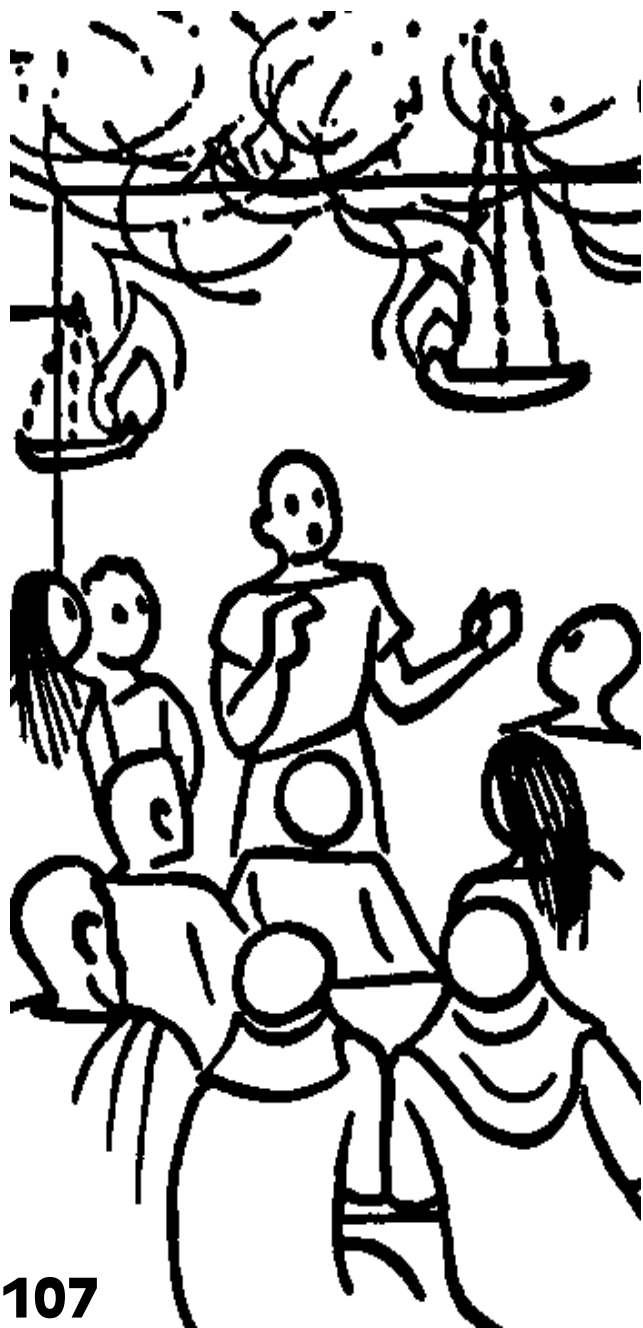


- Churches met in houses.
  - Acts 12:12
  - Acts 16:40
  - Acts 18:7
  - Romans 16:23
- Saints ate in those houses.
  - Acts 11:3
  - Acts 16:15
  - Philemon 2,22
- Does that authorize a Church meal for social purposes?

# The Church in Your House



- **Saints also did other things:**
  - Ran a business (Acts 18:2,3)
  - Gave first aid (Acts 16:33)
  - Were imprisoned (Acts 28:20)
  - Owned slaves (Phile.)
  - Provided lodging (3 Jno. 5,6)
  - Ran a gov't. (Phil. 1:13; 4:22)
- **Does that authorize the Church to engage in these practices? If not, why not?**



# Acts 20:11

- **When did Paul leave Troas?**
  - First Day of the Week (20:7)
  - On the Morrow (20:7)
  - Until Midnight(20:7)
  - Till Break of Day (20:11)
- **Luke follows Roman time.**
  - The morrow began after midnight (Acts 20:7).
  - Paul departed after break of “day,” the “morrow” (20:7,11).



# Acts 20:11

- Who broke bread in Acts 20?
  - The disciples (20:7)
  - Paul (20:11)
- Did all eat the same common meal?
  - Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:20,33)
  - Paul (cf. Acts 2:46; 1 Cor. 11:22)
- Is this a congregational meal for social purposes?
  - Acts 20:6,16



# Acts 20:11

- If Acts 20:7-11 is a church meal for social purposes:
  - By what authority do you bind taking the Lord's Supper on the First Day of the week?
  - How do you explain the necessity of remaining seven days in Troas?
  - How do you reconcile this passage with 1 Corinthians 11:18-34 which says "eat at home"?

# Thomas B. Warren

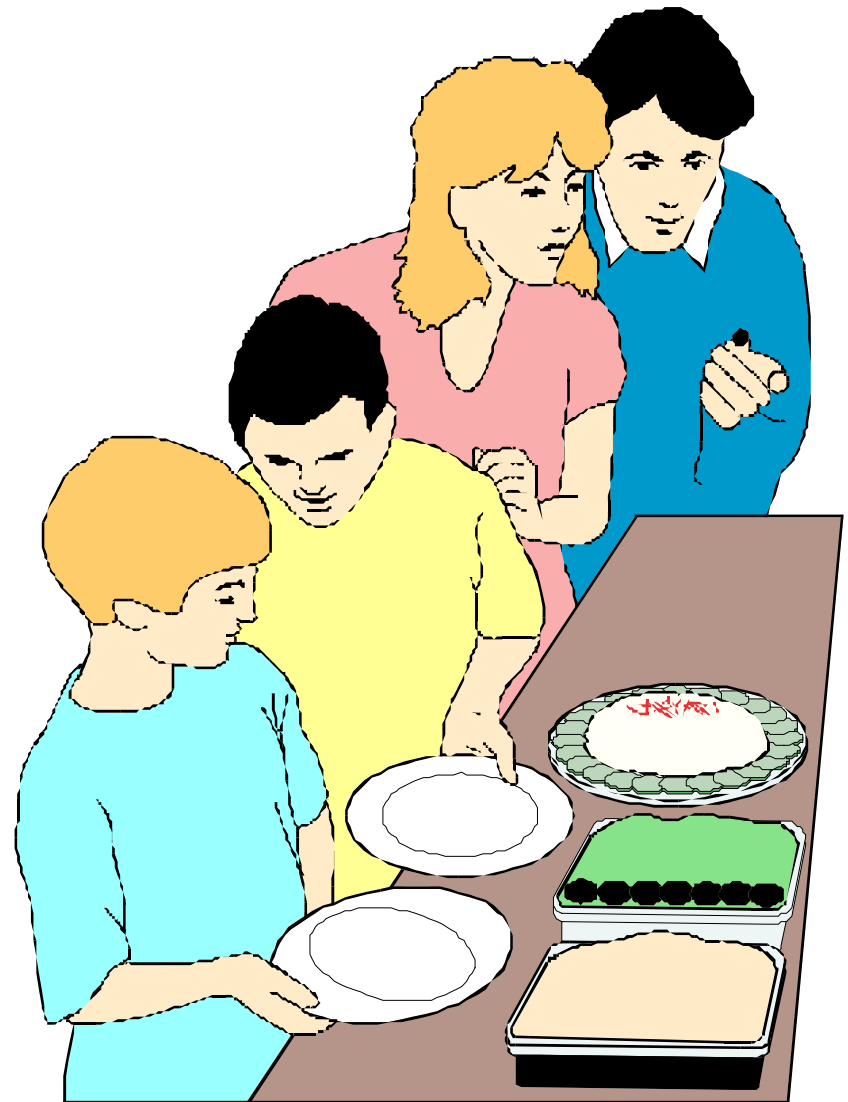


**“It is clear that the eating of the Lord’s Supper is at least the basic purpose of Christians coming together on the first day of the week. The disciples came together — after waiting seven days — on the first day of the week in order to ‘break bread’ (eat the Lord’s Supper, Acts 20:7).”**

***When Is An Example Binding?*  
p. 149**

# 1 Corinthians 11:20-34

- **Bob, are you sure you want this text?**
  - Admit it describes your current practice.
  - Receive the regulations that Paul applies to it.
  - Accept the consequences of your practice.
- **If not?**
  - Why cite this text?
  - Assumption and assertion





# 1 Corinthians 11:20-34

## • What was being abused?

### – *The Assembly (vs. 17)*

- “come together ... for the worse”
- “come together in the church”
- “come together into one place”

### – *The Lord's Supper (vs. 20)*

- “to eat the Lord's Supper”
- “This is my body”
- “This cup is ...my blood”

### – *The Poor Brethren (vs. 21)*

- “divisions among you”
- “shame them that have not”



# 1 Corinthians 11:20-34

- **What does Paul correct?**

- ***The Assembly (vs. 22)***

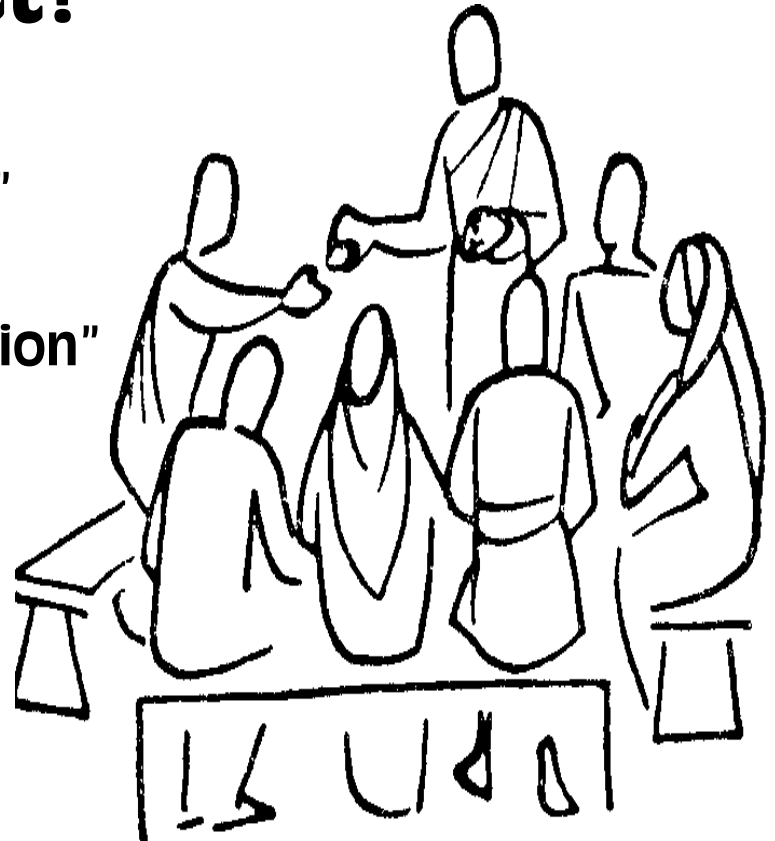
- “What, have ye not houses ... ?”
    - “Eat at home ...”
    - “Not together unto condemnation”

- ***The Lord's Supper (vs. 23)***

- “This do ...”
    - “In remembrance ...”

- ***The Brethren (vs. 28)***

- “Let a man examine himself ...”
    - “If we would judge ourselves ...”



# **A Congregational Meal for Social Purposes**



- **Congregational (1 Cor. 11:17,22)**
- **A Common Meal (1 Cor. 11:21,22,34)**
- **Social Purposes (1 Cor. 11:18,22,33)**

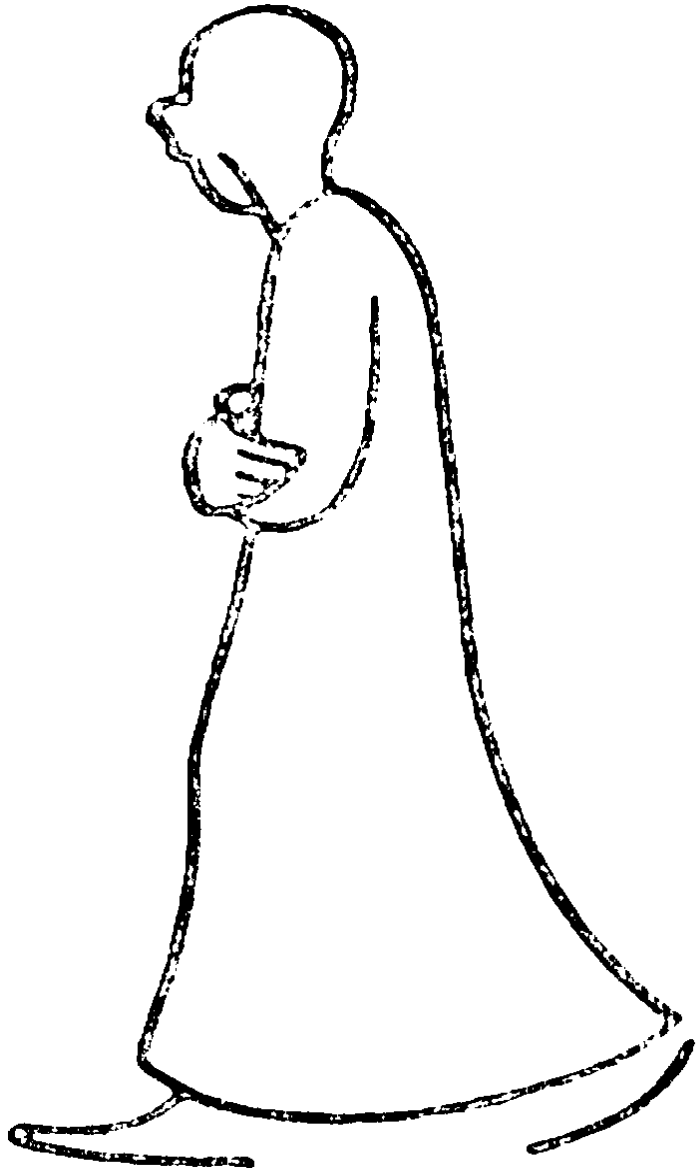
# 1 Corinthians 11:20-34

- **What does Paul command?**

- ***On the Assembly (vs. 33)***
  - All Come together into one place
  - For the “better”
- ***On the Lord’s Supper (vs. 23)***
  - As “I delivered unto you”
  - “Show the Lord’s death”
  - “Discerning the Lord’s body”
- ***On The Brethren (vs. 33)***
  - Shame not ...
  - “Tarry one for another”



# Gal. 2:11-17



- **Peter ate with Gentiles**
  - in Antioch
  - in homes (Acts 10:28; 11:3)
- **Peter withdrew**
  - some came from James
  - of the Circumcision
  - Peter a hypocrite
  - Paul rebuked Peter
- **A spiritual problem (vv. 14-17)**
- **Where's the church meal for social purposes?**

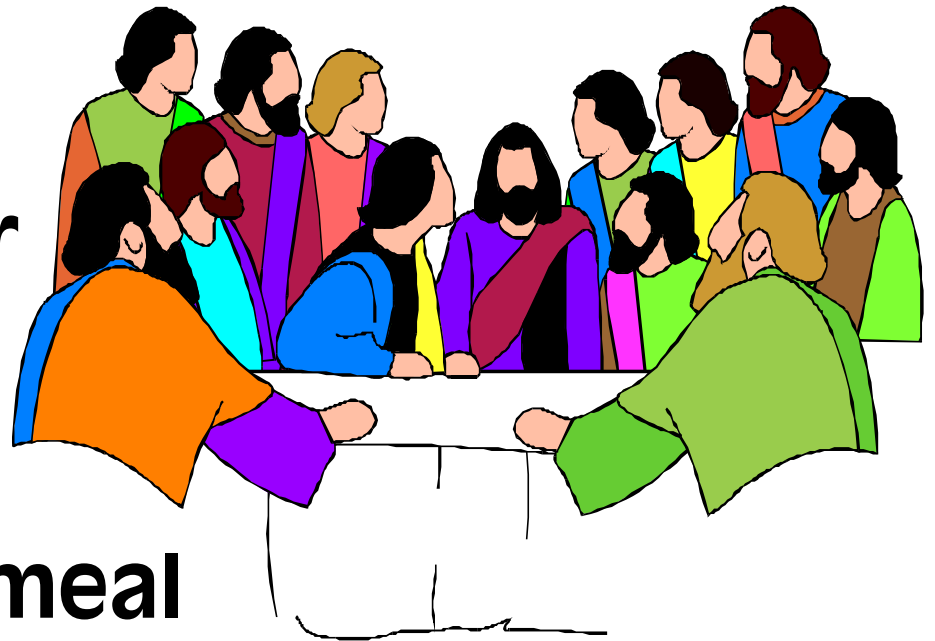
# Hospitality One to Another



- Hospitality commanded (1 Pet. 4:9; Heb. 13:2).
- Exemplified (3 Jn. 5,6; Acts 16:15; Phile. 22; Acts 2:5,44,45; 4:35,36).
- I preach these Bible principles to the church.
- Demonstrate how your church social meal is hospitality.

# The Love Feast?

- The Lord's Supper
- Church social meal joined to the Supper
- Church social meal apart from Supper
- Church benevolent meal
- Private social meal
- Private benevolent meal



# The Love Feast

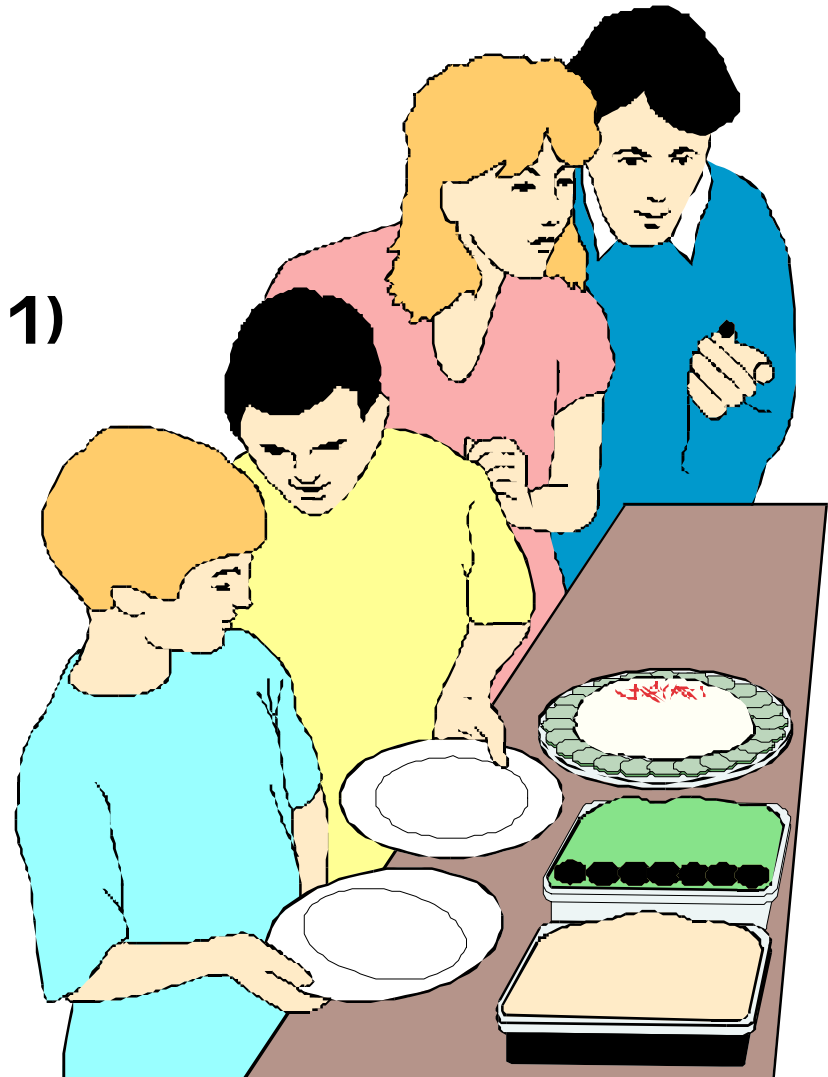
- A common meal?
- Addressed to a church?
- A local church planned or provided for it?
- The Lord authorized what was being done?
- The conduct of the participants approved?





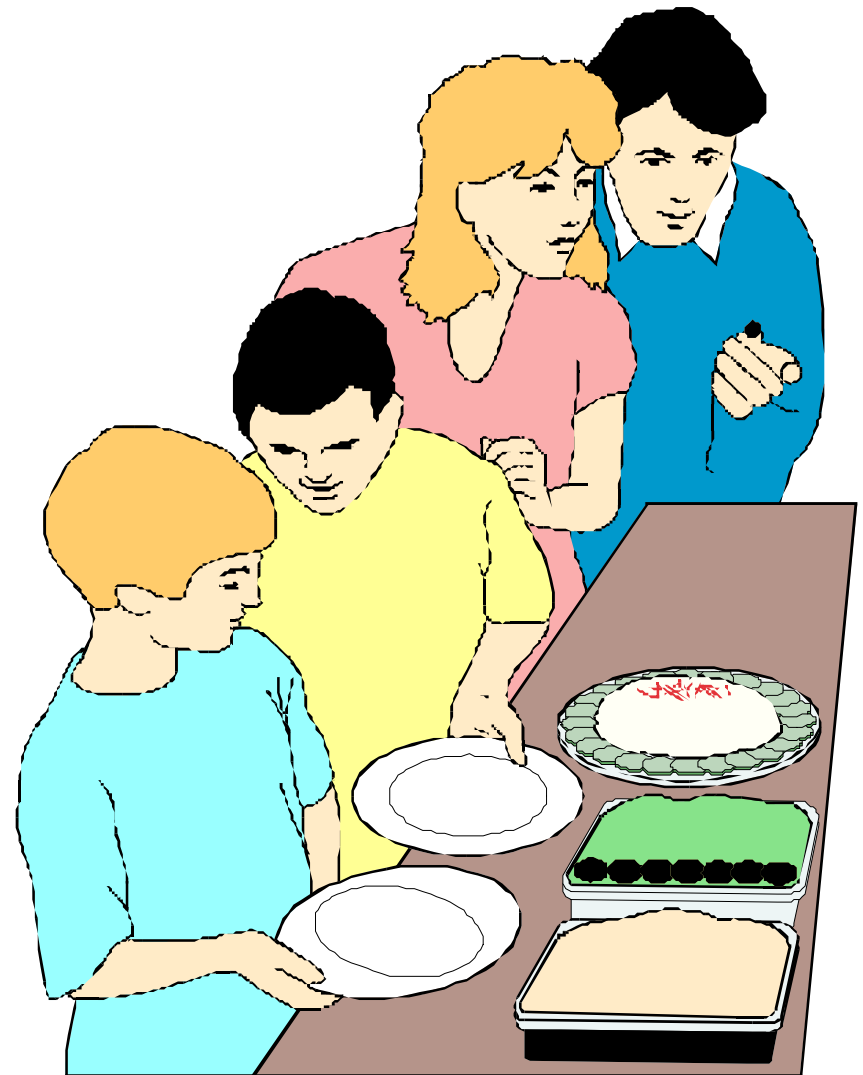
# The Love Feast

- **Apostate participants**
  - Ungodly men (Jude 4)
  - False teachers (2 Pt. 2:1)
  - Denying Jesus (Jude 4)
- **Lascivious behavior**
  - Spiteful (Jude 8)
  - Irreverent (Jude 12)
  - Shameful (Jude 13)
  - Riotous (2 Pt. 2:13)



# The Love Feast

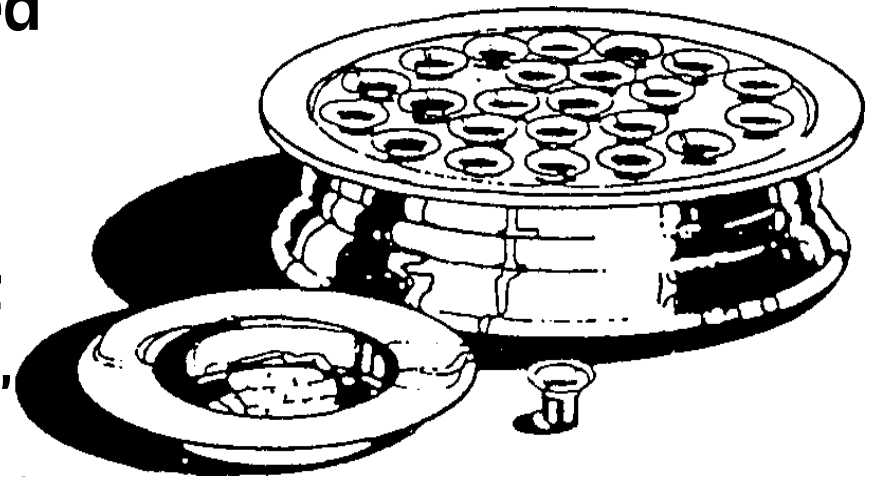
- **Apostolic remedy**
  - Edify (Jude 20)
  - Pray (Jude 20)
  - Holiness (Jude 21)
  - Discipline (Jude 22,23)
- **Spiritual consequences**
  - Apostasy (2 Pt. 2:14)
  - Damnation (2:20-22)
  - A remnant (Jude 24,25)



# Love Feast the Lord's Supper

**“The gathering of saints together at stated times [is] the duty of Christians. When wicked men meet with you, their excesses are so great they are like black spots upon a clean white surface. They regard not the holy character of the feast, and the love of the master in obedience to whose command it is observed, but as gluttons feed without reverence.”**

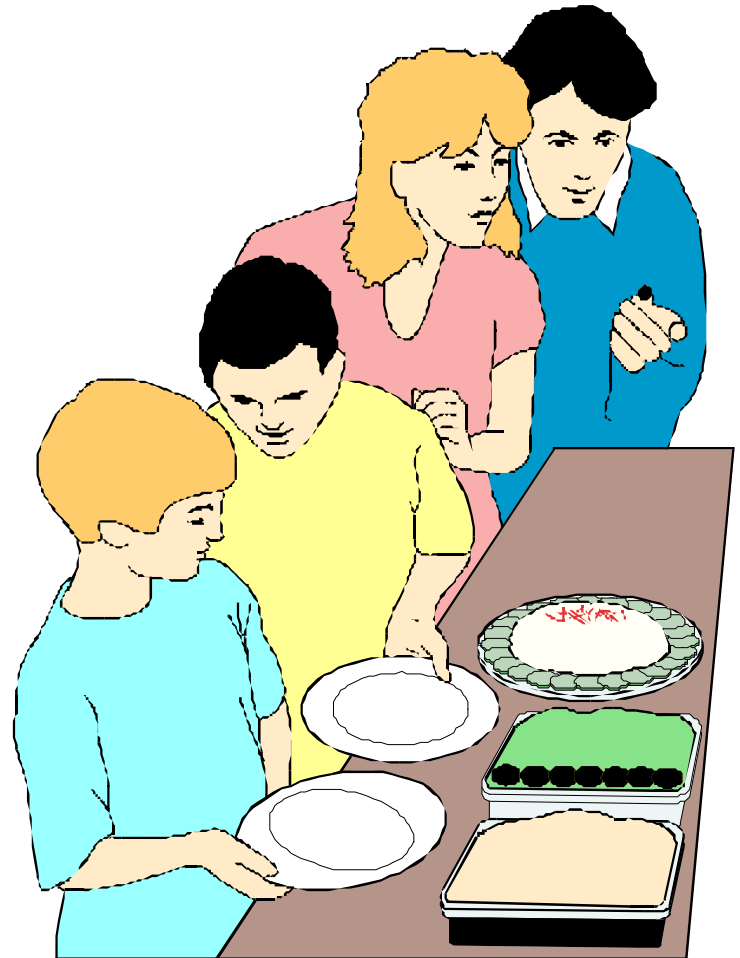
**N.T. Caton,  
*Commentary on Jude*, p. 207**



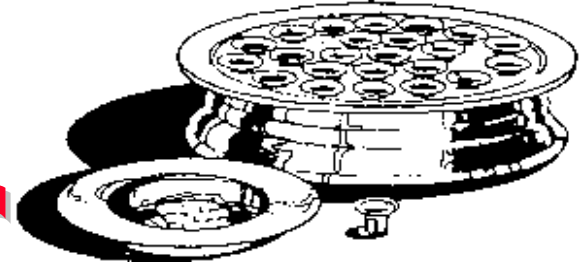
# Love Suppers Carnal

**“Commentators are not agreed about the meaning of this word. Some think Jude is speaking of the ancient love-suppers, which Tertullian hath described, *Apolog.* C. 39 and which do not seem to have been accompanied with the Eucharist. Others think they were those suppers which the first Christian ate previous to their eating the Lord’s supper, and of which st. Paul hath spoken, 1 Cor. 11:21. But being afterwards perverted to the purposes of carnal love by ungodly teachers, 2 Pet. 2:14, they were in time disused.”**

**James McKnight D.D.,  
*Commentary on Jude*, p. 694**



# The Love Feast & the Lord's Supper



## Jude & 2 Peter 2

- "Feasts of charity"
- "Feast with you"
- "Feed themselves"
- "Speak evil of things they understand not"
- "Corrupt themselves"
- "Beguiling unstable souls ... through lusts"
- "...Have compassion ..Others save with fear"

## 1 Corinthians 11

- "The Lord's Supper"
- "Together to eat"
- "His own supper"
- "Eateth and drinketh unworthily"
- "Damnation to himself"
- "Many are weak and sickly ... and many sleep"
- "When we are judged we are chastened ..."

# Guy N. Woods



**“The love-feasts were meals common to the apostolic age at which the saints met from social, charitable, and humanitarian reasons. They appear to have had their origin in the practice of the wealthier members of the congregation providing food for the poorer ones, and eating with them, in token of their brotherliness.”**

***Commentary on Jude, p. 395***

# Why Did The Church Assemble?

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- **Worship**
  - Acts 2:42
- **Preaching**
  - Acts 11:26
- **Edification**
  - Heb. 10:24,25
- **Evangelism**
  - Acts 14:26,27
- **Problems**
  - Acts 15:1-4
- **Benevolence**
  - Acts 6:1-6
- **Prayer**
  - Acts 4:31
- **Discipline**
  - 1 Cor. 5:1-6

# What About “Weddings”?

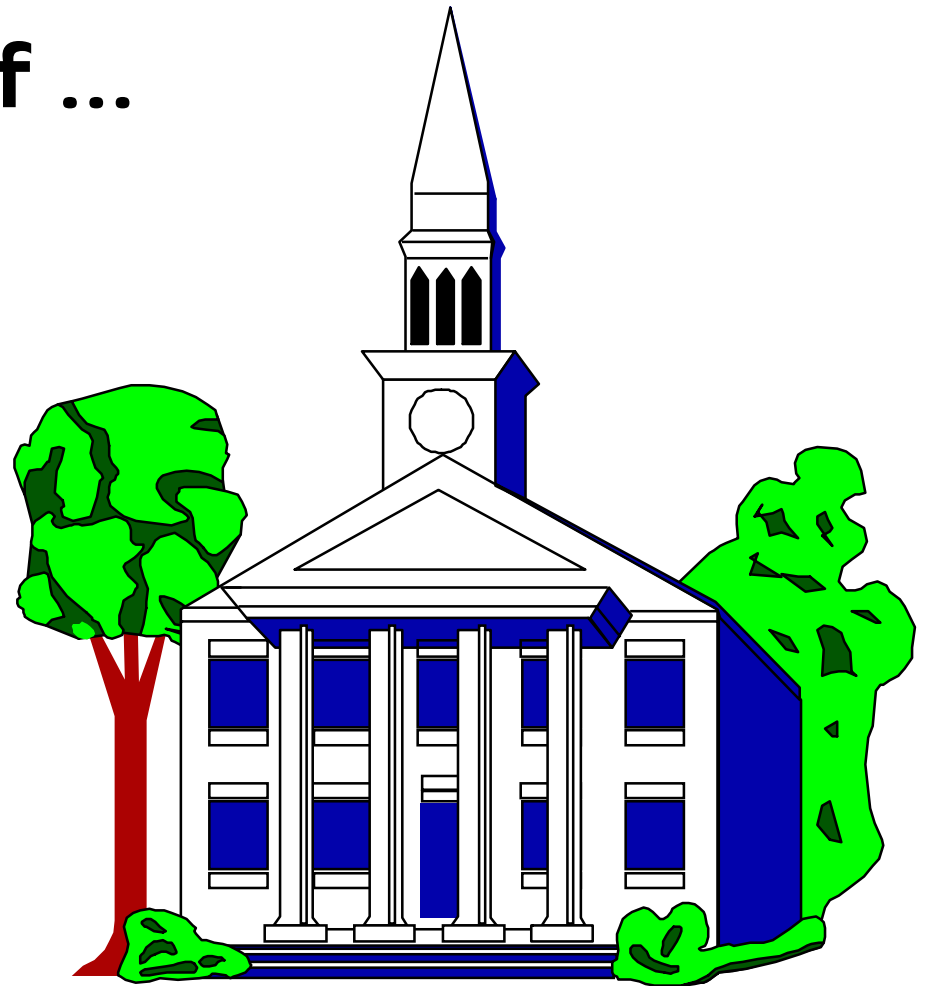
- **What are you talking about?**
  - Immodest dress
  - Secular & instrumental music
  - Denominational clergy
  - Wedding chapels
  - Receptions
- **Do you limit the use of your meetinghouse?**
- **Should elders oversee these social functions?**





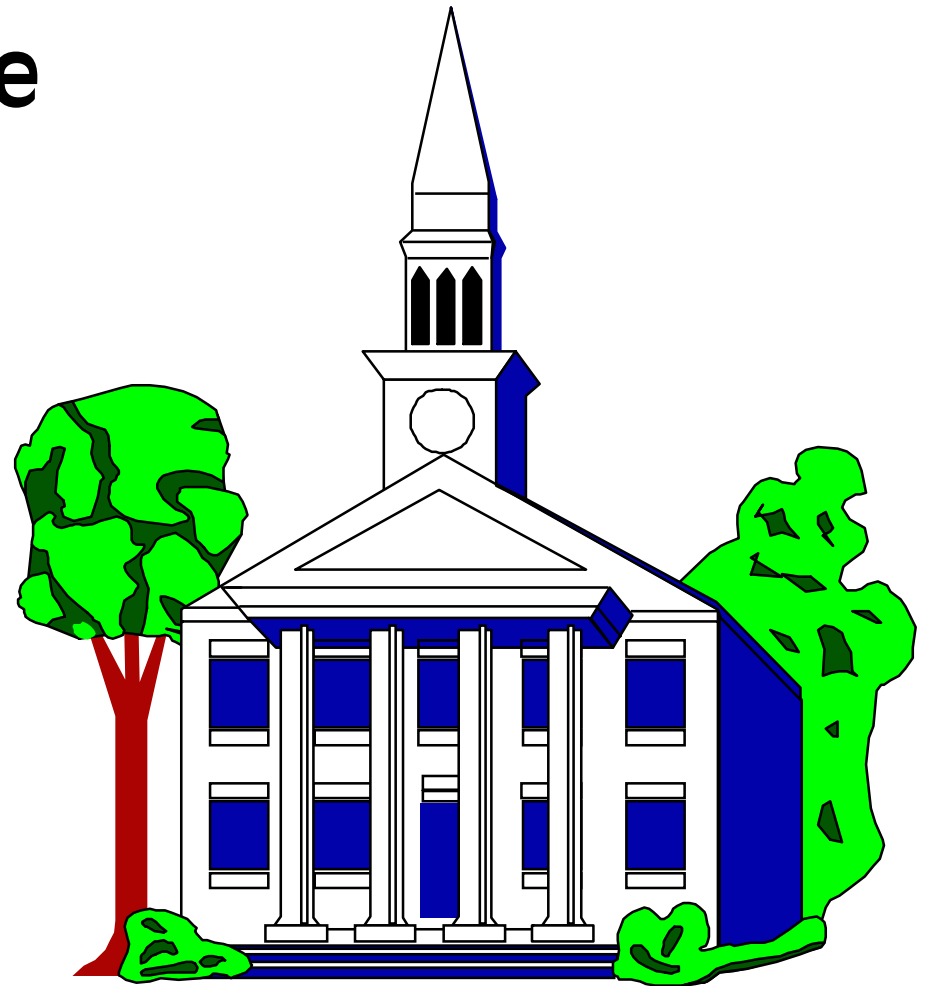
# Church Building Holy?

- **Not in the sense of ...**
  - Possessing a claim to reverence
  - Being profaned
  - Cf. Heb. 9:1-3,24
- **But as ...**
  - Set apart for god
  - Exclusively his
  - Lk. 2:23; 1 Pet. 2:9

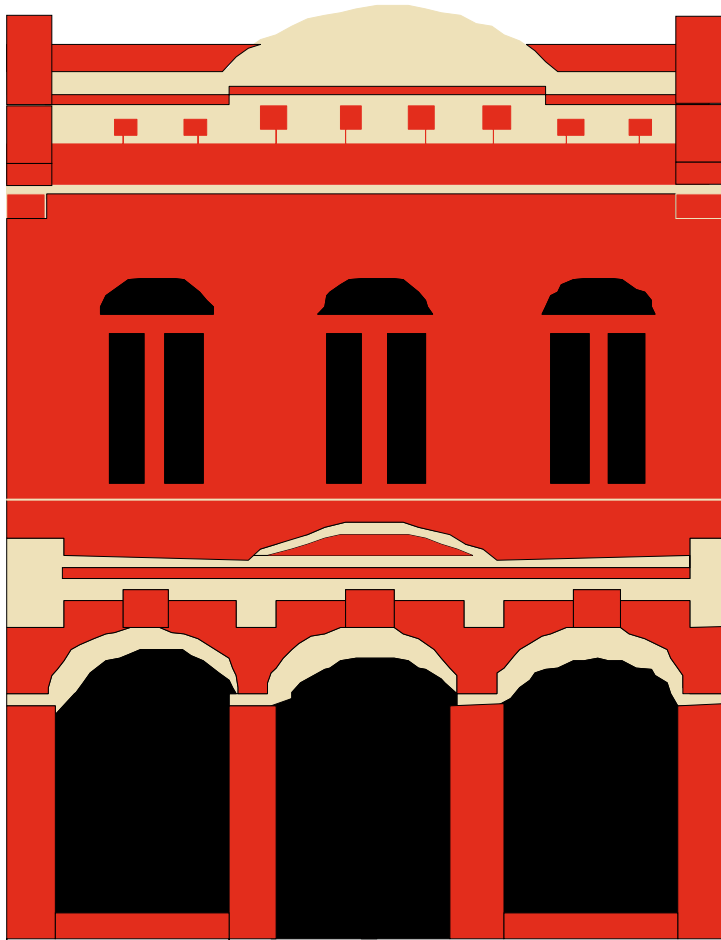


# Church Building Holy?

- Do you limit the use of your building?
- Why?
- Does the fact that some of the youth play ball on the parking lot authorize a gym?
- Why not?

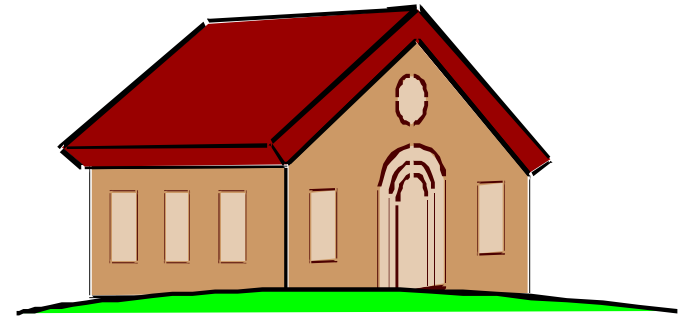


# Where The Saints Meet



- Store front?
- Dance hall?
- Saloon?
- Gymnasium?
- Bank?
- Funeral parlor?
- School cafeteria?
- Private home?

# Why Have A Meetinghouse?



- The church commanded to assemble for work and worship (Hebrews 10:24,25).
- A place essential to fulfilling that obligation (cf. Acts 20:8).
- The church may have a place sufficient to do what it is *authorized* to do in that place.

# “Dinner on the Ground”



- Past practice does not authorize anything.
- What was the practice?
  - All day meeting
  - Singing & preaching
  - Horse & buggy days
  - Necessity
- How does that compare with your practice?

# “Can’t Eat in a Restaurant”

- Does “eat at home” mean “in your own house”?
  - Dt. 24:5
  - Prov. 7:19,20
  - Hab. 2:5
  - 1 Cor. 14:35
  - 1 Tim. 5:4
  - Titus 2:5
- These passages affirm “at home” is a relationship not a place.



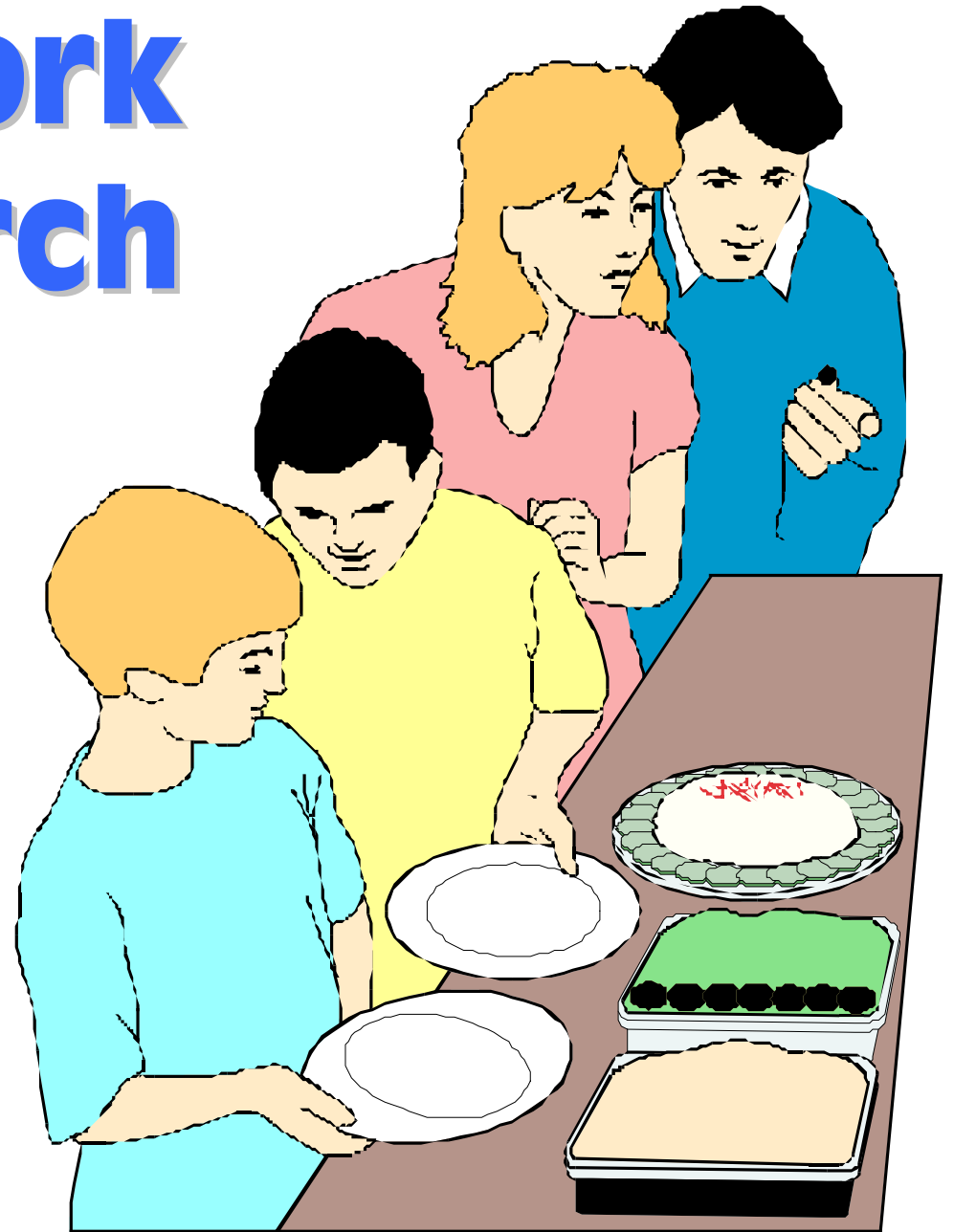
# **“Not in the Toilet Business”**



- Rest rooms and kitchens are not parallel.
- Rest rooms are inherent in the command to assemble (Heb. 10:25; Acts 20:8).
- Kitchens are inherent in the command to eat a church social meal.
- I can find the authority to assemble. Can you find the authority for the church social meal?

# Not The Work of the Church

- **Edification**
  - Ephesians 4:12
- **Benevolence**
  - Acts 6:3
- **Evangelism**
  - Mark 16:15





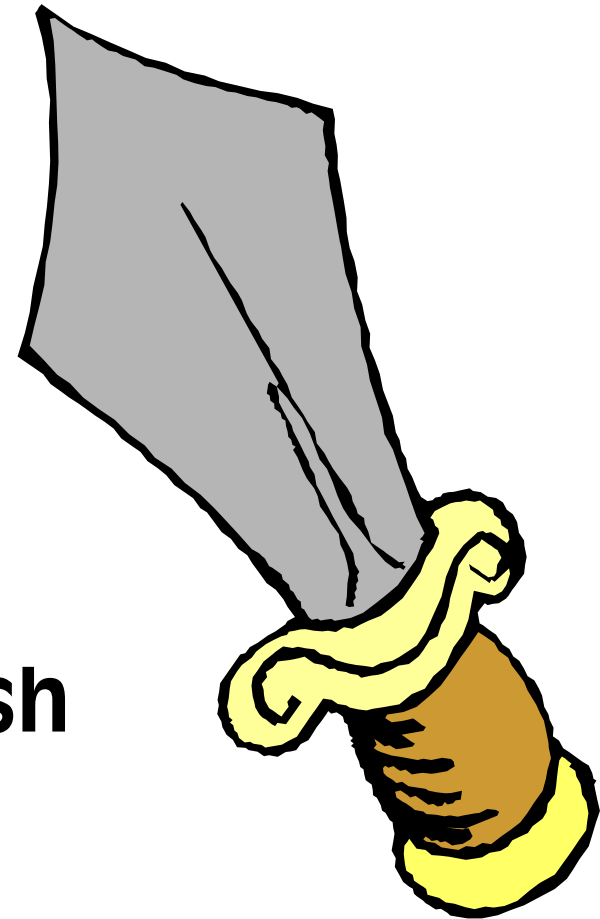
# It Proves Too Much!

- It broadens the work of the church to the social realm.
- It authorizes by “foresight” and “expediency.”
- It opens the door to denominationalism.



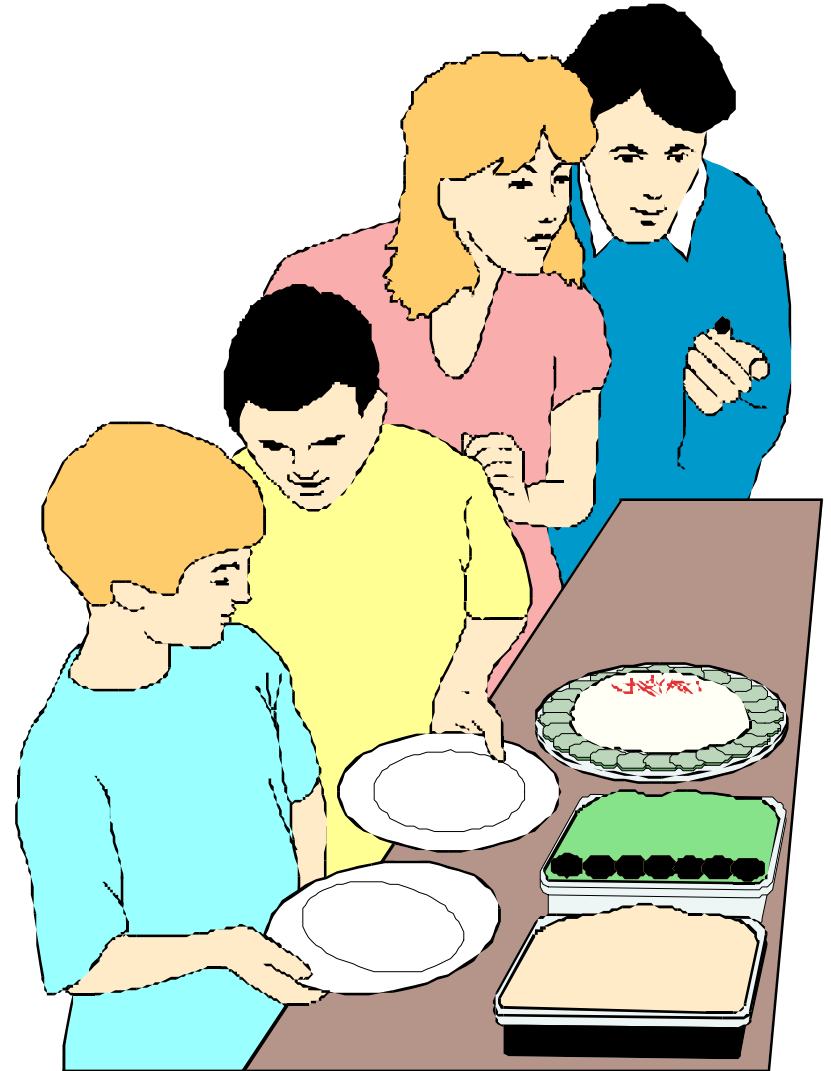
# It Is A Carnal Weapon

- It is hucksterizing the Gospel (2 Cor. 2:17).
- It is a rejection of the Word as the drawing power of God (2 Cor. 10:3,4; cf. Jn. 6:44,45).
- It is an appeal to the flesh (gal. 6:8; 2 Pet. 2:18,19)



# Specifically Condemned

- **1 Cor. 11:18-34**
  - “Have you not houses to eat and drink in?”
  - “If any man hunger, let him eat at home.”
- **What did Paul command that they eat at home?**
  - Corrupt Lord’s supper
  - Their social meals



# May the Church Do What Jesus Did?

- **Lived under the Law**
  - Galatians 4:4
  - Luke 22:15
  - Matthew 19:16-19
- **Issued Limited Commission**
  - Matthew 10:5-7
  - Luke 19:9,10
- **Practiced John's Baptism**
  - Matthew 3:13
  - John 4:1,2



# Is Benevolence Spiritual?



- Based on a spiritual relation (2 Cor. 8:4)
- Repays a spiritual debt (Rom. 15:27)
- Bears spiritual fruit (Rom. 15:28)
- Renders a spiritual service (2 Cor. 9:12)