

Further discussion on communion

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Preacher: Philip Wells and others

[0 : 00] What we've been doing is looking in some detail and some depth at the matter of the Lord's Supper. And we've seen, I think, a lot of really helpful things.

I think we've seen the goodness of the Supper where Jesus says, this is my body broken for you, this is my blood shed for you, and invites us as sinners to feed on those good things, to feed on His wonderful promises to us, and to be enriched by doing so.

So I'm not going to go over all the things that we looked at before, but I would like to take us back to 1 Corinthians 11, where we see in the church in Corinth that they were managing to get this wrong. And the way Paul remedies it is to take them back to basics. So there's lots of incidental things about the Lord's Supper.

I suppose things like how you sit, whether the bread is unleavened bread or whether it's ordinary bread, all sorts of incidental things.

[1 : 39] But he doesn't mention those. He takes it back to the bare essentials and invites them to draw from those essential points to get their celebration of the supper right.

So in 1 Corinthians 11, verse 17, we'll take it from there, where it says, In the following directives, I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good.

In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you. And to some extent, I believe it.

No doubt there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God's approval. But when you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper you eat.

For as you eat, each of you goes ahead without waiting for anybody else. One remains hungry, another gets drunk. Don't you have homes to eat and drink in?

[2 : 44] Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you for this?

Certainly not. For I received from the Lord what also I passed on to you. The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread. And when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, This is my body, which is for you.

Do this in remembrance of me. In the same way, after supper, he took the cup, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this whenever you drink it in remembrance of me.

For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord.

A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself.

[4 : 04] That is why many among you are weak and sick and a number of you have fallen asleep. If we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment.

When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world. So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for each other.

If anyone is hungry, he should eat at home. So that when you meet together, it may not result in judgment. And when I come, I will give further directions. So there is the Corinthian supper, which Paul says he is not pleased with.

But he gives them directions how it can be, as he says, something that does good. Verse 17, it does more harm than good.

It ought to do more good than harm. And we looked at this and we had these points that came out. So, Paul's essential tradition, tradition meaning something that he handed on.

[5 : 12] I received from the Lord what I passed on to you. So there is an important point about the cross.

I received from the Lord what also I passed on to you. The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread. So it's a historical thing in the past.

It was that night, the Thursday night, before the Good Friday. That's the exact point at which Jesus referenced.

His body, which was to be broken, as we would understand it, the next day. And his blood, which was to be shed the next day. So there's a point in history. And then he says, he talks about whenever you eat it.

So it's something that goes on in the present. Something that we are to keep coming back to. So we're to do this in remembrance of him.

[6 : 14] Verse 25, whenever you drink it in remembrance of me. So something we're to keep on doing. And then there's a future reference.

Looking forward to the future. Remembering that the best is yet to come. It's there in verse 26. Where whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup. You proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

So that just sets it in the scene of the past. The ongoing present and the future. And then there's some points about the people partaking of the supper.

So Paul assumes that this is what they do. Whenever you drink it. He doesn't say you shouldn't do it.

He's saying you should do it right. And the assumption is that Christians do this. They do the Lord's Sabbath. That's what Christians do.

[7 : 16] And as I think Chris said when he did this. It doesn't come under the heading of optional extras. It is a central.

I mean it is a command. But I wouldn't like us to think of command as being. Oh this is a hoop that we have to jump through. It's central to the identity of who Christians are in this world.

Who are Christians? They are the people that eat at the table of the Lord. They are the people who eat of his broken body and drink of his shed blood.

So there is a strong assumption there that they do this. It's an accountable meal. So you see how Paul talks about the seriousness of taking the bread and the wine.

So verse 28. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. Or in verse 27. Whoever eats of the bread or drinks of the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord.

[8 : 32] So it's a very serious thing to take this. It's sort of standing before the Lord and saying I'm taking this bread and wine and the Lord Jesus. You do it in his full view of him.

Unworthiness isn't being a sinner because that's what the bread and wine is for. It's for sinners. We come to the table as sinners.

I think it's more to do with coming and not thinking that it's a serious and wonderful thing. Treating it trivially and not bothering with the importance of it.

And Paul says we should treat it with great respect. Verse 29. Whoever eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself.

So it's a serious and an accountable meal. It's interesting that the accountability, as Paul says it here, rests with the individuals who take it.

[9 : 39] He doesn't, as he says it here, he doesn't say that everybody else is to examine one another. He says let somebody examine themselves as they come to the table.

It's a together event. So, David Rigglesworth found me the when you come together. Where was it David?

Which verse was it? When you come together is verse 20 isn't it? When you come together. It's a coming together verse. The idea of eating is...

Is it in verse 34? Thank you. When you come, when you meet together, it may not result in judgment.

Although there's a value, I guess, in taking communion to people in their homes, it does miss the point of taking communion when we're together.

[10 : 48] That was number three. Number four. Paul wanted to be able to praise them. Verse 17.

He wanted to be able to say, that meeting that you have, it does good to you. I praise you for that. It's an edifying thing. It's a thing that when people come to that meal, when you gather together as a church, you go home blessed.

You've symbolically partaken of bread. Sorry, you've literally partaken of bread and wine. But you've symbolically partaken of Jesus Christ.

You've fed upon him. And as I quoted before, Presbyterian brother saying, communion should be an elevating time.

It should lift Christ up. It should lift us up into his presence. We should go away exalting, being lifted up by that.

[11 : 56] So there's some basic things that we looked at before, and I've repeated them twice now, at least. And we're praying that we'll be able to make these things be so amongst us, and that we might make the wisest arrangement for that.

Now last, whenever we did the discussion previously, we did this little matrix of who should be at the table, who should be partaking at the table.

Absolutely everyone. What about people under church discipline? The whole of a particular church? Most of a particular church.

Visiting people who profess to be Christians, who say, I'm a Christian. And that seems a believable thing to say. Regular believers who are not members.

Regular believers who are not baptized. Sorry, regular believers who are not baptized. I mean, regularly attending the church. Regular attenders who are unconverted. And we said, about coming and partaking at the table, is it essential, desirable, neutral, undesirable, or unacceptable?

[13 : 09] So we said that it's unacceptable for just everyone to come and partake. We said it was unacceptable for those who are under church discipline to partake. We said that for the whole of the church to be present was desirable.

For most of the church, we thought it was somewhere between essential and desirable. With most people thinking it was essential that most of the church should be present.

And then we talked about people like Roberto, who would come along as somebody we know to be a Christian. Should they be partaking at the table?

And we thought that that was a desirable thing. And then people who we know are believers, but not necessarily members of the church. We thought it was desirable to invite them around the table. And then we thought about people who were not baptized. Now, there is a logic of saying, if you're taking the bread and the wine, it's a public symbol of belonging to Jesus Christ.

[14 : 13] And the logic says, well, Jesus gives a public symbol for saying you belong to him, which is to be baptized. So it seems rather inconsistent to take the bread and the wine and yet not have taken the step of being baptized.

However, we know that people are not consistent. Who am I to be consistent with myself? But there is a logic of saying a baptism. We said it was desirable that people who are not baptized should come and partake at the table.

That's what we came to. And regular attenders who are not Christians, we had quite a long talk about this. Some people said it was unacceptable for them to partake.

And we had quite a long talk about whether it was quite as easy to do as that. So, I don't want to use up all the time again by talking and not letting everybody else talk.

So, let me move on. I wondered last time whether we could get to this point. Do most church members agree? A. We already have a time when many church people do not attend communion.

[15 : 24] That's the evening. And I wondered whether we could agree. B. If there is an arrangement such that most church people do attend and that it is not a sinful thing to make such an arrangement, we should either do it or try it.

B. And then I thought C. Provided that a suitable provision is made for the discipline and respect for the table. So, that's where I got to last time.

And I thought perhaps that's a little bit... Did you understand that? Does that make sense? So, the question is do most church members agree those things? And I thought perhaps that's a little bit... What's the word? Ambitious. So, what I'd like to say is would you like to, rather than discuss that one, about this one.

How do the principles in Scripture stack up with regard to the communion service that we have? We have it twice a month on a Sunday.

[16:29] On a Sunday evening, once a month at about quarter to eight. If we were to have it on a Sunday... Oh no, sorry. We do have it on a Sunday morning at ten o'clock.

And the suggestion is that we might have it, let's say for a trial period, on a Sunday morning at eleven o'clock, in or with the main church meeting.

So, there are four things there. Twice a month, Sunday evening, and two possibilities for Sunday morning. How do the principles in Scripture stack up with regard to those?

So, I would like to say, would you like to move your chairs round so you're in groups of five or six? Have a think, have a talk about how the principles in Scripture stack up with those.

And then we'll come back and hear what people say. Does that make sense? Is that enough? No? No? No? Well, in our little group, we had a very interesting discussion.

[17:37] And the suggestion was that actually we have this communion at three o'clock in the afternoon. So, we... There's a couple of thoughts that come to me. One, I don't think there is a right or wrong answer.

If the Bible was categorical about something, I'd feel much more convinced about giving you an argument which led to a certain conclusion.

But I can't, in my heart, I don't think there is a right or wrong answer. I think there's a number of things to weigh up and do the best we can. That's what I think. But I'd be interested to know what your groups think.

So, David, could you just give us a flavour of what you were discussing? And if you came to a very good answer, tell us what it was. Well, I think we probably had husband and wife with different views here.

But no, as you said, there isn't a right and a wrong. And I think that there was a thought that if you did have it as part of the main Sunday morning meeting with a few more visitors present, you could just take the view, you must just leave it to an individual's conscience and still just go forward with it.

[18:50] Because you certainly are going to find that it's going to be a popular time. If people are not able to come to some of our times, it is the most popular time and they will make that time. But it gives you, I think it does give you the problem with a lot of visitors.

You don't, it's not really a meal for trying to, it makes people who are not Christians feel a bit left out. And then they may, they feel they want to partake rather than publicly acknowledge that they're not Christians.

And it can be a bit awkward. So my own preference would be that the, that keeping it as just before a main meeting, but thinking about those who are not regularly coming.

Is it that we're, it's just too, too long before the main meeting? Does it need to be a bit shorter and say at 10, 15? I don't know what the reasons are why some are not able to come.

But that's the most important question to think who, who is a Christian in our church who is not able to come and really delve into what we could do to help.

[19:57] Because it's very much a, you know, when could we meet that will make it easier for them. Does that anyone else want to add anything quickly from our group? Rosemary, what, what, what was the practice in the church?

You've got a lot of experience of different churches. What, what practices have you found in your experience, pros and cons or most helpful? Um, that's a difficult one to answer really.

Because I can't speak for everybody. But, um, I've had experience of it being before an evening meeting, you know, an earlier time. Um, and following a main meeting in the morning.

Um, and that does raise difficulties with, if you do have visitors, um, and they feel awkward, um, having it after the morning service.

Um, but it would be more of a separate thing rather than a complete follow on. Um, so I think it's a dilemma really. Sorry, what's that again?

[21:03] It's a dilemma really. It's a dilemma, yeah. Yeah, yeah. Um, you know. I mean, one option might be to, on occasion, have it on a Wednesday evening if you wanted to make it more of a smaller group within the church.

Thank you very much. Okay, can we come to this group here? Very quickly though, the Nigerian aspect. Yes. Just to bring in an international flavour. Am I right in quoting you that your church in Nigeria does this once a year?

Yeah. So there's something to think about. Tell us about that because this is fascinating. Yeah, you can. Yeah. I think it, I think it depends on the administrative convenience of the church.

For instance, in my church in Nigeria, we do it once in a year. But that same church in the UK here, they do it twice. So it means, I think it depends on the, on the organisation or how convenient. Is there an Baptist church or a Baptist church? It's an apostolic faith church. What? Apostolic faith. Apostolic free church. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

[22 : 08] So we do it once in Nigeria. But here, same church here in the UK is twice. Yeah. So, interesting. Yeah. So you've got long memories, you guys.

You can remember for a whole year for the last time. So, it depends. Yeah, it's true. Yeah, it's true. Yeah, it's true. Okay. Okay, this group here. Tell us, give us a flavour of what you were.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I think the, sort of, the main view was that it would be easier to have it within twice a month, but in the morning.

Um, no one spoke for the evening, so I'm not sure. But I think, um, in the mornings, because that's when the great majority of people attend.

And those who come in the evening are more often than not there in the morning as well.

[23 : 24] Um, so, um, if people knew it was in the mornings, then it would be more or less, you were able to, um, capture everybody, as it were.

Um, and then, I think the main view was that it should be within the main meeting, preferably at the end.

Um, there was some discussion about what you do about children. Um, one person felt it would be nice for the children to come back in, um, and observe, um, with their family group.

Um, so, I think that was mainly what we said. Is that correct? Anything further? To talk about the dynamic of the evening rather than the forward, because there's a bit more time in the evening.

So the dynamic is a bit different. That's just one thing in the favor of the evening meeting. I would say, when we make comment about visitors, more's the pity, you might say, but we don't actually have that too many people come in the morning who are not professing Christians.

[24 : 54] So we ought not to blow that out of proportion, because, I know, there was 82 people here this morning, 16 of those were children, and to my knowledge, two or three people here this morning were not professing Christians.

So, Corinne wanted to say something? In terms of student, international student people, we don't know where they're at, so it's kind of a question.

So, Corinne's saying in terms of international students, they might well be invited to come along on a Sunday morning.

That would be their next step of showing Christian interest. And we don't know where they are with their walk and stuff. There we go. Okay.

Thank you. Wes, would you like to comment on that from a point of view of, you would invite international, like an international student to come to a Sunday morning service, would you?

[25 : 58] Yes. And most of them, they are not Christians, so it's a little bit difficult to arrange, well, for them to understand.

And many times, I remember one occasion there was a Muslim sitting next to me, I told him not to partake, you don't have to eat.

I got to basically, you know, mention this because... That was at 10 o'clock. I mean... No, no, no. The... Oh, sorry. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

He came with me a bit early because... Right, yeah. That morning. Okay. Yeah. Yes. Sorry? Yeah, is this the group?

Yeah, okay. Let's go to Steve then. Yeah. I'm afraid, I have to say, that the conclusion of our group was almost diametrically opposite to the conclusion of that group over there.

[27 : 04] We felt that... And I'm probably the least strident member of it, actually, of this view, but we felt that there may be a case, given that a lot of people don't come to the evening service now, there might be a case for not having it in the evening, but perhaps having it twice a month in the morning.

But the view was quite strongly that we should be able to perceive the body when we come together, when we assemble. It's the positive vibe as well as the negative vibe of saying there may be non-believers there, but it should be clear that it is the body assembling.

And people thought, well, 10 o'clock ain't that early. And therefore, people should be encouraged to come at 8 o'clock. And then... At 10 o'clock, sorry. At 8 o'clock? Yeah.

Somebody said 6 o'clock. No, not 8 o'clock. 10 o'clock, sorry. Get up at 8 o'clock. Yeah. Some... Martin reminds us that brethren sometimes have theirs at 6 o'clock in the morning. But... Brethren do. Yeah. 6 o'clock in the morning. Yeah. So... Yeah. Yeah. Wow. So, I mean, the other objections to having it in the morning service is that Sunday school teachers would probably be excluded.

[28 : 18] Well, and just generally, it seemed to make more sense that what we should be doing is persuading people to come for the 10 o'clock one. Yeah.

I suppose one thing that's worth saying is that our discussion clientele this evening is self-selected for people who don't have children. And, well, with one or two exceptions.

But basically, we're not getting that view of how long the kids would have to be here if we wanted the kids to be there from 10 o'clock right the way through, which is another view.

Yeah. I mean, that's right. But, I mean, it's not an insuperable problem. And it's certainly not only the case that, you know, that all the parents want to have it in the... As we know, it's not the case that all the parents want to have it in the 11 o'clock service.

And we're aware. I don't know about that, but we know that some parents do manage to come along at 10 o'clock. Yeah. Yeah. Okay.

[29 : 23] Thank you very much. Anybody want to add to that? We were thinking, you know, when visitors do come to the church, we were thinking that, you know, our job, it is our job, you know, is to try and convert.

And I guess we... I was wondering how observing a communion, how edifying that might be and how many seeds we would sow.

I'm not saying we couldn't if we did a salvation, whole salvation message at the same time, then I think it could be, you know, really beneficial.

And then, if we did something else, and then sort of, because it's only a few verses we talk about, and they're not really that self-explanatory unless you know them for somebody that doesn't know the Lord.

And I'm just wondering how great that would be for some people. I mean, it might be. I mean, I don't know. But it was just looking at that for somebody that didn't believe.

[30 : 33] And then the other one thing that was very personal to me was faith wanted to take communion one day. And I went, oh, oh.

And, you know, she goes, well, I believe in Jesus, you know, which is really odd. I love Jesus, and I believe in Jesus. You know, and it was really quite difficult, I think, for some people to discern, you know, who can take that communion.

I felt really uncomfortable, you know, because I didn't want to say, no, you can't, or anything like that. Do you see what I mean? And there may be people like that, and yet I had a real fear of the danger.

And so it was all, you know, difficult, difficult. But that was a personal thing. Okay. Thank you very much. So let's come to the...

I'm not missing anybody out, am I? So we had a little sort of international group here with various experiences from... Well, I have just to add that, as you said before, I had a church in Guildford, and they had the meeting always at 3 o'clock.

[31 : 44] I mean, on a Sunday, it was kind of a connecting gathering with afterwards some afternoon tea, which was quite great.

And it was a little bit of a special service, which I found nice. But this was not one of the options I was... No, it wasn't, wasn't it?

But I just wanted to share this, and I think it's worth mentioning that there are also other churches. I thought this was the only thing that churches in the UK do, but you have proven me wrong, so...

Yeah, thank you. Yeah, thank you. We hadn't even thought of 3 o'clock in the afternoon. But that's Churchy Street Baptist Church Church Plant.

Would other Grace Baptist churches, Rosemary, do you think, do something like that? No. Okay, that's a fair enough answer. I don't know. Sorry?

[32 : 47] Do we know what the film is? I don't. Ebenezer, I think, have a Tuesday afternoon. Tuesday evening. Okay, right. Richard, we need to go to that group there.

So, give it to Corinne or Anya, whoever's hand reaches out and grabs. Okay. Our, like, consideration was, it's the best thing to keep it at 10 o'clock.

So, more slowly, it's a watch thing. Okay, it's the best thing to keep it at 10 o'clock. I'll explain why. Because in the morning service, we obviously have sermon, and already sometimes it goes over the time.

And we will need to cut either sermon or some songs or some big children's talk, make it shorter. You don't want to rush through communion because the children finish Sunday school already. And we want to have plenty of time to think about really what we're doing. As I say, Bible says you need to examine yourself. We really have the time. And if kids come in, it's okay if kids are older, but my kids come in from Sunday school for communion.

[34 : 03] And they will climb on me like this. And I will not have time really even think about what I'm doing. I will just grab it just quickly. Oh, Daniel, don't take it. Don't. It will be more hectic, actually.

And hassle. It would not be a defying at all. It will be not nice experience. And I would feel guilty for even doing this. So just maybe the option is, as somebody said, do it at 10.30.

Even then people can come before service. They don't have longer gap than waiting half an hour until morning service. And people who come earlier, they could just go through back corridor to the back room and wait for communion to finish.

But, yeah, we just prefer to have it at 10 o'clock, our group. Okay. Thank you very much. Anybody whose thoughts has not been heard?

Mr. All Times at the back. You probably won't thank me for saying this, because Phil knows my view on this. I agree it should also be at 10 o'clock. It should remain at 10 o'clock for the reason.

[35 : 10] Once a month, 10 o'clock is not so early for most people. If we were going on holiday next Saturday at 10 o'clock, next Sunday at 10 o'clock at Gatwick, we would all be there on time.

This is a command of Christ. It's not so difficult to come. I know for some people it is difficult, and we need to make provision for those people. But the good thing about having the communion before the main service is that people who actually really want to come, make the effort, will be here for that.

And I think that's important, because it is a very important meeting. Of course, we want everybody to be here, as many people as possible. That's very important to us. We need to make provision for those people. But I think it would devalue in some ways communion by making it so easy that everybody who happens to be here at 11 o'clock would be here.

That's my point of view. I think it's important to keep it as it is, and to encourage people to reevaluate our commitment. Are we taking this seriously? Are we willing to make a sacrifice to be here one hour earlier, once a month?

That's my opinion. Thank you. Thank you very much. Just on one point, it's not commanded that we have it at 10 o'clock. It's commanded that we have it. And so there's just a little distinction there.

[36 : 21] Okay. Well, I don't think there's anybody... Does anybody want to come back on anything? I want to suggest that we possibly haven't got necessarily a truly representative gathering in the sense, the voice that I'm not hearing tonight really is the families.

And I wouldn't want to mention too many names, but there are some folk who I would love to be able to come. I'd love to be able, both of them, to be able to come.

And if some have not been able to do that for a while, I don't want to underestimate the challenge that it is for some families to come here. And I would remind people that we've had a very constant encouragement to folk to come at 10 o'clock for communion.

It's been going on for, you know, a good number of months. Isn't that right? We have constantly encouraged attenders at 10 o'clock for communion. One could say the same thing about prayer. But, you know, we normally get about eight or nine people for prayer at 10 o'clock on a Sunday. And at the moment, possibly up to 20 on a Sunday morning for a communion.

[37 : 37] We have a membership of 39. And that is after constant encouragement. So, you know, you need to address that a little bit to think, well, what does that really mean in practice?

You know, people may vote for things, but, of course, the proof of the pudding is if it actually works out in practice and they actually do come along. Because I think we'd all be very happy with 10 o'clock if we were actually seeing a very good number of people regularly coming to that.

So, what is it that's going to make a difference? What about 10 o'clock in the quarter of the year?

Okay, so, Julia's saying what about normally 10 o'clock but exceptions in the course of the year?

And Steve is going to say... I mean, you said we haven't considered an afternoon communion. To be fair, I suggested that on Tuesday night. Right.

I don't remember you saying that. And two other people have suggested it today. So, you know, should we be thinking about that? Well, I thought it was one of the first. Sorry, I thought it was one there and one somewhere else. Is it just one other...

[38 : 57] Well, it might be, but, you know... Sorry? It is a consideration that we actually reflect upon the life situations of folks.

Because the family dynamic is a growing connection in the church over the last few years. But when those of us who had children... You know, most of us did have children at one point. And we managed to come to morning communion then. And, you know, I mean... The advocate of keeping it at 10 o'clock is a family.

I mean, the most vociferous advocate. You know, I mean, it's... I understand that. But you need to talk to the families concerned about this. The other ones... Yes. I mean, in terms of voting, we're voting for what we think here.

And I think, in some of us, we're probably thinking what we would like. I think that expression was used. And, of course, the people who aren't here are the very people who's also ought to be heard about what they...

[40 : 15] What is workable for them. Can I just make a comment? I mean, we've sort of, in the last few comments, moved in the direction of what people would like.

And... I'm not saying that people's preferences should be sort of dismissed or ignored.

Of course not. Nor am I trying to minimise the difficulties that some families do seem to have with Sunday mornings. Or, you know, which...

Whatever. But I don't think it would necessarily be good if the church comes to a conclusion on the basis of just what people would like.

I do think we do have to consider these principles... The principles in Scripture. Yep. And if we feel... If we felt that, in some senses, what people would like are perhaps not entirely in line with the principles of Scripture, then we have...

[41 : 34] You know, we have got to think about that seriously. Yep. You know, I'm not sort of proposing, you know, one thing or another. But this shouldn't just be decided on what people would like.

Correct. Yep. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. If we're talking about principles, when the church met in Bible times, there must have been unbelievers.

And it doesn't mention that they had different meetings when they came together. Yeah. And I think that's the principle, when they come together.

So that's really why I'm in favour of 11 o'clock or whenever we have our morning service, whatever the time is. Because of that, we're coming together. Because of that, we're coming together.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I think that that is a thing there in the area of principle.

[42 : 44] Because when the church met, this is what they did, is my understanding of it. And what happens at 11 o'clock on a Sunday morning, I think, is the church meeting.

It isn't an evangelistic session as such. It is the church meeting. And other people come and, you know, when an outsider comes in, they should understand what's happening and fall down on their knees and worship God.

But the nature of what we do at 11 o'clock is the church meeting. That's what I understand a bit.

Yeah. You need a microphone. Yeah. I mean, actually, we did discuss this briefly.

What exactly is the assembly in our group? But just to think about what has been actually said. If you think about that quote from 1 Corinthians 14, where it indeed says that the unbeliever should come, if the unbeliever comes in, they will be convicted.

Be convicted by what? Not by observing a communion service, but by the word of prophecy, the word declared. I think that means a not. I mean, it could include, wouldn't it?

[44 : 00] No, no. True. But you could argue that they were different things. I mean, we don't know, frankly, do we, exactly what happened. But the sort of meeting that Paul is talking about as convicting an unbeliever is one where prophecy is going on or speaking the word of God is going on.

Well, it says in chapter 11, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. So that's happening at the table. Yeah, but I would say you were proclaiming that to believers personally.

I mean, again, we can. Well, I don't think you can say that. No. It is a proclamation. So there is a proclamation going on. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. But I say the question is who are you proclaiming it to. I'm not saying it's necessarily wrong, but what I am saying is that to say it was all one meeting is not necessarily the case. And what Paul says about the meeting in 1 Corinthians 14 would seem to have a slightly different flavour to the Lord's Supper, which is described in 1 Corinthians 11 and 12. Okay, thank you very much. We will stop. So we haven't got a nice, clear, neat answer, have we? [45 : 18] It would be so nice if we did. But I think it's very important that as we work this through, the point of the supper is to show our unity in Jesus Christ.

We all come to the same table. So whatever we think, let's not fall out about it because the whole point of it is to exalt Christ, to show and to be together around his table as sinners.

It's not a competition. It's a confession as we come around the table. And it's not meant to be a hurdle that we try to, some of us jump and some of us don't.

It is meant to be a blessing to edify and build us up, isn't it? And so let's just remember that. I'll close in prayer and then we'll go home.