

Fellowship Halls, Kitchens, Etc. (Part 2)

This outline will consider some passages some use to justify “fellowship halls” and kitchens.

A. Jude 1:12 (similar passage in 2 Peter 2:13).

1. Some contend the “love feasts” here are equivalent to “fellowship meals” today.
2. Exactly what were these love feasts? Can anyone say for sure?
 - a. The Lord’s Supper? Perhaps, but certainly not enough evidence to prove it.
 - b. Adam Clarke says these were possibly dinners wealthier members gave for poorer members. All kinds of possibilities, but who can say for sure?
3. What we do know is that Jude 1:12 does not even mention the church, nor does it in any way imply that the church planned or provided this feast.

B. 1 Corinthians 11:17-34.

1. Some use this passage to prove first century local churches did eat a regular meal together—before they observed the Lord’s supper. According to this argument, this passage was written to correct abuses of that practice, specifically the divisiveness of it.
2. But Paul doesn’t just correct the abuse of the practice; he issues a “cease and desist” order.
 - a. He doesn’t say, “Make sure you eat your meals together and share what you have.” What he says is, “Do you not have houses to eat and drink in?” (v. 22); and, “If anyone is hungry, let him eat at home” (v. 34).
3. Once again we see that “home” activities must be separated from “church” activities. Eating a common meal (our “own supper”) is a home activity (or handled by the home’s budget); eating the Lord’s Supper is a church activity.

C. Acts 2:42-47.

1. Evidence points to two different types of meals (as just seen in 1 Corinthians 11).
2. “The breaking of bread” in verse 42 would seem to indicate the Lord’s Supper, especially when you consider the other activities mentioned along with it. See also Acts 20:7 and 1 Corinthians 10:16, where very similar expressions are used in reference to the Lord’s Supper.
3. “Breaking bread” is also mentioned in v. 46, but this time it specifies that it was done “from house to house,” as opposed to what was done “in the temple.” Most would agree this was a “common meal” (note the further description: “they ate THEIR food with gladness...” (v. 46).
 - a. If truly a “church activity,” we would have 3000 people (Acts 2:41) moving from house to house.
 - b. What we have here is Christians being hospitable to one another (1 Peter 4:9), which is exactly what the Corinthians brethren needed to do then, and what we need to do today.

D. Acts 6:1-4.

1. The “daily distribution” (v. 1) refers to something begun back in Acts 2:44-45 and also discussed in Acts 4:32-37. The church provided for its needy members, which included the widows discussed here in chapter 6.
2. This passage certainly authorizes the church to provide food, clothing, money, etc., for its own needy members, but it in no way authorizes the “fellowship meals” we’ve been discussing.

E. Ephesians 4:11-12.

1. Some like to include “fellowship meals” under the work of edification (the word translated edification means to build, or build up; in fact, it is translated that way in some passages).
2. But we need to let the passage explain itself. The following verses clearly indicate that it has reference to building people up spiritually by teaching them the word of God—feeding their souls, not their bodies.
 - a. Consider Acts 20:32: “...I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up...”
3. If eating together promotes such great unity, why wouldn’t a volleyball game or basketball game do the same? Can you see how this would open the door for any and every activity that promotes “togetherness”?
4. Never forget that Biblical unity is founded upon our unity with the Father and the Son (John 17:20-23).

Additional Thoughts

1. Some use these “fellowship meals” to “attract new members,” to give them some incentive to come.
 - a. Recall some passages discussed in previous lessons: John 6:26 (“you seek Me...because you ate of the loaves and were filled”); 1 Corinthians 1:22-24 (Jews and Greeks requested incentives, but Paul kept giving them the wisdom of God).
2. It’s good for Christians to eat together. We enjoy our “get-togethers” very much. Occasions like these can certainly draw us closer together and make us more aware of each other’s needs. Nevertheless, it is a responsibility given to the home, to the family. We must not burden the church with it. The church must continue to use its resources to do the work God has assigned to it.
3. When discussing these issues, we make the point that when the church is burdened with these activities, it keeps the church from doing the work God assigned to it. What we don’t say often enough is that it also keeps individuals from doing the work God assigned to them. In other words, personal responsibility “takes a hit” when these works are given over to the church.

4. To some it might seem that we are being “nit-picky.”
 - a. Was the Lord being nit-picky when He told the church at Corinth to remove their common meals from their gatherings and take them home? (1 Corinthians 11:22, 34).
 - b. Was the Lord being nit-picky when He gave the responsibility for certain widows to individuals rather than the church? (1 Timothy 5:16).
 - c. Was the Lord being nitpicky when He rebuked those who were following Him, **not** for what He could teach them, but for what He could feed them? (John 6:26).
 - d. The Bible is filled with examples of people who changed God’s plan, sometimes even in the “slightest way,” and had to suffer the consequences for it.
5. “Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father” (1 John 2:24).