

Preparing Souls To Serve The Lord

Volume XVII

December 1996

Number 5

Registration Schedule Florida School of Preaching Spring Semester begins January 6, 1997

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✓

Check Classes Desired

| Hours | Course | Instructor | Credit |
|----------------------|--|------------|--------|
| Monday | | | |
| __ 8:30 to 12:00 | First and Second Timothy and Titus 22338 | Davis | 3 |
| __ 1:00 to 4:15 | Introduction to New Testament 22321 | Burgett | 3 |
| Tuesday | | | |
| __ 8:30 to 12:00 | Eschatology 32376 | Stearsman | 3 |
| __ 1:00 to 4:15 | General Epistles 22349 | Stilwell | 3 |
| __ 7:00 to 9:30 p.m. | Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther 22315 | Kenyon | 2½ |
| Wednesday | | | |
| __ 8:30 to 12:00 | Speech 12302 | Stearsman | 3 |
| __ 1:00 to 4:15 | Wisdom Literature 22348 | Kenyon | 3 |
| Thursday | | | |
| __ 8:30 to 12:00 | Ethics 32385 | Kenyon | 3 |
| __ 1:00 to 4:15 | Gospel of John 22327 | Davidson | 3 |
| __ 7:00 to 9:30 p.m. | Survey of New Testament 22340 | Blackman | 2½ |
| Friday | | | |
| __ 8:30 to 12:00 | Restoration History 22342 | Daugherty | 3 |
| __ 1:00 to 4:15 | Study and Research | Faculty | |

“Fellowship Activities in the Church Building (Eating, Etc.) Are Not Permitted”

By
Jackie M. Stearsman

If you are a regular reader of these pages you will recall in August of 1996 we reproduced a letter from a person who was a member of a congregation of the Lord's church being disturbed by anti-ism. This person and others have asked for help dealing with such confusion and we promised to assist them by presenting articles in the Harvesters as time and space permit.

Building or Church?

Those teaching that the building cannot be used for fellowship activities exhibit a glaring inconsistency. It is not uncommon to see signs relating to the services of a congregation stating the following: “The church meets here.” Is this not done to make a distinction between the building and the church? The inconsistency comes when you enter the building. If asked what is permitted in a building where Christians meet you are told that you can not eat in the church. Is the building the church or the people?

Inconsistency

The passage often cited to forbid eating in a meeting house is this: “What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not” (I Cor. 11:22). The passage is used to forbid eating in a meeting place but many of the same buildings have a water fountain. How can we forbid eating and permit drinking?

If this is to be a mandate that has no qualification from context or otherwise, to be consistent the only place one could eat would be at home. No restaurants, no picnic lunches, no taking a lunch on a job. Travel would indeed be limited, if the only place one may eat is his own home. Where may homeless people eat? You say this is extreme, you are right. When you

begin to justify eating in other places than home and understand the purpose of a worship assembly you may remove the foolish position some promote causing discord in the church.

Meetings In Homes

New congregations often have their first meeting in homes. Where are people to eat who permit this? Since the church met there does this make it impossible to eat there? It would according to the position advocated by the “no eating in the meeting house” dogma.

Early Christians had brethren meeting in their homes. One family seemed to make this a practice as they traveled from one area to another. “The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house” (I Cor. 16:19). Note that this passage is in the same First Corinthian letter from which the forbidding to eat in meeting houses is supposed to be enforced. Strange that Paul did not correct this mistake when he corrected so many other abuses in this letter. This is not some oversight of Paul and the Holy Spirit who inspired him for he writes to the Christians in Rome: “Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. Likewise greet the church that is in their house” (Rom. 16:3-5).

Conclusion

It should be understood that the concept of modern church meeting places, as we know them today, was not a part of the early church. They met in homes and in other public meeting places. We learn that they met in an upper chamber. Who did it belong to, whose church property was this? What church building was this (Acts 20:8)? The Christians met in the

home of Mary (Acts 12:12). They met there for prayer. Is prayer worship? Did this render Mary's home unfit for eating her regular meals? Christian preachers and brethren met in the home of Lydia, did they not (Acts 16:15, 40)?

The New Testament knows nothing of holy buildings used for Christian worship that were rendered contaminated because someone ate a meal in them. This is a modern perversion.

The thing forbidden in First Corinthians 11:22 and its context was the blending together of two actions: the eating of a common meal and attempting to observe the Lord's Supper. Such actions, if practiced, would pervert the eating of the Lord's Supper. This is what Paul forbade. If you can understand the difference between a common meal and the Lord's Supper you should have no difficulty understanding what is taught in First Corinthians 11:22, relative to eating and drinking at home.

Coming together to worship should be the important thing, not where you happen to be able to come together.



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Wm. Woodson



Wendell Winkler



Dan Wheeler



Bernard Smith



Walter Slayden



Richard Sain



Paul Sain



Flavil Nichols

Monday

- 9:00 If The Foundations Be Destroyed, Who Will Care For The Helpless: Orphan, Aged, Needy? J. Kenneth Gossett
9:45 Foundation Principles For The Home Samuel Roney
10:45 The Church And The Home Wendell Winkler
11:30 LUNCH
1:30 Confusion Over The Authority Of Elders Joseph Meador
2:30 The Obligation To Support Faithful Preachers Flavil Nichols
3:30 Joseph In Potiphar's House Wendell Winkler
4:30 DINNER
7:00 How May We Know Who Is A Christian? British Carlton
7:45 The Obligation Of The Church To Train Preachers B. C. Carr

Tuesday

- 9:00 The True Foundation For The Home, Civil State And Church Derrel Davis
9:45 Consequences Are Predictable When The Foundation Of The Home Is Destroyed V. P. Black
10:45 Autonomy Of The Local Congregation William Woodson
11:30 LUNCH
1:30 Religious Division Destroys The Foundation Of The Church Robert Clemons
2:30 Forced To Obey God Rather Than The Civil State Richard Sain
3:30 Why Are There Violent Children In Our Society? Roy Dicks
4:30 DINNER
7:00 Confusing The Subject Of Worship Brian Kenyon
7:45 Distinguishing Lines Must Be Recognized William Woodson

Wednesday

- 9:00 "Restoration Fellowship" and Bible Based Fellowship Bernard Smith
9:45 Consequences Are Predictable When The Foundation Of The Church Is Destroyed V. P. Black
10:45 Unequal Yoke Between Church And State Winfred Clark
11:30 LUNCH
1:30 The Obligation Of The Church To Support Faithful Preachers Flavil Nichols
2:30 Confusion Over Service: Deacons And Women Paul Sain
3:30 Devoted Service Is The Key To Self Esteem Walter Slayden
4:30 DINNER
7:00 The King Of Kings And Civil Governments Greg Harmon
7:45 Making Shipwreck Of The Faith Jimmy Clark

Thursday

- 9:00 Following Social Fads Rather Than Divine Principles Joe Worndle
9:45 The Obligation Of The Church To Develop Congregations Dan Wheeler
10:45 How May The Church Assist Dysfunctional Families Kenneth Franklin
11:30 LUNCH
1:30 Difficult Questions Related To Serving In The Civil Government Terry Hightower
2:30 When Foundations Are Destroyed, They Thwart World Evangelism Guy Dickinson
3:30 Man Made Laws Destroy The Foundation Of The Church Jimmy Clark
4:30 DINNER
7:00 Serving As An Agent Of The Civil State Ulysses Richardson
7:45 Removing The God Given Place Of The Father And The Mother In The Home Winfred Clark

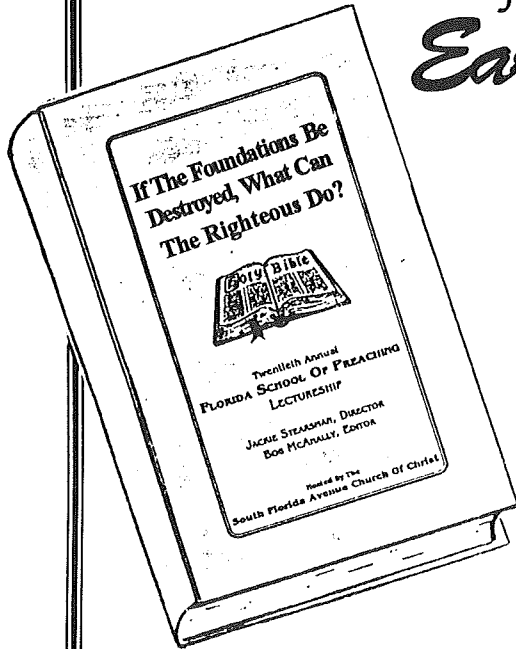
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