

1 Corinthians: The Body of Christ vs. A Body in Crisis
New Pilgrim Baptist Church Bible Study
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Unity Over Worship (1 Cor 8-11)

“Getting Worship Right Part 3: Honoring Christ in Worship” (1 Cor 11:1-34)

Contextualization

Paul begins this section by asking the Corinthians to “imitate” him as he “imitates” Christ. Paul is the physical example of the invisible Christ; Paul is the role model worthy of copying for the church. Paul praises the church in following some of the customs he has handed down to them (11:2-16) but he rebukes them for not following those pertaining to the Lord’s Supper (11:17-34). In either case, Paul is concerned with how the church comes together where the presence of Christ meets them. He wants them to always honor and bring glory to the presence of God as they are the body of Christ.

- **How to Honor Your Head (vv. 2-16)**

Paul begins with helping the church recognize God’s order in creation. The head of Christ is God. The head of the male is Christ. The head of the woman is the male. But, also, while women came from men (Gen 2), men come into the world through women. There is equality in worship even though there is order. Both men and women are permitted by the Spirit to pray and prophesy. But, while there is equality, there is a distinction. Men should not cover their heads in worship with long hair, essentially displaying femininity. Women should aspire to have long hair and should not cut their hair trying to be masculine. The angels are present in worship so how women conduct themselves, as well as men, should be something we are concerned with. In the final analysis, there is not custom we MUST follow if people are contentious.

- **Avoid Factions in Worship**

Paul laments the fact that the factions, remember chapters 1-4, were present in eating the Lord’s Supper. Some people brought food, ate, possibly shared with their friends, while others had nothing. This was a desecration of this sacred moment and Paul said it most certainly was not the Lord’s Supper.

- **The Giving of Christ’s Body and Blood (vv. 23-26)**

On the contrary, this meal points to the ultimate sacrifice, Christ’s giving of his body and blood. In this moment, the presence of Jesus is made manifest through our activity. We receive power to continue in the will of God until we meet him in his return. Just as the first Passover meal, this meal is sacred and reminds us that we have moved beyond wrath into grace.

- **Worthiness in Worship (vv. 27-34)**

The believer who through their selfishness does not care for another member of the church, the body, is guilty of the body and blood of Christ. Paul suggested people in Corinth got sick or died because of their irreverence for the body of Christ, the communion, by their mistreatment of the body of Christ, other church members. This is why examination of oneself is fundamental. We must make sure our own hearts are right in how we treat one another. How we treat people is how we treat God.