

“FOR AS OFTEN AS,” 1COR.11:26

Ed Dye

1. The expression “for as often as ye eat” in 1Cor.11:26 is sometimes cited by some brethren as authority for partaking the Lord’s supper more than once on the 1st day of the week.
2. To do so is to take the expression out of context, to ignore the problem being dealt with in the context, and to erroneously apply the expression to that which is not even being considered in the context of 1Cor.11:17-34.
3. Paul in 1Cor.11:17-34 is not concerned with the day nor the time of eating the Lord’s supper, but with **HOW** they were to eat it or observe it when they did eat it.
4. The problem Paul is dealing with and seeking to correct in this whole context is their **concept** of the supper AND their **attitude** toward one another, AND their failure to properly “discern the Lord’s body” – thus their perversion of the Lord’s supper!
5. “As often as” in 1Cor.11:26 is from the Greek **OSAKIS**, a relative adverb, which implies that the Lord’s supper was frequently observed; but it doesn’t specify how frequently, nor necessarily imply multiple times on the 1st day of the week. For, once again, Paul in this context, of which “as often as” is a part, is not concerned with the day or the time of eating the Lord’s supper, but with **HOW** they must eat it or observe it when they do eat it.
6. Therefore, even though “as often as” is an adverbial phrase of frequency, and the frequency specified is simply “as often as you eat...drink”; it is to completely miss the sense of its use in this context to suggest that this text authorizes Christians to eat the Lord’s supper more than once on the Lord’s day. It has no reference to that!
7. In this context “as often as” is an adverbial phrase modifying the verb “show” or “proclaim.” (Emphasize this.)
8. V.26 is Paul’s conclusion concerning his previous instructions about the proper observance of the Lord’s supper in his effort to correct their perversion of it.
9. Because of the significance of the “bread” and the “cup,” every time you eat you “show” or “proclaim” the death of Christ on your behalf. Or, you preach it by your practice!
10. Paul is emphasizing the memorial character of the supper not the number of times it may or should be eaten on the Lord’s day.
11. This memorial character is repeated and preserved every time it is eaten until Jesus’ 2nd coming.

12. Ac.20:7 is the only Divine authority we have to establish **WHEN** or **HOW OFTEN** we are to observe the Lord's supper. Ac.20:7 by necessary implication tells us how frequent it is to be eaten – every 1st day of the week, which disciples did under apostolic directions, Ac.2:42.
13. Thus, it is not “as often as” one desires to eat it on the 1st day of the week (that is, more than once), but “as often as” the Lord authorized eating it by means of his word through his apostles as per Ac.2:42 and Ac.20:7 – on the 1st day of the week.
14. If this is not the case, as per Ac.2:42 and Ac.20:7, and since 1Cor.11:26 doesn't authorize multiple eating of it on the 1st day of the week, then it could mean a variety of things; such as:
 - a. That its observance will no longer be bound to a fixed day of the year, like the Passover feast was; but that it is to be observed at the discretion of the church, as some Bible scholars contend; for that would be a case of “as often as.”
 - b. That its observance could be annually, semi-annually, quarterly, monthly as some contend; for either would be a case of “as often as.”
 - c. That it may be eaten on any day of the week, as some professed Christians contend; that again, would be a case of “as often as.”
15. As to 1Cor.11:33 and the expression “tarry one for another” consider this:
 - a. Again, this verse must be interpreted in light of the context, especially in light of V.21.
 - b. To help understand this verse then ever be aware of the problem at Corinth Paul is seeking to correct and in doing so teaching them the true nature and design of the Lord's supper as Jesus instituted it.
 - c. First of all they were erroneously viewing the Lord's supper as a common meal. So what they were doing was in effect not eating the Lord's supper at all. Their attitude and actions were a gross, soul-condemning perversion of it, Vv.17,20-22,29.
 - d. Secondly, the assembly was divided into social classes with the rich (or the haves) not waiting for the poor (the have nots) before eating the meal. As a result of their perverted practice “one is hungry, and another is drunken,” V.21.
 - (1) Furthermore, “drunken” of V.21 does not mean “intoxicated.” It is used in antithesis to “hungry” meaning the opposite of. Thus it is used in the sense of “filled, satiated”; the one group did not get enough to eat to satisfy their hunger; the other group had eaten their fill; they were satiated.
 - (2) For “drunken” see also Rev.17:6; Isa.29:19; 49:26; Jer.51:7; Lam.3:15; Ezek.39:19.

- e. What they were doing in their perverted practice of what they were erroneously calling the Lord's supper was eating and drinking damnation to themselves, V.29.
 - f. Thus Paul exposed their sinful practice, taught them the truth, and demanded that they change both their attitude and their practice and observe the Lord's supper just as the Lord instituted it in order to show or proclaim his death till he come.
16. Further consideration of the expression "**tarry** one for another" in 1Cor.11:33.
- a. The word "tarry" or "expect" is from the Greek EKDECHOMAI.
 - b. Vine, II, 61; Vine, III, 111, says: "it suggests reaching out in readiness to receive something.."
 - c. Obviously, from the context what they were to "tarry for" or to reach out "to receive" was one another in eating **together**.
 - d. Their problem, among other things, had been their lack of concern for the participation of all in the supper, V.21.
 - e. Paul seeks to correct their erroneous concept of the supper AND their attitude toward one another, Vv.21-29. See 1Cor.10:16,17.
 - f. Paul taught them they were to make provisions for all to participate in the memorial supper – all are to be received; all are to eat **together**, as opposed to what they were doing, Vv.18-21.
 - g. Again, remember: this context has nothing to do with time or day, or how often the Lord's supper is to be eaten. That is established by Ac.20:7.
 - h. Neither does it have anything to do with the supper being served on Sunday night to those disciples who were unable to attend the Sunday morning assembly.
 - i. Its emphasis is on **HOW** it is to be eaten when it is eaten in order to properly show or proclaim or preach the Lord's death till he come.
17. On last thought. Obviously, "as often as ye eat" is an adverbial phrase which modifies something in the sentence of V.26. It can't modify "eat" because "eat" is a part of the adverbial modifier. Adverbs modify verbs. Therefore in this sentence it modifies the verb "show" or "proclaim." So, once again, the emphasis is on **HOW** the supper is to be eaten when it is being eaten in order to properly show or proclaim or preach the Lord's death till he come.
- Note:** "as often as" could mean infrequently, etc., etc. if that were all we had to identify its use. Take away Ac.20:7, then see what it means!