

Further texts and discussion

Paul carries on, in 1 Corinthians 11:23–34, by:

- bringing in a heavyweight argument from the origins of the Jesus movement (23–26)
- calling on people to take time for reflection before the meal (27–32)
- suggesting something about eating at home (33–34)

11:23 For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, **24** and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” **25** In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” **26** For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

27 Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be answerable for the body and blood of the Lord. **28** Examine yourselves, and only then eat of the bread and drink of the cup. **29** For all who eat and drink without discerning the body, eat and drink judgment against themselves. **30** For this reason many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. **31** But if we judged ourselves, we would not be judged. **32** But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world.

33 So then, my brothers and sisters, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. **34** If you are hungry, eat at home, so that when you come together, it will not be for your condemnation. About the other things I will give instructions when I come.

Questions

- ▶ What would strike your character most in the account of the Last Supper in 23–26?
- ▶ How might it affect your character’s thinking on the issues that Paul has just raised about eating together?
- ▶ Paul sometimes describes the Christian community as being ‘the body of Christ’ (1 Cor 10:16-17; 12:12-13). What would your character be likely to think Paul was referring to when he writes about ‘discerning the body’ (verse 29)?
- ▶ Paul writes about people becoming weak and ill, or dying (v. 30). What kinds of weakness, illness and death would your character have encountered in their life? What would they think had caused these things? How are they likely to interpret what Paul says about this?
- ▶ What would your character think of the instruction to eat at home (v. 34)?

- ▶ What would your group as a whole do in response to Paul's instructions in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34?

Note: the discussion questions in these studies don't do away with the need for careful historical study, to try and find out what actually happened among early Christians. Nor do they do away with the need for careful study of NT texts, including consideration of wording, grammar, setting, theology, etc, etc. These studies mainly open up reflection on the implications of the early Christians being socially diverse groups of first-century people and on what that means for how they would have heard the NT texts.

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