

## **2007 AGAPE FEAST**

**We have celebrated the Agape Feast ever year since our beginning as a church in 1974. It is an annual reminder of the reason for our existence as a group of Christians in the Birmingham area.**

THE REASON WE FORMED A CHURCH IN 1974 WAS TO TEACH THE SCRIPTURES UNDER THE PRINCIPLE OF I.C.E (Isagogic, Category, Exegesis) AND UNDER THE PRINCIPLE OF MILK AND MEAT SPIRITUAL GROWTH RESULTING IN OUTREACH MINISTRIES (Heb.5:11-14;1 Pet.2:2; Acts 14:21-28).

Jesus taught us that the commandment of the New Covenant was forgiving **love (agape)**: “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, **even as I have loved you, that you also love one another**. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:34-35)

Paul began, like a good teacher by **praising** them (1Cor.11:2) and then by addressing a **problem** (1Cor.11:17-19) and finally by recommending spiritual **performance** (1 Cor.11:20-22, 33-34).

Our section of study involves Paul addressing the problem: “But in giving this instruction, I do not praise you, because you come together NOT for the better but for the worse.” (1 Cor.11:17)

The Greek word come together (sunerchomai) [assembly] is mentioned four times in our lesson text (1 Cor.11:17, 18, 20 & 33). The Corinthian church didn't forsake assembling together (Heb.10:25) but did worst (to hesson). **They came together and excluded our believers from their personal fellowship**. They didn't show them the same forgiving love shown to them by Jesus Christ.

Today's lesson will study the Agape Feast and the Eucharist and participate in both of them.

**We will begin by studying the Agape Feast by the following three homiletical points.**

- Directive (1Cor.11:17, 34)
- Division (1Cor.11:18-19)
- Despise (1Cor.11:20-22, 34)

### **1. Paul referred to his discussion on the Agape Feast as a directive (paraggello / p.a.ptc nsm) (1 Cor.11:17).**

Paraggello refers to transmitting a message or directive down the ranks. This directive was passed down to correct an assembly problem of exclusion of fellowship.

**The local Christian church should be the ONE PLACE IN THE WORLD for all barriers to be broken down.** “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all ONE IN CHRIST.” (Gal.3:28; 1 Cor.12:13)

The church is composed of redeemed believers called out of the world by the gospel of Jesus Christ.

2. **Paul said that the assembly problem of exclusion of fellowship was causing division in the church (Titus 3:9-11).**

“For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, hear that division (schisma) [prejudices] exist among you; and in part, I believe it for there must also be factions (heresy / doctrinal) among you, in order that those who are approved (dokimos) may have become (ginomai / a.m.subj) evident among you.”  
(1 Cor.11:18-19)

Division and factions test those with PV towards the truth of God’s word regarding their handling others with doctrinal truth and with the same forgiving love that Christ handles them.

The Eucharist demands fellowship and unity with one another as well as with the Lord.

3. **Paul asked those believers involved in carnal thinking and behavior an important question:**

“Do you **despise** (kataphroneo / p.a.ind) [to think down] the church of God, **and shame** (kataischuno / p.a.ind) those who have nothing? Shall I praise you? In this I will not praise you.” (1 Cor.11:22) (20-22).

The carnality of the Agape Feast, which preceded the Eucharist, was resulting in divine discipline associated with the Eucharist (1 Cor.11:20-22, 30-34).

Paul emphasized the important of discernment between privacy of the **believer** and public assembly of **believers**.

- Personal privacy - “Do you not have houses in which to eat and drink?” (vs.22)
- Public assembly – “So then, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another.” (vs.33)

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BECAUSE OF CARNALITY ASSOCIATED WITH THE AGAPE FEAST, PAUL WARNED BELIEVERS ASSEMBLED THAT PERSONAL PREPARATION PRECEDED PERSONAL PARTICIPATION IN THE EUCHARIST.

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**In preparation for the Eucharist we will examine 1 Cor.11:23-33 by the following four homiletical points.**

- **Elements** (1Cor 11:23-25) Bread (body of Jesus Christ) and New Covenant cup (blood of Jesus Christ)
- **Examination** (1Cor 11:26-28) **1 John 1:9** – confession for spiritual fellowship
- **Evaluation** (1Cor 11:29-30) Divine discipline for participation without confession of personal sin
- **Examples** (1Cor 11:31-33) Personal sins such as **Mental attitude sins**: anger, jealousy, hate, bitterness, malice, prejudice; **Sins of the tongue**: gossip, saying hurtful things, maligning, back-biting, lying and **Overt sins**: drunkenness, drugs, violation of law, stealing, fornication, gluttony