

**A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE LORD'S SUPPER IN THE
NEW TESTAMENT AND TODAY'S PRACTICES**

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ABSTRACT

A comparative study of the Lord's Supper in the New Testament and Today's Practices is more important, since our faith should be lived out in practical Christianity in close conformity to original practice. The writer considers it a rewarding task to place the Lord's Supper in the New Testament side by side with what obtains in the Baptist Churches in Nigeria today.

To this and major doctrinal views of the ordinance were examined followed by the researcher's biblical understanding of its observance from the New Testament perspective. The current practices were analyzed and on the basis of this recommendations were offered that will make the observance of the Lord's Supper Bible based and devoid of Western Missionary ideological imposition.

are absent at the meal. Pastors do emphasize the ordinance among the congregations. Lastly, the ordinance is solemn and joyous.

B. Conclusion

Having looked at the Lord's Supper during the New Testament and the contemporary trends in the Baptist Church, we have not considered it our duty to strictly abide by the practices of the Apostles.

If we are to enjoy as we ought to, fellowship together in Christ at His table we need a more Christian, and a more constructive approach to the practice of the Lord's Supper.

First the church needs to see the Lord's Supper as an occasion of thanksgiving to God. It is a time for thanksgiving to God for His gifts of creation and of redemption through Jesus Christ. But more importantly, this should remind us to remember the poor. The offering of gifts must play a significant role in communion service. A substantial part of communion offerings must be used to support widows, the poor, the distressed, and of course, those on our mission fields.

Secondly, while the deep-rooted Baptist conviction that the Lord's Supper is an ordinance and not a sacrament need not be abandoned, yet we need to remember that the Lord's Supper is the ordinance of memory. This is the only ordinance which carried the definite instruction from the Lord.

"Do this in remembrance of me" (I Cor. 11:24). In view of this, the frequency of times of celebration must be increased at least to

once a month. We need to teach people the importance and relevance of this ordinance.

Related to the above is the fact that many ministers do not take pains to observe every detail of the service. Tables are not well furnished, distributions are not settled in advance, biscuits and pieces of bread are broken and how, infact irreverently. Consequently, it is observed merely as an appendage instead of the climax in our worship.

C. Recommendations

In view of the noticeable deficiencies in the interpretation and observance of the Lord's Supper as practiced today compared with how it was conducted in the NT., the following recommendations were proffered.

1. It is high time that different churches in Nigeria find a meeting ground where an agreement can be reached as to the biblical eligibility to the Lord's Supper. This is necessary so that our denominational gift will be used for building up the body of Christ rather than caring confusion and hatred in Christendom.
2. The celebration should be seen as part of Christian worship and, therefore, the elements should be handled with reverence in the Spirit of rededicating and renewing ones union with Christ from contrite and penitent heart.
3. Where an ordained minister could not be reached, student pastors, deacons, pastors or church leaders should be allowed

to administer the ordinance instead of depriving the church from enjoying communion with Christ.

4. While it may be deduced that Baptism always preceded the taking of Supper, this should be taken as a strict and rigid rule without exception. There is the need for flexibility judging from Cornelius; account in Acts 10.
5. Since the Lord's Supper can be celebrated any time, it beloves on Christians to live holy lives daily. Hence thorough self-examination is demanded on a daily basis.
6. It is high time the Nigerian Baptist Convention detaches herself from the apron of her convention but rather look inward to all aspects of her doctrinal beliefs with foreign cultural learning and subject such to biblical teachings so as to come out with Bible-based and theologically sound doctrines.
7. Church members and pastors must be thoroughly schooled on the necessity of the Lord's Supper to correct the age-long paganistic impression of seeing the ordinance as a ritual rather than the expression of Christian union with Christ.