

The Five W's of the Lord's Supper

Sometimes I hear about members of the Lord's church wanting to partake of the Lord's Supper at weddings or funerals or meals, etc. Is it appropriate to partake of the Lord's Supper at these functions? God's Word gives us specific instructions regarding the Lord's Supper and when we go outside of those instructions then we are breaking God's Law. God gives us the five w's of the Lord's Supper: who, what, when, where, and why.

The Lord's Supper is to be observed on the first day of the week (when) by Christians (who) when they are assembled together for worship (where). It is to consist of unleavened bread and fruit of the vine (what) and it is observed to remember that Christ died for us (why) (Matthew 26:26-35; Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 11 and other passages).

Recently, this issue came up when I was in a wedding. The groom decided he wanted all of the immediate family to partake of the Lord's Supper after the ceremony. When someone asked him why he wanted to do that, his response was he wanted it to represent the unity of the two families. Now let's think about this. They partook of the Lord's Supper with non-Christians on a Saturday at a wedding to signify the unity of two families. When I stated that the Lord's Supper was reserved for the first day of the week in worship, I was indirectly called a "legalist". Why? Let's look at this in a table format for simplicity:

God's Instructions for the Lord's Supper:			
Observed on 1 st day of the week	By Christians	When they are assembled together for worship	To remember that Christ died for them
Man's Actions:			
Observed on a Saturday	With non-Christian family members	At a wedding	To represent the unity of two families

How does what occurred comply with God's instructions? And why would I be considered a legalist for pointing out that it was wrong? A classic sign of liberalism is when members of the Lord's church start getting the attitude that we do not need to follow God's instructions exactly and before you know it everything becomes "no big deal." And those who want to adhere to God's Word exactly are then labeled "legalists".

I guess the apostle Paul would be labeled a legalist by many today when he rebuked the church in Corinth for partaking the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner in I Corinthians 11. When they were coming together as the church to partake of the Lord's Supper, they were treating it like a common meal (verses 17-22). Paul had to remind them what the Lord's Supper was really about. He then told them they needed to repent and start partaking the Lord's Supper correctly—according to God's instructions (verses 23-33).

We, as Christians, must do everything with Christ's authority or permission as Paul stated in Colossians 3:17 and we must never have the attitude that we can go outside God's instructions and still be pleasing to Him.