

1 Corinthians 11



Personal Preparation Day 1 – 1 Corinthians 11:2-16

The next 4 chapters of Corinthians contain some of the most-discussed and contentious passages in the New Testament. As we work through them, keep in mind that Paul was dealing with particular problems at a particular time in history. Try not to react too strongly to the cultural issues in this passage.

Read 1 Corinthians 11:2-16

1. From verse 5 and verses 13-16, what seems to be happening during prayer times in the Corinthian church?
2. In the context of their culture, what statement are the Corinthian Christian women making?
3. Paul wants to uphold two key principles. Make a note of them:
 - v.3
 - v.11-12
4. How does Paul's response in this section reflect the principles we saw him speak about in 10:31-11:1?

The details of this passage are notoriously hard to understand. What sort of head coverings is he talking about? What do they actually signify? What does he mean by the phrase "because of the angels" (v10)? Does "headship" imply authority?

If you want to do some further reading on this subject, get a hold of Bruce Winter's book, "After Paul Left Corinth" (pgs 121-138) and share your insights with your group!

Personal Preparation Day 2 – 1 Corinthians 11:17-34

The sharing of the Lord's Supper is another area of church life in which the Corinthians were getting things badly wrong. While we have reduced the Lord's Supper to a ritual with small pieces of bread and tiny cups of grape-juice, in Corinth it was a full meal.

1. While in verse 2 Paul had praise for them, about this subject he has none. From verse 17, why is that?
2. How would you describe the problem from verses 18-22?
3. What does Paul describe as the purpose of the Lord's Supper, in verses 23-26?
4. How is what they're eating "not the Lord's supper", as he says in verse 20?

5. The words "of the Lord" (verse 29) don't appear in the original Greek.¹ From verses 27-32 (omitting these words), what body do you think the Corinthians are failing to recognise? (Also see 10:17)

6. What is Paul's practical solution in 11:33-34?

THINK: What might a passage like this mean for the way we celebrate the Lord's Supper today?

Coming Up...

- Rush Games Night, 7 June
- YouthChurch going to see Narnia, 14 June
- Playgroup Mum's movie night, 20 June
- Family Service @ mpc, 22 June

For Prayer...

- That our approach to church might be to serve, and not be served.
- That we might work within the church in such a way as to promote harmony, and not division.

¹ This appears in the NIV, not the ESV.

Group Discussion Questions

The consumerist mentality has taken over society. People are not here to serve, but to be served. And often the Church is no different.

1. How do you see the consumerist mentality at work in churches and people these days? Do you see elements of this at mpc?

As we look at this passage, keep in mind the framework that Paul has just put forward as to how the Corinthians should be dealing with people. The key thought is:

I am not seeking my own good, but the good of many, so that they may be saved. (10:33)

What happens when you take these words and apply them to church meetings? Instead of seeking our own good, we'll seek to serve. Sadly, as we'll see in chapter 11, some of the Corinthians are missing this point.

Read 1 Corinthians 11

2. What questions, comments or observations did you have from reading the passage this week?

3. Run through the issues Paul identifies in the Church at Corinth (discuss where necessary!). What are his practical recommendations for dealing with them?

- Prayer & Prophecy (speaking on behalf of God), in verses 2-16

- The Lord's Supper, in verses 17-34

4. How would you describe the underlying problem of both of these issues?

5. How can you see Paul using 10:33 to deal with the issues?

6. How does understanding the underlying problem help us to deal with the controversial nature of many of the things Paul raises in this passage? What things do you still struggle with?

THINK:

- a. What does this passage have to say about the place of prayer and prophecy in the life of mpc?
- b. How does this passage challenge us about what the Lord's Supper should be like, and how we should approach it?
- c. How can we create an environment in which we don't approach church as a consumerist?

(See previous page for prayer points and what's coming up)