

# ON THE FREQUENCY OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

## Old Testament evidence for a weekly observance:

### Typology of the Passover

The Last Supper was likely a Passover meal. It is the aspect of *commemoration* that is foreshadowed, so this alone would not dictate a weekly observance. If the Passover were the only type of the Lord's Supper, we would conclude that it is to be an annual observance.

### Typology of the Table of Showbread

Every Sabbath day twelve fresh loaves were placed on the table (Lev. 24:5-9), thereby providing a pattern for a weekly observance.

Like the Passover, the Lord's Supper is a commemorative meal celebrating God's redemption of His people in the past. Like the Table of Showbread is typical of the weekly meal celebrating the Lord's presence among His people.

## ***New Testament practice supporting the weekly observance:***

### Apostolic Precedent

Whatever the churches did by the appointment or approval of the Apostles, they did by the commandment of Jesus Christ, for He guided them into all truth through the Holy Spirit. Apostolic precedent is as authoritative as direct command.

By following the practices of those churches, we do what God wants us to do.

According to Acts 2:42, the Christians at Jerusalem observed the Lord's Supper as regularly as any other part of worship. (How could a weekly collection of contributions be justified when the Lord's Supper is observed less frequently? Yet, congregations that do not observe the Lord's Supper weekly still collect an offering every week!)

According to Acts 20:7, the Christians met for the expressed purpose of breaking bread.

Putting those two texts together, we conclude that the Apostolic church met on the first day of every week to observe the Lord's Supper.

The fact that Paul tarried in Troas for seven whole days (Acts 20), the last of which was the first day of the week, is evidence that he stuck around to celebrate the Lord's Supper with them.

The context of Acts 2:46 indicates this does not refer to the Lord's Supper.

The definite article indicates an every-week activity. Just as the Jews were instructed to remember THE (meaning every) Sabbath day, so Christians meet on THE (meaning every) first day to break bread.

Either the biblical case is for a weekly observance or there is no biblical case regarding frequency.

## ***Historical evidence for the weekly observance***

### Testimony of early church writers

The consistent testimony of post-biblical and church historians is that Christians observed the Lord's Supper weekly.

Justin Martyr (c. A.D. 140)  
Tertullian  
Didache (c. A.D. 110)

Weekly communion was prepared in the Greek church until the 7th century. "Such as neglected three weeks together were excommunicated."

### Testimony of later Christians

Matthew Henry (Presbyterian)  
John Calvin (1509-1564)  
Antoine Arnauld (1643) (Catholic)  
Archbishop William King (1695) (Catholic)  
John Mitchell Mason (1798) (Presbyterian)  
John Wesley (Methodist)

For the first three centuries of Christianity, the Lord's Supper was observed every Sunday.

## ***Comments***

In a healthy, vibrant marriage, the husband and wife long for frequent communion and fellowship .

A healthy body hungers for frequent nourishment. A physical body that does not desire food is obviously sick.

What could be concluded about a soul that does not seek every opportunity to avail itself of the spiritual nourishment and divine fellowship the Lord's Supper provides?

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