

Trends

- ☛ 25% of all internet searches are porn related (~68 million/day).
- ☛ 35% of all internet downloads are porn related.
- ☛ 34% of internet users experience unwanted exposure to porn.
- ☛ Average age child first sees online porn is 11.
- ☛ 20% of men admit viewing online porn at work.
- ☛ ~116,000 internet searches each day for "child pornography."
- ☛ The least popular day to view porn Thanksgiving.

—via OnlineSchools.org

I Thessalonians 4:3-5: "For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; 4 that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, 5 not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God;"

Sentence Sermons

"Fornication and adultery unleash destructive consequences into a person's life: poverty, lack of perception, loss of respect and mutual acceptance, children with shattered futures, dullness of the senses and intellect, deterioration of health."

—Sunday Adelaja, mega-church "pastor"

News & Notes

Please pray for those mentioned in the announcements after services and others listed on the bulletin board in the foyer of the church building.

Please pray for my son and his wife as they seek to start a new congregation in northern Michigan. Please pray Ryan can raise enough support to do this important work. Please read his recent report I forwarded to all on my e-mail list.

Please pray for those at Grayling who chose not to follow the truth.

Please pray for Sandy Willis, wife of gospel preacher Mike Willis (Decatur Township). Sandy had successful heart valve replacement surgery and is now home recuperating.

Please keep sisters Virginia Brown and Wilma Cardwell in your prayers. Their faithfulness sets such a good example and gives encouragement to all! Ditto for Al (our Barnabas!).

Pray for Hatti and her "new life" in Texas! We wish her only the very best and will miss her "something fierce"!

Pray for the all of our students: elementary, secondary and college. Our young people are now back to school.

There are many needy saints! Can you help?! Let me know.

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Editor: Craig Thomas (812-320-9569); craigthomas82000@gmail.com

Please direct questions and comments to the editor.

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"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

John 6:68



Did the Troas Church Provide a Pizza Party Fellowship Meal?

Ron Halbrook

Brethren desperate for a pretext upon which to rationalize the church providing social meals have occasionally resorted to twisting and torturing Acts 20:11. The text shows that the church at Troas met and that Paul ate something, but the context clearly distinguishes the function of the church and the action of Paul in eating food to satisfy his hunger. No, the church at Troas did not provide a pizza party fellowship meal!

Distinguishing Local Church Action & Individual Action in Acts 20:6-12

In Acts 20:6-12 Paul worshiped with the saints at Troas and then continued on his preaching journey. The church met "upon the first day of the week to break bread" and Paul preached to them, extending his lesson well into the night. When a sleeping saint fell from the window where he was seated, the assembly broke up as everyone rushed to his aid, but, alas, he was dead. Paul used this opportunity to confirm the word "with signs following" by raising Eutychus (Mk. 16:20; 2 Cor. 12:12).

Rather than calling upon the brethren to reassemble for additional teaching, Paul prepared to resume his journey. "And when he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed" (Acts 20:11). The saints met to eat the Lord's Supper in verse 7, but Paul alone is said to have taken food in verse 11, as might be expected of someone preparing to embark on a long journey. Nothing is said about the church engaging in a common meal.

A Distinction Consistently Made in the New Testament

The New Testament clearly distinguishes occasions when the church functioned by providing the Lord's Supper and when saints ate common meals. Common meals were always provided by individual action not church action.

I. Acts 2:42 shows the Lord's Supper was eaten when the saints assembled for worship. "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." This briefly outlines the worship services of the early church in Jerusalem which included teaching by the apostles, a collection (literally, "the fellowship," cf. vv. 44-45), the Lord's Supper, and prayers. In verse

46, after referring to ongoing meetings for worship in the temple area, the text shows that common meals were shared among individuals on an individual basis in their homes: *"And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart."*

2. Acts 20:7 speaks of the saints assembled to eat the Lord's Supper: *"And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight."* The worship assembly was broken up by the death of the sleeping saint who fell from the window. After Paul raised him, nothing is said about the saints re-assembling to continue their worship or

"And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart."

Acts 2:46

work as a church. *"And when he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed"* (Acts 20:11). Paul personally ate something

for the reason reflected in the text, i.e., he was preparing to leave on a long journey. Nothing is said about anyone else eating anything!

3. I Corinthians 11:17-34 distinguishes saints gathering to eat the Lord's Supper as the function of the church, and saints eating common meals as a function of the home. They *"came together...into one place"* with the purpose of eating the Lord's Supper as Paul had taught them by divine inspiration, but they had corrupted the function of the church by including a common meal (vv. 20, 23). Twice Paul insisted that common meals should be provided in the realm of individual responsibility and not church action (vv. 22, 34). *"What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in?" "And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation."*

The careful student will notice that all of these passages are consistent in demonstrating the distinction between church action and mission, and individual responsibilities and function.

The Distinction Further Confirmed: Preaching Before the Church, Talking With Individuals

Luke's use of the words *"preach"* and *"talk"* confirm that the functioning of the church is recorded in Acts 20:7, 9 but not in verse 11.

Verses 7 and 9 speak of Paul preaching. The Greek word is *dialegomai*, a word Luke commonly uses for public preaching, discourse, and debate. This is consistently true throughout Acts in all ten uses of this term (*"dispute,"* 17:17; 19:8-9; 24:12; *"reason"* or *"reason with,"* 18:4; 24:25; 17:2; 18:19; *"preach,"* 20:7, 9).

Verse 11 speaks of Paul talking with individuals, not engaging in public preaching. The word is *homileo*, a word Luke consistently uses for personal conversation (*"talk,"* Lk. 24:14; Acts 20:11; *"commune with"* or *"commune together,"* Lk. 24:15; Acts 24:26).

The two terms appear in sequence not only in Acts 20:7, 9 and 11, but also in Acts 24:12, 25 and 26 with the same distinction between occasions of preaching and occasions of personal conversation. In Acts 24 Paul pleads his case before Felix the governor. First, Ananias through the orator Tertullus accused Paul of stirring up an insurrection (vv. 1-9). Second, Felix allowed Paul to make a defense (vv. 10-21). Paul denied that he had incited insurrection or so much as engaged in *"disputing"* or debating (*dialegomai*) in the temple (vs. 12). Felix deftly postponed ruling on the case because he knew the machinations of the Jewish leaders but did not consider Christians a threat (vs. 22-23).

Next, wanting to know more about this new sect of the Jews called Christians, and possibly seeking to entertain himself and his Jewish wife, Felix invited Paul to make a formal presentation *"concerning the faith in Christ"* (vs. 24). *"And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, 'Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee'"* (vs. 25). Felix got more information and less entertainment than he bargained for!

The KJV says Paul *"reasoned"* in verse 25, which is necessary to any proclamation of the gospel, *"but the word used here means simply as he discoursed, and is applied usually to making a public address, to preaching"* (*Barnes' Notes on the NT, Acts: 336*). This sermon terrified Felix, and he never sought such a discourse again, but he did seek opportunities to *"commune"* or talk (*homileo*) with Paul in the hopes of generating a bribe for his release (vs. 26; cf. vs. 17, where Paul mentioned bringing alms to Jerusalem, which likely caught the covetous governor's attention).

The Issue Clarified: What Is the Work of the Church?

The issue is not over our geographical location when eating, i.e., eating in a church building, but what is the scriptural work or mission of the church? The New Testament pattern is very clear that the work of the local church is to proclaim the gospel, to worship God and edify His saints, and to provide benevolence to saints in need (1 Tim. 3:15; 1 Cor. 14:26; 16:1-2). The church building should be used to fulfill the mission of the church, not for social and recreational purposes.

Knowledgeable brethren have never objected to *"eating and drinking in a church building."* That is not the real issue. We eat and drink the Lord's Supper there. Ladies feed their babies there. Preachers eat their lunch there when studying all day. Even visitors drink from the water fountain. These latter eating's and drinking's are incidental to the appropriate use of the building for the work of the church, but it is emphatically *not* the work of the church to plan, finance, and conduct Baby Feeding Fellowship gatherings, Preacher's Anniversary Celebration dinners, or Water Fountain Fellowship meetings.

Will our brethren claim a Pizza Party Fellowship Meal in the church kitchen and dining hall is a mere incidental to the appropriate use of the building for the work of the church? What work: evangelism, worship and edification, or benevolence to destitute saints?

In short, common meals are the work of individuals and families, not the work of local churches. That distinction is reflected in Acts 20:7 and 11.