



# BROAD STREET

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*From Where I Sit . . .*

### **“The Breaking Of Bread And The Lord’s Supper”**

The question has often been asked, “How do we know when the phrase ‘**The Breaking of Bread**’ is referring to the Lord’s Supper and when it’s referring to a common meal such as was shared by brethren in Jerusalem in **Acts 2:46**?” In fact some use Acts 2:46 as justification for taking **The Lord’s Supper** on any day.

Certainly “**The breaking of bread**” is an appropriate description of partaking of the Lord’s Supper – The communion of the Body and the Blood of Jesus. **1 Corinthians 10:16 (KJV)** “*The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?*”

Note in **Acts 2:42** “*And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in **breaking of bread**, and in prayers.*” This phrase has the appearance of being in a spiritual context, whereas later in the chapter a non-spiritual use of the phrase appears to exist, but can we know for sure? Does the usage in **Acts 2:46** refer to the Lord’s Supper or to a common meal? “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.”

Other Scripture sheds some light on the question. This latter usage (breaking bread and eating meat - **Acts 2:46**) does not appear at all to be the usage of the phrase when referring to the special gathering of **Acts 20:7**, “*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.*” Note the adverbial phrase which **defines purpose of coming together**: “*When . . . came together . . . **to break bread**.*” The purpose of their coming together on the First Day of the Week was “**to break bread**” and corresponds to the phrase as used in the above citation of **1 Cor. 10:16**. This breaking of bread was not a common meal. In fact such was forbidden as a substitute for the coming together to commune with the Lord in breaking bread.

This “**breaking of bread**” corresponds to the statement of rebuke a chapter later, **1 Cor. 11:20**, “*come together . . . **to eat the Lord’s supper**.*” This passage is rebuking them for abusing the purpose of coming together. It was supposed to be to take the Lord’s Supper and Paul calls it “**to break bread**” in **Acts 20:7**. They were not doing so correctly because they were making a common feast out of it. One is not authorized to substitute these two separate practices with each other.

Both of these expressions, “**to eat the Lord’s Supper**,” and “**to break bread**,” were used of what was to occur “**upon the first day of the week when the disciples came together**” (**Acts 20:7**). It’s interesting to note that in **Acts 20**, when Paul came to Troas, he abode for 7 days waiting to meet with the disciples for this designated purpose. If the “**breaking of bread**” could be practiced any other time than the First Day of the Week as was the case of the phrase as used in **Acts 2:46**, “*daily . . . **breaking bread from house to house**,*” he could have had the Lord’s Supper with them at any time, house to house, and sped on his journey. However, there was a designated time for such gathering, a designated purpose for the gathering, and a designated prohibition of substituting a common meal with that purpose. Then Paul sped on his journey.

Summary of these thoughts: Inasmuch as these passages tell us “**Breaking Bread**” when it parallels “**Eating the Lord’s Supper**” – the communion of the body and the blood of Jesus – was the purpose of their gathering – and it was on the First Day of the Week at the time of the church’s accustomed and even commanded gathering, we can rightly conclude that First Day of the Week observance of the Lord’s Supper is the New Testament pattern. Anything other than this is without New Testament pattern or authority. The daily breaking bread and eating meat from house to house does not comply with that standard.

**. . . . Terry Broome**