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# The Answer: Wait for Each Other
# 11: 33-34

**The answer: wait for each other DIG: Why does the phrase, "Wait for each other," get at the heart of what Paul was saying? What changes did Paul call on the Corinthians to make in their observance of the Lord's Supper? Why wasn't merely "waiting" enough? Why were the Corinthians under divine judgment? What was the simple remedy for that judgment?**

**REFLECT: Who are the "haves" and the "have-nots" where you worship? What can you do to bring them together? What have you done for a "have-not" lately? How can you help someone this week? What in Paul's instructions on the Lord's Supper do you need to take to heart? What unfinished business would Yeshua come personally to talk to you about?**

**Only by "the haves" sharing their food and fellowship, could they ease the acute embarrassment of "the have-nots" and capture the spirit of Yeshua's sacrifice.**




**Paul** is ready to wrap up this discussion and move on to another topic. **His** words here bring a brotherly touch at the end, but at the same time shows in what spirit **Paul** was writing throughout. **So then, my brothers, when you gather together** (Greek: *synerchomenoi*) points us back to the verb used in **11:17-18** to open this discussion, and serves to bracket this unit (**to see link click By – Issues Surrounding the Lord's Supper**). **When you gather together to eat** at the

fellowship (Greek: *agape*) meal**, wait for one another (11:33).** This seems to get at the heart of things. Just as "the ground is level at the foot of the cross," so it must be level when it comes to sharing at **the Lord's Supper**. **Paul's** conclusion was clear: **the Corinthians** were to **wait** for **everyone** to arrive before **they** began eating.

The *agape* feast went like this: **The "haves"** provided everything that was needed, **the "have-nots"** brought what **they** could, and **the slaves** probably brought nothing at all. The *agape* feast did not take place like an ordinary meal as we know of today where people eat to satisfy their hunger. Its purpose was to reveal the congregation as a loving, united **Body**. The fitting climax was the celebration of **the Lord's Supper.**[340]

But the problem was not so easily solved because **the "have-nots"** brought barely anything, and what **they** did bring, **the "haves"** probably wouldn't want to eat anyway. So, the problem of sharing would not be solved simply by the early arrivals **waiting** for **them** to show up. If everyone was to **wait** before unpacking their own food basket, it stands to reason that the contents of these should have been shared on common platters. Otherwise, the **waiting**, which was supposed to prevent some from remaining hungry, would be useless. Even if **Paul** meant **wait** until **everyone** showed up, it still would necessitate sharing. But that is exactly what was *not* happening. So only by **the "haves"** sharing **their** food, could **they** ease the acute embarrassment of **the "have-nots"** (see **Bz – The Problem: The Abuse of the Poor**) and capture the spirit of **Yeshua's** sacrifice.

**If the "haves"** come only to fill **their** belly**, the Lord's Supper** was not the place to do it. But to say that **they** should celebrate **the Lord's Supper** in **their** own **homes** misses the entire point. **Paul** does not believe that **the "haves"** can retreat from the demands of the gospel in **their** own **homes**. This command to **eat at home** connects with **Paul's** first warning that **they did more harm than good when they gathered together (11:17**). If **they** were intent only on indulging **their** appetites, then **they should** stay **at home** and not even show up at all **(11:34a).** If the agape feast was to be meaningful, it had to be an expression of real fellowship.[341]

That real fellowship was **Paul's** intent is supported by the fact that **he** warned "**the haves"** regarding **their** behavior: **So that when you meet together it will not result in judgment (11:34:b).** This picked up on the **"judgment"** motif in **11:28-32**. Yes, they were meeting together to eat **the Lord's Supper**, but in doing

so **they** were "devouring" **their** own private meals with **their** privileged portions and thereby humiliating those who barely had anything. Therefore, because **they** had treated **the Lord's Supper** so badly, neither proclaiming the salvation for which **His meal** is intended, nor honoring the **"have-nots"** who are a part of **His Body**, **they** were presently experiencing divine **judgment**. The remedy was simple. When **they** gathered together to celebrate **the Lord's Supper**, welcome everyone with true fellowship.

**As for the other matters, Paul** would **instruct the Corinthians** more **about them when he** returned personally to **Corinth** (see **Ea – Doing God's Work**) **(11:34c).** How much we are left in the dark because Paul was not writing first of all to us! Indeed, it is not possible even to know what **the other matters** refer to. **The Lord's Supper**? Traditions that were being kept but requiring further instruction? Relationships between the **"haves"** and the **"have-nots**?**"** We simply don't know. What a sentence like this does, is to remind us of how little we really do know, and to teach us to be grateful for what we have received – even if it had to be at the expense of some unfortunate abuses in the church at **Corinth**.[342]

*Dear Heavenly **Father**, Praise **You** for **Your** excellent example of sharing **Your righteousness** with those who love **You**. **He made the One who knew no sin to become a sin offering on our behalf, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God (Second Corinthians 5:21).**Thank **You** for **Your** sure gift of **righteousness** for all who love **You**. Thank **You** for Moses' example of keeping his eyes on the future rather than being caught up in treasures that would soon pass away. **He considered the disgrace of Messiah as greater riches than the treasures of Egypt – because he was looking ahead to the reward (Hebrews 11:26).***

*Thank you for the example of **the Messiah's communities in Macedonia – that in much testing by affliction, the abundance of their joy and their extreme poverty overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part (Second Corinthians 81c-2).** Often it is much easier to look at those who have more than we do and so we want to keep what we have; but if we look thru **Your** eyes that see everywhere, we will see brothers and sisters in **Messiah** who have much less than we do. Please help us to remember always that this world and its treasures are but a blink – while the treasures we will get as we share what **You** have given us, will last for all eternity! We love to please **You** in our sharing! Thank **You** for **Your** sharing. In **Yeshua's** holy name and power of **His** resurrection. Amen*