

EXAMPLES THAT BIND

INTRODUCTION

A. **Philippians 4:9**

Approved examples are authoritative and binding.

B. **1st Corinthians 10:1-13**

Disapproved examples are presented as warnings of what behavior to avoid.

C. **2nd Thessalonians 3:6-9; 1st Corinthians 9:14**

Incidental examples need to be evaluated in their context and applied as appropriate.

I. TIME OF COMMUNION SPECIFIED

A. **1st Corinthians 11:23-26**

We are commanded to break bread often in memory of Jesus, but how often?

B. **Acts 20:7**

The first day of the week is mentioned particularly. Some may ask how we can know whether this is any first day or every first day – why not just the first day of the week once per month, per quarter, or per year? The answer is that it is only logical to do this weekly. If a little league team meets for practice on Thursday at 5:00 p.m., parents know to bring their players every Thursday; none would ask, “Which Thursday?” If the Rotary Club meets on Wednesday at 7:00 a.m., no member will ask, “Which Wednesday?” Unless otherwise stipulated, a given day of the week will mean every week. This is common sense.

C. **Acts 20:16, 6**

The details provided in the context help us to know that the first day of the week itself was not incidental, but essential. Paul was in a hurry, but still stuck around Troas a week in order to eat the Lord’ Supper with the disciples of that place. Thus, we conclude the timing was not optional.

II. KIND OF MUSIC SPECIFIED

A. **Mark 14:26; Acts 16:25; 1st Corinthians 14:15**

In the New Testament, worship by music, whether in church or out, was singing – not humming, whistling, clapping, beating a drum, blowing a trumpet, strumming a harp, or any other kind of music. Every example is consistent on this point, without variation.

B. **Colossians 3:16; James 5:13**

Singing was commanded, and nothing else was, as far as music is concerned, so we recognize that the above examples are binding.

III. LOCATION OF ASSEMBLING INCIDENTAL

A. **Romans 16:5; 1st Corinthians 16:19; Colossians 4:15; Philemon 2**

There are several indications that churches of the first century met in homes. This is, therefore, an approved example.

B. **Acts 2:46; 19:9**

However, there are examples of churches meeting elsewhere, which shows the examples are not binding.

C. **1st Corinthians 11:17-20, 33-34; 14:35**

In fact, homes were generally not where churches assembled.

D. **John 4:20-24**

Jesus indicated plainly that no one place is to be preferred above another when worshiping.

IV. KIND OF SERVICE INCIDENTAL

A. **John 13:1-17**

Jesus told the disciples He set an example (15) for them by washing their feet. Some have turned this into a ceremonial action to be undertaken in conjunction with their occasional communion.

1. What was emphasized? That feet were washed (14) or that the Master had become the Servant (13, 14, 16)?
2. Do we grasp the cultural significance of washing feet in a time when people wore sandals, roads were not always paved, and walking was a primary means of transportation? It was a fundamental act of hospitality in those days and usually carried out by household servants. None of that fits our situation now.

B. Matthew 25:31-46

Christ was truly not specific about how serving others was to be accomplished. He presented many kinds of service that could be performed to aid those in need. That service is done is what matters, not which service is done.

C. Philippians 2:3-8

The lesson is to be a servant as Christ was a Servant. That's all.

V. PLACE OF BAPTISM INCIDENTAL

A. John 3:23

The only location for baptizing that was ever very specific is this, that John baptized in the Jordan River at Aenon. From this, some might conclude that baptizing must be done in a river, where water flows, as some folks I encountered in the Eastern Cape of South Africa told me! But, if a river is necessary, then so, too, would be which river, the Jordan. If not, why not?

B. Acts 8:5, 12; 9:18-19

That anyone was ever baptized elsewhere is proof enough the Jordan isn't a binding example, and thus, neither is a river. Any water will do.