

THE FLORAL HEIGHTS INFORMER

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A "NEW" APPROACH

By Roelf L. Ruffner

A growing trend among some congregations in the brotherhood is to divide the membership into small groups for the purpose of Bible Study and edification. They usually meet in private homes. In and of itself this practice is harmless and can be beneficial to a larger membership in getting to know one another. Yet some have decided to go further and have these groups meet in lieu of the regular assembly, usually on Sunday night. They do have one group meet at the church building to provide the Lord's Supper for those who missed partaking of it that morning. This of course is a sop for the "traditionalists" (ie. God's tradition not men's - 2 Thess.3:6).

With any "innovation" men try to bring into the body of Christ the question needs to be asked, "By what authority do you do this?"(Col.3:17). The New Testament makes no mention of divided assemblies or "house churches" where group A meets in one place to worship God while group B meets elsewhere at the same time, both claiming to be part of the same local congregation.

Various objections come to mind concerning this approach:

1. How can the local eldership scripturally oversee a "divided flock"? Can they be in a dozen places at once to "feed the sheep" or to rebuke false teaching?

Local News:

Welcome to all our visitors. We pray that you will be edified by our service and that you will ask questions if things are not as you are accustomed to seeing. Please come back at your every opportunity.

There are many of our members **traveling** due to the spring break week off for school kids. Remember them in your prayers that they may return unto us safely.

Please pray for two prison inmates, **Ben Lawrence and Manuel Ruiz**, who have been studying for quite some time now with John. Manuel is a member of the church and Ben is of a denominational background.

Continue to pray for our shut-ins:

Stella Davidson
696-1030 (Home)

Calvin York
692-0489 (Home).

Bessie Murphy
4600 Taft Blvd, Apt. 538

2. How can a divided assembly obey the Lord's commands for the church to "come together to break bread (the Lord's Supper- Acts 20:7); "speaking to one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs"(Eph.5:19 ASV); and to contribute to the kingdom's work (1 Cor.16:2 - "every one of you")?

3. Granted, the early church did meet in private homes to worship (and still do); did they divide the assembly to do so? Chapter and verse please!

4. Some maintain that this is the best way for the congregation to "meet needs" and provide emotional support. This is a lot of subjective nonsense! Notice the Lord's prescription for meeting needs: "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: **not forsaking the assembly of ourselves together**, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching"(Heb.10:24,25).

5. Finally, others blatantly declare that "our elders gave us their permission to do so and even promote it". Brethren, how can an eldership allow anything in the church which is unscriptural? They sound like "carnivorous" elders (Acts 20:29-30).

"O Jehovah, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walks to direct his steps. O Jehovah, correct me, but in measure; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing"

Jeremiah 10:23-24