

I Corinthians 11:1 -34 “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.”

I Cor 11:2-16 Head Coverings – Divisions over Corporate Worship

Paul addresses issues dividing the church from the letter he received and from oral reports. Paul addresses head coverings – or the lack of them – in corporate worship. He instructs the women to cover their heads when praying and prophesying. He begins his instruction with a reminder of the headship of Christ. Headship – *kephale* – means source. Christ exerts his authority and leadership to His church, and in marriage, the husband is responsible for the spiritual, emotional, and physical needs of the wife. He is to love her as he loves himself. Paul also uses this same word – *kephale* – in his phrase “the head of Christ is God.” In the Trinity the Father has a role of authority or leadership with respect to the Son, though they are equal in power and glory, deity and attributes. Paul applies this truth about the Trinity in the relationship of husband and wife in marriage, as in the Trinity, there is equality in being and value but difference in roles. (Read Ephesians 5: 22-33)

In the Corinthian culture, a woman who was married covered her head, much like a woman wears a wedding ring today. Paul also told the men to not cover their heads, as the practice in that day was for men to pull their togas over their head as a sign of piety in pagan worship.

As to hair length, in Corinth, Paul is teaching that believers should take into context the cultural distinctives. Long hair on men was often seen by men participating in male prostitution in the temples, while short hair on women was identified with prostitutes. We are to live our lives by not causing a distraction to our Christian witness.

I Cor 11: 17-34 The Lord’s Supper

Paul is troubled by the conduct of the church while observing the Lord’s Supper. It appears they were making social distinctives between the rich and the poor as this has been told to Paul by church members. The rich do not share with the poor, and drink too much wine. Paul illustrates the proper way of participating in the Lord’s Supper, as received from the Lord. These practices came directly from Jesus, and from the disciples of the early church.

“This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

“This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

Roman Catholics, Lutherans, and Presbyterians would all agree that Jesus Christ is truly present in the Lord’s Supper.

Transubstantiation is the Roman Catholic belief that when the priest blesses the elements during the Mass, the bread and wine are transformed into the physical body and blood of Jesus Christ.

Consubstantiation is the Lutheran belief that Jesus Christ is truly present in the elements, in, with, and under the bread and wine.

Zwingli taught the memorial view of the Lord’s Supper. Christ commanded us to “do this in remembrance of me.” The bread and wine are only symbols to remind us of what Christ has done for us in his death and resurrection.

Calvin teaches the spiritual or real presence of the Lord's Supper. The bread and wine bring us to the presence of Jesus Christ and his benefits. The Holy Spirit makes true fellowship possible in the here and now. When we partake of the Lord's Supper as brothers and sisters, Christ's Spirit is present, too. Jesus meets us through grace and faith when we come to His table.

We are called to examine ourselves before we come to the table, confessing our sins, and seeking forgiveness.