

Cutting Straight the Word of the Truth on the Bread-Breaking Meeting
(Part I)

**What is the Scriptural Meaning and Practice
of the Lord's Table Meeting?**

The bread-breaking meeting is the most important meeting of the church. It is a matter of utmost seriousness because it involves the one unique Body of Christ. It is the practical symbol of our oneness and, as such, deserves our greatest care and study.

The symbol of the oneness that we enjoy is seen in the bread at the Lord's table, which signifies not only the physical body of the Lord Jesus given in His death for our redemption, but also the mystical Body of Christ produced through His resurrection for His unique expression. When we partake of the bread at the Lord's table, we identify ourselves with the crucified and resurrected Lord and with His universal Body, and we declare to the entire universe that we stand as one, apart from all division. To partake of the bread is to touch the Lord's heart, for the bread and our joint participation in it touch the Lord's Body, for which He gave His life.

It is sad that in recent years, some among us have risen up to establish tables in reckless disregard of the feeling of the Body and opposed to the fellowship of the elders of the church. By misquoting the Bible and misrepresenting the ministry, some saints have been misled to think that such a practice is both scriptural and based on the ministry, as the proponents have repeatedly trumpeted. A number of churches and saints have voiced concern about this and seek to find clear fellowship about these matters, particularly the practice of house-to-house Lord's table meeting. In this article of two parts, we shall present from the Word and the ministry what the proper bread-breaking and the meeting to break bread really are.

The Bread-Breaking Meeting Being Instituted by the Lord

On the night the Lord Jesus was betrayed, He had supper with His disciples. As they were eating, the Lord took the bread and blessed it. Having given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, saying, "Take, eat. This is My body, which is given for you. Do this unto the remembrance of Me." Similarly, after they had dined, He took the cup and gave thanks. Then He gave it to them and said, "Drink of it, all of you. This cup is the new covenant established in My blood, which is being poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, unto the remembrance of Me" (Cf. Matt. 26:26-28; Luke 22:19-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-25).

The Lord Jesus instituted the bread-breaking meeting after He and His disciples had eaten the Passover (Matt. 26:20-25; Luke 22:14-18). He did that to replace the Feast of Passover because He was going to fulfill the type and be the real Passover to us (1 Cor. 5:7). Today, as we attend the bread-breaking meeting, we are keeping the real Feast of Unleavened Bread (Matt. 26:17; 1 Cor. 5:8), which was a seven-day feast (Lev. 23:6) also known as the Passover (Luke 22:1; Mark 14:1). The Feast of Passover was the *first day* of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Exo. 12:15-20; 13:6-7). Hence, we must come together on the Lord's Day, the first day of the week, to the bread-breaking meeting, for it is a

replacement and continuation of the Old Testament Feast of Passover. The New Testament feast of the Lord's table will only be replaced and continued by the feast in the coming kingdom of God when the Savior will feast with the overcoming saints upon His return (Luke 22:30; 13:28-29).

In view of this, the Lord commanded the disciples to "*do this*" to *remember* Him, instilling in them the importance He gave to their coming together to eat the bread and drink of the cup to remember Him until He comes back (1 Cor. 11:26). Israel's keeping of the Passover to remember their deliverance from slavery in Egypt to have a new start typifies the believers' keeping of the Lord's table to remember the Lord's redemption and salvation (Matt. 26:26-28) while awaiting our full redemption upon His return. Moreover, as the Feast of Tabernacles was a remembrance to the Israelites of how God had provided their fathers with tents to live in during their wandering years in the wilderness (Lev. 23:39-43) while expecting to enter into the rest of the promised good land, the Lord's table is also our remembrance of the Lord's provisions and leading during our sojourning in the temporary dwelling place on this earth to enter into the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and new earth which is our eternal habitation (Rev. 21:3).

The bread-breaking meeting consists of the remembrance of the Lord in the first part and the worship of the Father in the second part. According to the procedure in God's salvation, we first receive the Lord and then draw near to the Father. After we have partaken of the bread and the cup, we the many sons of God should be led by the Lord who is designated God's Firstborn Son to worship the Father together in our spirit.

Eating the Lord's Supper Mainly to Remember the Lord

The first aspect of the bread-breaking meeting is eating the Lord's supper. It pertains to a relationship between *us and the Lord* and can be called the *vertical aspect* of the bread-breaking meeting. The emphasis of eating the Lord's supper is the remembrance of the Lord (1 Cor. 11:20, 23-25). By eating the Lord's bread and drinking of the Lord's cup, we eat the Lord's supper in remembrance of the Lord.

In the aspect of the Lord's supper, the bread signifies the Lord's individual physical body that He gave for us (1 Cor. 11:23). The bread also denotes life – the eternal life of God (John 6:33-35, 48). Thus, the bread is a symbol signifying the Lord's body, which was broken on the cross to release His life in order that we may participate in it. When we see or receive the bread, we remember how His body was given to us (1 Cor. 11:24) so that we may have His eternal life, and how His body was broken for us so that He could be distributed as bread to us.

The cup signifies the new covenant that the Lord enacted for us by shedding His blood (1 Cor. 11:25). Whenever we see or receive this cup, we should consider how the Lord partook of flesh and blood for us (Heb. 2:14), how He gave His body for us that we may have His life, and how He shed His blood for us that we may be redeemed from our fallen condition back to God and to God's full blessing. By this symbol, we should consider how the Lord bore our sins, was made sin for us, and was judged and cursed for us, shedding His blood, which constitutes our cup of blessing, our eternal blessed portion. We should also consider how we are redeemed, forgiven, sanctified, justified, reconciled, and accepted by God through the Lord's blood, how it cleanses us from our sins and washes our conscience that we may come to God with boldness, how it speaks better things

before God, and how it resists the attacks from the evil spirits for us that we may overcome the devil who accuses us.

While the bread on the table is identified as the bread, the blood on the table is not identified as the blood, but as the cup. If the cup was referred to as the blood, it would denote only redemption. However, the significance of the cup encompasses much more than merely redemption. In the Bible the cup signifies a portion, a blessing (1 Cor. 10:16), which is God Himself as the believers' portion (Psa. 16:5) which we obtain from God. Formerly in Adam we were sinful and evil, and the portion that we deserved from God is the cup of God's wrath (Rev. 14:10; 21:8). However, the Lord drank this cup for us on the cross (John 18:11). He shed His blood to fully redeem us from our sins. Hence, His salvation became our portion (Lam. 3:24; Col. 1:12), which is the cup of salvation (Psa. 116:13), and our cup of blessing that runs over (Psa. 23:5). Its content is God Himself as our all-inclusive blessing. Thus, by drinking of the cup, we remember how the Lord poured out His blood to redeem us that our sins may be forgiven (Matt. 26:28) and that we may experience God Himself and all that He has as our eternal blessed portion.

The Lord knows how easily we forget Him. Although the grace we received is so great and the redemption we obtained so wonderful, we would often still forget Him. For this reason He charged us to *remember Him*. By eating the bread and drinking the cup, we take in the redeeming Lord as our portion and as our life and blessing. This is to remember the Lord in a genuine way.

Eating the Lord's Supper Also to Display His Death

Whenever we eat the Lord's bread and drink of His cup, we simultaneously remember the Lord and display His death (1 Cor. 11:26). Originally, the blood was in the flesh. When the blood is separated from the flesh, it means death has occurred. The bread refers to the Lord's body, and the cup, to His blood. The bread and the cup, displayed separately on the table, signify death. Since the separation of the body and the blood signifies death, death is thus displayed. While we are remembering the Lord, we display the Lord's death for ourselves and for others to see, including the angels.

With the display of Christ's death, we display and announce Christ's all-inclusive termination of twelve items on the cross: the angelic life (Col. 1:20), the fallen human life (Gal. 2:20), Satan (Heb. 2:14; John 12:31), the kingdom of Satan (Col. 2:15; John 12:31), sin (2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 8:3), sins (1 Pet. 2:24; Isa. 53:6), the world (Gal. 6:14; John 12:31), death (Heb. 2:14), flesh (Gal. 5:24), the old man (Rom. 6:6), self (Gal. 2:20), and all things or creation (Col. 1:20). By the death of the Lord, all negative things have come to an end, and their end is displayed openly.

We should take the Lord's supper unto the remembrance of Him by declaring His redeeming death continually until He comes back to set up God's kingdom (Matt. 26:29). In His first coming, the Lord accomplished His death to carry out an all-inclusive redemption for the producing of the church. After His death, He went away to receive the kingdom, and will come again with the kingdom (Dan. 7:13-14; Luke 19:12). The period between His first and second comings is the church age. The church, thus, bridges the gap between the Lord's two comings and connects His death in the past with God's kingdom in the future. Hence, to declare the Lord's death until He comes implies the declaring of the existence of the church for the bringing in of the kingdom.

When we eat the Lord's supper with a view of continually remembering Him in His first and second comings, and in a spirit and atmosphere of hoping and waiting for His return, that supper becomes a real satisfaction to Him in relation to the kingdom, God's administration.

Attending the Lord's Table to Fellowship with the Saints

The second aspect of the bread-breaking meeting is attending the Lord's table. It conveys a relationship between *us and the saints* and can be called the *horizontal aspect* of the bread-breaking meeting. While eating the Lord's supper is for us to remember the Lord, attending the Lord's table is for all the members of the Body of Christ to fellowship in the Lord (1 Cor. 10:16-17) in His accomplishments for us, the stress of which is on the fellowship among the saints. Its emphasis is not just the individual drinking of the blood of Christ but a joint participation in His blood. This joint participation is the fellowship.

Our eating and partaking of *one bread* and drinking and sharing of *one cup* imply *mutual fellowship*. Such fellowship becomes the fellowship of the blood of Christ and the fellowship of the Body of Christ. When we eat and drink together, sharing in the Lord's bread and the Lord's cup, we "partake of the table of the Lord" (1 Cor. 10:21). That is why we must partake of the Lord's table together with other saints; otherwise, we would only have the vertical aspect of the bread-breaking meeting.

At this table, we share in the Lord's body and the Lord's blood with all the saints and *have fellowship with one another*. Fellowship refers to the believers' communion in the joint participation in the blood and body of Christ. This fellowship makes us, the participants in the Lord's blood and body, one with the Lord and one with one another. We, the participants, make ourselves identified with the Lord as well with the believers in the fellowship of His blood and body.

The bread and the cup are the constituents of the Lord's supper, which is a table, a feast, set up by Him so that His believers may remember Him by enjoying Him as such a feast. Hence, to remember the Lord is not to lock oneself alone inside a room and think of Him, but it is to attend the Lord's table and feast on the Lord together with the saints.

In the aspect of eating the Lord's supper, the bread refers to the Lord's *physical, individual body*, which He gave for us on the cross, whereas in the aspect of attending the Lord's table, the bread points to the Lord's *corporate Body* – the church, which is constituted with all the regenerated believers brought forth through His resurrection from the dead. We are the bread, and this bread is the church. The former is physical and was put to death and given for us; the latter is mystical and is constituted with all the saints in the Lord's resurrection. Therefore, each time that we break the bread, on the one hand, we remember the Lord and enjoy Him by receiving the body which He gave for us on the cross; on the other hand, we enjoy the mystical Body which He produced through His resurrection from the dead, fellowshiping with all the saints in this mystical Body and testifying of the oneness of this mystical Body. There is not only a relationship between us and the Lord, but a relationship between us and all the saints.

The bread, which we share and partake of together and which symbolizes the individual body of Christ, comes into us to make us all *one Bread*, signifying the one corporate,

mystical Body of Christ (1 Cor. 10:17). The bread signifies the one Body of Christ. Although we are many, yet we are one Body because we all partake of the one bread. Our joint partaking of the one bread makes us all one. This indicates that our partaking together of Christ makes us all His one Body. The very Christ of whom we all partake constitutes us His one Body. Hence, each time we come to the Lord's table to break the bread, we testify of the oneness of this mystical Body, that is, the universal church. Our participation in the Lord's table during the bread-breaking meeting is a testimony of this unique fellowship of His unique Body, without any division either in practice or in spirit.

The Setting for the Bread-Breaking Meeting

The early believers continued steadfastly in the breaking of bread that they did it on a daily basis (Acts 2:46). At the time, because they were fervent toward the Lord and loved Him deeply, they spontaneously broke bread every day. Later on, they gradually acquired the habit of doing it once a week on the first day (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2). The first day of the week, which is the Lord's Day, is the day of the Lord's resurrection and the beginning of a new week, signifying that the old things are passed away and a new life has begun. Furthermore, although we display the Lord's death when we break bread, we are actually remembering Him in resurrection. Therefore, it is most appropriate to break bread to remember the Lord on this day. This is affirmed by the ministry speaking:

“The early church broke bread from house to house **every day**. They probably remembered the Lord before every meal. At that time the believers were very zealous for the Lord. Our practice of having the bread-breaking meetings on the **Lord's Day** is also according to the Bible. Even though Acts 2:46 speaks of the saints breaking bread every day in their homes, 20:7 shows that **the saints came together to break the bread on the first day of the week**. It gradually became a pattern in the early church life to hold the bread-breaking meeting on the **first day of the week**.” (*W. Lee, Three Crucial Matters for the Increase and Building Up of the Church: Begetting, Nourishing, and Teaching, pp. 48-49, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

“The New Testament shows us that the early Christians met on the **Lord's Day**. In Acts 20 Paul arrived at Troas and stayed there for seven days. On the **Lord's Day**, the saints gathered together to **break bread** in remembrance of the Lord (v. 7). This indicates that at that time the Christians met on the **Lord's Day**.” (*W. Lee, The Present Advance of the Lord's Recovery, Chapter 3, Section 4, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

“If there are ten to twenty saints in a home meeting, we may sometimes bring them to attend the **Lord's table meeting** at the meeting hall on the **Lord's Day morning**. I believe this will be a great encouragement to them.... As long as the saints in the district fellowship and pray according to the real situation and need, the thirty to sixty people can meet together. After three to four weeks we can bring these brothers and sisters to the meeting hall to attend the **Lord's table meeting** on the **Lord's Day**.” (*W. Lee, Bearing Remaining Fruit, Vol. 1, Chapter 13, Section 3, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

As regards the venue of bread-breaking meeting, the early believers in Jerusalem broke bread from house to house (Acts 2:46):

“At Pentecost over three thousand people were saved. Day by day, they continued steadfastly with one accord in the temple and broke bread from house to house (Acts 2:46). Due to their great number, the believers met regularly from house to house. They met in the temple only when they all needed to gather together. Other than these times, the brothers and sisters assembled in different homes.” (*W. Nee, The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, (Set 3) Vol. 62: Matured Leadings in the Lord's Recovery (2), Chapter 10, Section 1, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

The early believers also came together in one place for the bread-breaking meeting (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:20):

“The disciples had meetings in the homes of the people who believed in the Lord; they had home meetings. We believe that later some homes joined together to have a small group meeting and that the group meetings joined together to form a **district meeting**. Every city had home meetings, small group meetings, and **district meetings**. The people who were saved loved the Lord, and they gave everything that they had for Him. They were the Lord's testimony. Furthermore, Acts shows us another meeting. In Acts 20:7 the whole church met together to break bread and to hear a word from the apostle Paul. Instead of going from house to house to speak a word of light, revelation, and vision, the apostle spoke in this gathering. This meeting is what we call a big meeting.” (*W. Lee, Three Crucial Matters for the Increase and Building Up of the Church: Begetting, Nourishing, and Teaching, p. 152, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

“According to this word, the early believers also came together in one place to eat the Lord's supper. This must have occurred in a larger place. There is the sweet and intimate flavor of a small meeting when we gather to break bread in the homes. There is also the rich and uplifted atmosphere of a large meeting when we gather together in one place. The believers may **break bread in separate homes** or **in one place**, and this should be decided on by the church according to the need and the situation.” (*W. Lee, Life Lessons, Vol. 2, Chapter 17, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

“According to our present situation, we cannot have the bread-breaking meeting in every home even though the saints in the initial church life broke bread from house to house (Acts 2:46)... Even though Acts 2:46 speaks of the saints breaking bread every day in their homes, 20:7 shows that the saints came together to break the bread on the first day of the week.” (*W. Lee, Three Crucial Matters for the Increase and Building Up of the Church: Begetting, Nourishing, and Teaching, pp. 48-49, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

However, despite the clear record of the Scriptures and the mature leadings of Brother Lee concerning the bread-breaking meeting according to the Word and our present situation as cited above, a sister has propounded that the descriptive practice of house-to-house Lord's table meeting seen in Acts 2:46 is *the* optimum means of hastening the Lord's return and insisted that the churches promote and practice it or be censured. To be sure, the practice of house-to-house Lord's table meeting in the Acts has its benefits. However, as we shall see, it is neither a truth nor a prescriptive practice that all the saints

and churches must insist upon. The sister's assertions were based on her allegations that house-to-house Lord's table meeting was practiced and taught by the Lord Jesus, the early believers, Brother Nee and Brother Lee. Let us look into the Word and historical facts to examine one by one the truthfulness and verity of her claims.

The Example of the Lord Jesus on Bread-Breaking

First, the sister claimed that the Lord practiced the Lord's table meeting of two or three believers by His "breaking bread" with the two disciples on their way to Emmaus in Luke 24:13-35. But, as illustrated by our article "*Was Jesus' Breaking of Bread with the Two Disciples Going to Emmaus a Lord's Table Meeting?*", brothers Nee and Lee quoted the Lord's breaking of bread with the two disciples in numerous occasions and applied them to many spiritual lessons but *never* to the Lord's table meeting. Similarly, notable Bible scholars also did not interpret the Lord's breaking of bread with the two disciples going to Emmaus as a Lord's table meeting. Instead, they acknowledged that as a mere repast. As pointed out in our article "*What were the Practices of the Early Church Life in Acts 2?*", the Greek word for "breaking of bread" in Luke 24:30 and 35, as in Acts 2:46; 20:11, and 27:35, is *klontes arton* which generally refers to common meals that the believers partook of at home, and *not* the breaking of bread of the Lord's table meeting. Hence, it is beyond any doubt that the sister is either inaccurate or altogether erroneous in citing the Lord Jesus as the first example of house-to-house Lord's table meeting composed of a small number of believers.

Second, in instituting the first Lord's table meeting and demonstrating to the disciples the way to do it, the Lord Jesus did not practice "house-to-house Lord's table meeting"; He did not go to the disciples separately from house to house to break bread with them. Rather, He called them all *together in one place* to display the oneness that was signified by the bread and the fellowship that was carried out through the breaking and the partaking of the bread by the members of the one Body.

Third, had the Lord preferred to use the house of the disciples, He could have easily done so by requesting any of the disciples to conveniently "open" his house just for the Lord's table meeting. Instead, He asked Peter and John to "borrow" a furnished upper room in a certain one's house (Matt. 26:18-19; Luke 22:8-13) for its use. This arrangement of the Lord is similar to today's district Lord's table meeting that brothers Nee and Lee had led the churches to practice rather than the house-to-house Lord's table meeting that the sister is advocating today.

Applying the principle of first mention in the Bible, the first Lord's table meeting instituted by the Lord was (1) not held with a small number of two or three disciples only, (2) not going from house to house but a gathering of a moderate number of saints together, and (3) not conveniently a Lord's table meeting for household members only and a few serving ones. Noticeably, all these precedents set by the Lord Himself exude stark contrast to the kind of house-to-house Lord's table meeting that the sister is promoting today. The charge to His disciples was to do it unto His remembrance without any bearing or emphasis on the venue.

The Example of the Early Believers on Bread-Breaking

The sister contended that house to house Lord's table meeting should be practiced in the church life today simply because it is an example shown to us in Acts 2:46. But, as illustrated in our article "*What were the Practices of the Early Church Life in Acts 2?*", the practice of daily house-to-house Lord's table meeting we gleaned from the seminal church life in Acts was not meant for us to follow legalistically without consideration, due to the following reasons:

First, the daily house-to-house Lord's table meeting we see in Acts 2:46 portrays the condition of the church *in Jerusalem* during the earliest church life immediately after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost that issued in the producing of the church, but it had not become a blueprint for other churches in succeeding days to follow altogether. In fact, apart from Acts 2:46, we do not see other biblical records of other churches doing such a practice. Conversely, instead of partaking of the Lord's table every day like in the earliest church life depicted in Acts 2:46, not long thereafter the believers in Paul's time partook of it once a week – on the Lord's Day, the first day of the week which is the day of resurrection (1 Cor. 11:20). Also, after chapter 2, the house-to-house breaking of bread was not mentioned again in Acts or in any of the Epistles. Instead, we see that the early believers came together in one place for the bread-breaking meeting (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:20). Today, should we insist on practicing the items which even the churches in the later part of Acts and the Epistles have modified and moved on from?

Second, in the early days, the church in Jerusalem had more than ten or twenty thousand members in a short period of time (Acts 21:20 fn1). Under God's sovereignty and the Spirit's leading, the believers met mostly from house to house or, simply, at home. Aside from preaching and teaching which were done in the temple (Acts 2:42, 46; 5:42), all other church activities were done in the believers' homes. They opened their homes to invite their neighbors, friends, and relatives to preach the gospel to them; they opened their homes for home meetings to cherish and nourish the new believers; they opened their homes for "Bible-study" and to prophesy the teaching and fellowship they heard from the apostles; they opened their homes for prayer. In the same manner, they opened their homes for bread-breaking. Hence, breaking bread at home was very logical for them to do. Where else would the believers break bread as the believers' house is the believers' predominant meeting place?

Third, in the only biblically recorded practice of house-to-house Lord's table meeting in Acts 2, three things were involved: every day (time), house to house (venue), and breaking of bread (food). According to Acts 2:46, the Lord's table meeting was held every day, from house to house, and preceded by a meal. These three items describe the house-to-house Lord's table meeting in Acts 2:46. To merely copy the "house-to-house" aspect of the Lord's table meeting in Acts 2:46, as the sister did, and forsake the other two concomitant aspects of practicing it every day and the partaking of food preceding it makes it partial, selective, and subjective. What can possibly be the basis of keeping the one aspect of the practice while omitting the other two?

Fourth, to say that we must copy the house-to-house Lord's table meeting in Acts 2:46 simply because it is a beneficial contributing factor to the reviving and prevailing condition at the beginning of the church life in Jerusalem is insufficient. As illustrated in our article "*What were the Practices of the Early Church Life in Acts 2?*", there were fifteen practices that the believers steadfastly and faithfully attended to in the early days of church history which are covered by Acts 2:42-47. These portray the state of the

wonderful beginning and prevailing church life in Jerusalem. Each of them carries spiritual principles and lessons behind such a prevailing church life full of revival and blessings. Breaking bread from house to house is just one of them. For the sister to insist on repeating the practices of the early believers at the beginning of the church life as shown to us in Acts 2:42-47 to the letter, should she not also practice the other items such as wonders and signs, meeting every day, having all things in common, and selling possessions and properties to share among all to be faithful to the early believers' example?

The Example and Teaching of Brother Watchman Nee on Bread-Breaking

The sister had cited Brother Watchman Nee as a prominent exponent of the practice of house-to-house Lord's table meeting with a small number of saints, mainly based on his experience of bread-breaking with Leland Wang and his wife in the latter's house in 1922. What the sister did not tell us is that the three of them were the only ones in the Lord's recovery at that time! No wonder there were only three saints in that meeting. [For details of Brother Nee's testimony, please refer to Brother Lee's book *Watchman Nee: A Seer of the Divine Revelation in the Present Age* (pp. 37-40)].

Despite Brother Nee's own testimony of it as an experience he will always remember as long as he lives and even unto eternity, the entire volumes of *The Collected Works of Watchman Nee* never made mention of it again, much less did Brother Nee teach concerning such a practice to be observed by the churches in the Lord's recovery. On the contrary, as regards the venue of bread-breaking meeting, he consistently taught that it should be held in the districts, *not* from house to house:

“In principle, the best way to have the bread-breaking meeting is by districts. The districts should come together once a month at the most.... In order to meet by districts, we have to look for suitable places. Once we find a suitable place, we can rent it. The church can rent the living room for meeting, while the brothers and sisters can rent the rooms for boarding. We can have prayer meetings, bread-breaking meetings, young people's edification meetings, and gospel meetings.” (*W. Nee, The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, (Set 3) Vol. 61: Matured Leadings in the Lord's Recovery (1), Chapter 4, Section 1, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

“The bread-breaking meeting should be conducted in the districts. The more we divide, the easier it will be to grow, and the more opportunity there will be for others to serve. If we do not subdivide our meeting into districts, the priesthood will be confined to just a few people.” (*W. Nee, The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, (Set 3) Vol. 61: Matured Leadings in the Lord's Recovery (1), Chapter 4, Section 3, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

“The gospel preaching meeting as well as the prayer meeting and the new believers' meeting may be carried out in the different districts. If we want to do so, even the edification meeting can be carried out by separate districts. If we wish to combine some meetings together, I think that the edification meeting would be a good one to combine and perhaps the gospel preaching meeting as well. If there are brothers who are workers in this region and if they want to have some message meetings for the brothers and sisters, it is obvious

that combining them is more convenient. All the other meetings may be held separately—the prayer meeting, the **bread-breaking meeting**, and the new believers' meeting. All these may be held in the **districts**.” (W. Nee, *Church Affairs, Chapter 7, Section 1, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

“There will be three **district meetings** a week: the **table meeting on the Lord's Day** evening, the Tuesday night prayer meeting, and the Friday night meeting for new believers. These will be held in the fifteen different **districts**.” (W. Nee, *The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, (Set 3) Vol. 55: The Ministries & The Open Door, Chapter 2, Section 2, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

“The responsible brothers have to make proper arrangements in the **districts** for the follow-up work of all the ones received into our **bread-breaking meeting**. You cannot let one name slip away. If a brother or sister has been assigned to your **district**, you have to exercise care over him or her in a proper way.” (W. Nee, *The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, (Set 3) Vol. 62: Matured Leadings in the Lord's Recovery (2), Chapter 4, Section 2, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

Brother Nee also exhorted the believers to stay behind after the bread-breaking meeting and not to return to their respective homes immediately, indicating that the bread-breaking meetings were not held in their individual homes but in district meetings at certain ones' homes:

“The saints should not return home right after the meetings. They should stay behind and fellowship with the other brothers and sisters, or spend twenty to thirty minutes visiting other saints. The time for the **bread-breaking meeting** should not be too long; it should be at most one hour. As soon as we bring the saints' spirit to a high peak, we should briskly move on to the worship of the Father. After the **bread-breaking meeting**, we can leave half an hour for fellowship.” (W. Nee, *The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, (Set 3) Vol. 62: Matured Leadings in the Lord's Recovery (2), Chapter 10, Section 3, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

The district meetings in Brother Nee's time were held in the believers' homes:

“The **bread-breaking meeting** will be conducted in five **districts**; they will meet in five **homes**. Every **district** will be supervised by some responsible brothers.” (W. Nee, *The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, (Set 3) Vol. 61: Matured Leadings in the Lord's Recovery (1), Chapter 21, Section 4, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

“The responsible brothers in a **district** should only bear responsibility for spiritual matters.... In the meetings the sisters cannot teach, but they can call hymns and testify. In the prayer meetings and **bread-breaking meetings**, the sisters should pray in the middle of the meeting. They should not initiate or conclude the meetings with their prayers. They should also avoid calling hymns as much as possible, unless they are clear they have the prompting of the Spirit.... All the responsible ones in all the '**homes**' (i.e.,

districts) should meet once a week.... The sixth **'home'** has too few saints because the brothers and sisters there were somewhat separated from the church in the past. In the future we need many gospel meetings in this **district**. The brothers and sisters must also bring new ones to the meetings.... The districts in Chan's home and Shen's home should take care of the new immigrants as soon as possible. They should arrange visits to these new arrivals within the shortest possible time.” (W. Nee, *The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, (Set 3) Vol. 62: Matured Leadings in the Lord's Recovery (2), Chapter 13, Section 4, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

“The main responsibility of the elders is to oversee. They should all be headed up by Brother Witness. Together they should oversee the entire church in Hong Kong. The leadership in the various **districts** is: Chu Zhi-yuen for the Jordan Road meeting hall, Hsu Jin-ching for Hsu's home, Cheng Him-yuen for Bao's home, Chan Shi-re for Chan's home, and K. H. Weigh for Shen's home.” (W. Nee, *The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, (Set 3) Vol. 62: Matured Leadings in the Lord's Recovery (2), Chapter 10, Section 1, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

During the time of Brother Nee, sometimes the term “homes” (“Jia” in Chinese) was used when referring to “districts”:

“A few days ago we announced that the **bread-breaking meeting** would be conducted in five **districts** or **'homes'** [Translator's Note: **home** is another term for **'district'** in the usage at that time.] Now we want to increase that to six **districts**.” (W. Nee, *The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, (Set 3) Vol. 62: Matured Leadings in the Lord's Recovery (2), Chapter 10, Section 1, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

“Witness Lee: I have a word of fellowship for all the **'home'** responsible ones. Concerning the practical affairs in the **districts**, such as the preparation for the meeting facilities, the arrangements before and after the meetings, the supply of drinks, etc., we should not overburden the hosts of the **homes where the meetings are held**. Instead, we should share the work by assigning different brothers and sisters to do the various jobs.... From today forward, the works in the **'homes'** are officially passed on to the various **districts**. We have to write down everything we need to do and should not allow anything to slip through our fingers.” (W. Nee, *The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, (Set 3) Vol. 62: Matured Leadings in the Lord's Recovery (2), Chapter 10, Section 1, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

The Testimony and Teaching of Brother Witness Lee on Bread-Breaking

During the experimental stage of the practice of the new way, in his fellowship to the full-time trainees in Taipei from January to May of 1987, Brother Lee suggested that Lord's table meetings may be set up in the homes of the newly saved ones, but it was by no means meant to be practiced without careful consideration and fellowship:

“Take the **bread-breaking meeting** for instance. We do not have a set rule about this meeting. For example, after leading the home meeting in a

certain home for three to five times, or even ten to twenty times, we should set up a **Lord's table meeting** for them. We can compare this to studying; after we read a few lessons, we need to give them an advanced curriculum. If we do not first observe their situation, we should not make a decision concerning the **Lord's table meeting**. We must first study their condition, leading them in meeting after meeting. We should lead them to the point where we can sense that the inner condition of the few saved ones in this home is stable before the Lord. Furthermore, we must sense that there is nothing pertaining to idols in the furnishing and environment of this home and nothing that will cause damage to the Lord's testimony. When the condition of the home is ready, we can lead them to start **breaking bread**." (*W. Lee, Bearing Remaining Fruit, Vol. 1, Chapter 13, Section 3, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

Nevertheless, immediately after saying this, Brother Lee encouraged the full-time trainees to bring the new ones meeting in homes to break bread together in order to know the church:

"After this home has started to break the bread, it may reach the point where there is a need to bring in another two or three homes to **break bread together**. When this is appropriate depends on the condition of the home and our inner feeling.... The last thing, which is also the most important thing, is that we should not keep people only in the home meetings and not let them contact the big meetings. This does not work. To do something in particular may not be necessary at the beginning, but gradually we have to bring them into the knowledge of the church. There are several ways to do this, so we need to be flexible.... If there are ten to twenty saints in a home meeting, we may sometimes bring them to attend the **Lord's table meeting at the meeting hall on the Lord's Day morning**. I believe this will be a great encouragement to them. Both the newly saved ones and those who have been saved for a long time will blend together in the meeting and be mutually encouraged. Still, we need to bear in mind that this is not a set regulation but is something entirely organic and flexible. This requires us to observe the situation and contact, fellowship with, and pray with the brothers in the **districts** or the **meeting halls**.... As long as the saints in the **district** fellowship and pray according to the real situation and need, the thirty to sixty people can meet together. After three to four weeks we can bring these brothers and sisters to the meeting hall to attend the **Lord's table meeting on the Lord's Day**." (*W. Lee, Bearing Remaining Fruit, Vol. 1, Chapter 13, Section 3, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

Subsequently, in his messages given to the saints who were involved in the spread of the gospel in Taiwan from 1987 to 1989, Brother Lee concluded and taught assertively that the bread-breaking meeting is best held in the districts. Ironically, the first three quotes below were taken from the very pages of the book the dissenting sister quoted a lot from, but she simply chose to ignore them and misrepresent Brother Lee's view and leading:

"It is best for the **bread-breaking meetings** to be held in the **districts**. According to our present situation, we **cannot** have the bread-breaking meeting in every home even though the saints in the initial church life broke bread from house to house (Acts 2:46). The early church broke bread from house to house every day. They probably remembered the Lord before

every meal. At that time the believers were very zealous for the Lord. Our practice of having the bread-breaking meetings on the Lord's day is also according to the Bible. Even though Acts 2:46 speaks of the saints breaking bread every day in their homes, 20:7 shows that the saints came together to **break the bread** on the first day of the week. It gradually became a pattern in the early church life to hold the bread-breaking meeting on the first day of the week." (W. Lee, *Three Crucial Matters for the Increase and Building Up of the Church: Begetting, Nourishing, and Teaching*, pp. 48-49, LSM) [Emphasis Added]

"The fourth step in the practice of the **God-ordained way** is to function in the **district meetings**. We must gradually lead the new believers from the group meetings into the **district meetings** and help them enter into the church life. The content of the **district meetings** is rich because we **break bread** for the remembrance of the Lord, and we study the truth. The mutual fellowship and enjoyment allows every person the opportunity to function, to speak for the Lord, and to build up others. Hence, we should lead the new ones to speak for the Lord and speak forth the Lord in the **district meetings**...." (W. Lee, *Three Crucial Matters for the Increase and Building Up of the Church: Begetting, Nourishing, and Teaching*, pp. 205-206, LSM) [Emphasis Added]

"Concerning the regular weekly meetings, we can make the following arrangements. On the **Lord's Day morning** we will have **district meetings** in which we **break bread** to remember the Lord, study the truth, and fellowship and testify." (W. Lee, *Three Crucial Matters for the Increase and Building Up of the Church: Begetting, Nourishing, and Teaching*, p. 208, LSM) [Emphasis Added]

"In the **district meetings**, they first have the **Lord's table**, and then they prophesy for about sixty minutes. Within sixty minutes twenty persons can speak with a maximum time of three minutes per person. About one-third of the attendants prophesy in the **district meetings** without any prior arrangement or program." (W. Lee, *The Advance of the Lord's Recovery Today, Chapter 7, Section 3, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

"Sometimes in larger churches, the church meetings are held in **district** groups of around fifty saints so that there may be more opportunity for the saints to function. The **Lord's table meeting**, the prophesying meeting, and the prayer meeting are sometimes held in **districts**." (W. Lee, *Our Meetings, Chapter 1, Section 1, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

"In the past we were veiled so that we saw only the meetings in the meeting hall. If the number of people increased, we would set up a **district meeting** for the sake of convenience to accommodate everyone. We had only this view with no concept that it is even better for the saints to meet **in their homes**.... Because of this need, in every **Lord's table meeting**, and even before or after the prayer meeting, we should minister a short message that is full of life and light (which is the truth). This will enable those in the meeting to

be perfected in every way.” (W. Lee, *Bearing Remaining Fruit*, Vol. 2, Chapter 5, Section 3, LSM) [Emphasis Added]

Brother Lee encouraged the serving ones to bring the new ones they were shepherding in their home meetings to attend the bread-breaking meeting at the meeting halls:

“We need to bring a person to the **bread-breaking meeting**, preferably at the **meeting hall** on the first Lord’s Day following his baptism. If in the long run he cannot go to the meeting hall that often, then we should find a place for him to break bread according to his need.” (W. Lee, *Vessels Useful to the Lord*, Chapter 2, Section 6, LSM) [Emphasis Added]

“In addition, we should pay attention and observe to see whether we should combine a few neighboring homes to teach them how to have a small group meeting.... If they have only one meeting at first, we can help them to add another one. However, we should not add too many at first. To meet twice a week is sufficient, once on the Lord’s Day and another time during the week. This depends on how we do it. Not only so, but we must also lead them to build up a relationship with the meeting in the meeting hall. According to the **district** they are in, we should take them to the **meeting hall** to attend the **Lord’s table meeting**. All of this depends upon our effort. If we put in the effort, there will certainly be the result.” (W. Lee, *Bearing Remaining Fruit*, Vol. 2, Chapter 3, Section 3, LSM) [Emphasis Added]

“If there are ten to twenty saints in a home meeting, we may sometimes bring them to attend the **Lord’s table meeting** at the **meeting hall** on the Lord’s Day morning. I believe this will be a great encouragement to them.... As long as the saints in the district fellowship and pray according to the real situation and need, the thirty to sixty people can meet together. After three to four weeks we can bring these brothers and sisters to the **meeting hall** to attend the **Lord’s table meeting** on the Lord’s Day.” (W. Lee, *Bearing Remaining Fruit*, Vol. 1, Chapter 13, Section 3, LSM) [Emphasis Added]

On March 26, 1989, Brother Lee gave a message in Quezon City, Philippines regarding bringing the newly saved ones on the Lord’s Day to the district meeting; he did not prescribe the practice of “house-to-house Lord’s table meeting” on the Lord’s Day for the churches in the Philippines or any other churches for that matter:

“The preaching of the gospel, the home meetings, and the group meetings are all conducted during the week. On the **Lord’s Day**, we should bring the new ones to the **district meetings**. A church can be divided into a few **districts**. The best number for the district meeting is around fifty. When we gain some new ones through the gospel, we should nourish and establish them in the home meetings. We should also care for them and perfect them in the group meetings. In this way, when they come to the church meetings, every one of them will be able to prophesy.” (W. Lee, *The Riches and Fullness of Christ and the Advanced Recovery of the Lord Today*, Chapter 7, Section 2, LSM) [Emphasis Added]

In practicing the God-ordained way of meeting on the Lord's Day, Brother Lee suggested that the bread-breaking meeting in the districts be followed by mutual ministering of the word of God through prophesying:

“In the church in Taipei, the saints call the larger meetings of the church ‘**district meetings.**’ The saints meet according to the **district** in which they live geographically. For the sake of convenience, most of these **district meetings** are in the **halls.** Some of the **districts** meet in a **small rented place.** The saints have home meetings and group meetings during the week, but on the Lord's Day morning, they come together to do two things: to remember the Lord, to have the **Lord's table,** for at most one hour and to have a **prophesying meeting.** After the **Lord's table,** the saints **prophesy one by one.** They all function to minister Christ to each other and they receive one another's ministry on Christ as their supply. In this way, they all get nourished and built up.” (*W. Lee, The Present Advance of the Lord's Recovery, Chapter 3, Section 4, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

“In these meetings the saints practice prophesying one by one. They limit the time of each one's sharing to not more than three minutes. They all know this principle of three minutes and practice to keep it. In the **district meetings,** they first have the **Lord's table,** and then they **prophesy** for about sixty minutes. Within sixty minutes twenty persons can speak with a maximum time of three minutes per person. About one-third of the attendants prophesy in the **district meetings** without any prior arrangement or program. They all come together and follow the Spirit to **prophesy.**” (*W. Lee, The Advance of the Lord's Recovery Today, Chapter 7, Section 3*) [Emphasis Added]

“Because of this need, in every **Lord's table meeting,** and even before or after the prayer meeting, we should minister a **short message** that is full of life and light (which is the truth). This will enable those in the meeting to be perfected in every way.” (*W. Lee, Bearing Remaining Fruit, Vol. 2, Chapter 5, Section 3, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

Brother Lee likewise suggested that the whole church gather together every so often to break bread together in the meeting halls:

“The **first Lord's Day of every month,** all the saints in a particular hall should gather together for the Lord's table meeting. For the other Lord's Days they can meet in **districts.** The same principle applies to the prayer meetings.” (*W. Lee, Crucial Words of Leading in the Lord's Recovery, Book 1: The Vision and Definite Steps for the Practice of the New Way, Chapter 17, Section 3, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

“Our church life is knocking on doors to preach the gospel, leading people to be baptized, having home meetings to nourish the new ones, and perfecting them. Once a week we break bread together in the meeting halls, and every three or four weeks we have a big meeting of the church for blending.” (*W. Lee, Three Crucial Matters for the Increase and Building Up of*

the Church: Begetting, Nourishing, and Teaching, p. 105, LSM) [Emphasis Added]

The Ideal Number of Saints in the Lord's Table Meeting in a District

According to both brothers Nee and Lee, the ideal number of saints in a district meeting during the Lord's Day's bread-breaking meeting is in the vicinity of fifty:

"A district meeting can have fifty people or a hundred people.... There can be fifty to a district or a hundred to a district. Such meetings are very convenient because the number is small, and it is easy to care for and visit everyone. It affords more opportunities for everyone to function in the meetings." (*W. Nee, The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, (Set 3) Vol. 62: Matured Leadings in the Lord's Recovery (2), Chapter 10, Section 1, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

"Based upon this principle, I think that the responsible brothers in all the localities should learn to make arrangements to have the people divided into **districts** whenever their number becomes large. The number could be fifty, one hundred, or a little more than one hundred. In any case we should begin to have **district meetings** when those meetings reach these two numbers. This kind of meeting is most convenient because it is easy to take care of the saints and visit them when the number is small. There is also more opportunity for the saints to function in the meeting when the number is small. Numbers between fifty and one hundred are very good for meeting." (*W. Nee, Church Affairs, Chapter 7, Section 1, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

"In the past we already knew that to keep the saved ones, we had to bring them into the small groups. Now in taking the new way, after three years of study, we are more clear concerning this point. From now on, our practice will consist of the home meetings on the small scale, and the district meetings on the large scale.... For the **district meeting**, however, we have made the decision that the basic number is fifty. Once the number exceeds eighty, it should be divided into **two districts**. Meanwhile, between the homes and the district must be the groups. Without the groups, there will not be any link, nor any means to uphold the brothers and sisters.... According to our experience, among the three kinds of meetings—the home meetings, the group meetings, and the **district meetings**—the most difficult one to have is the group meeting. The district meeting has at least thirty to forty people; it is not that difficult to take care of." (*W. Lee, Words of Training for the New Way, Vol. 2, Chapter 7, Section 2, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

"The church in Taipei has been exercised to take the **biblical way, God's ordained way.** They have about five thousand saints meeting every Lord's Day morning. They discovered that if all five thousand came together in a big hall, eventually the number of those attending the meeting would be reduced. Therefore, they divided these five thousand into over one hundred thirty sections. Each section has about forty to fifty saints. They call these sections '**district meetings.**'" (*W. Lee, The Advance of the Lord's Recovery Today, Chapter 7, Section 3, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

“From now on in Taipei our meetings should comprise three levels, the most basic level being the home meeting, the level above being the small group meeting, and the level at the top being the **district meeting**. The unit of a home meeting should be a household. A small group meeting should have from seven or eight people to a little over ten but not more than that. A **district meeting** should have fifty people in principle, although a meeting of forty people would also be acceptable. However, if a **district meeting** has about seventy to eighty people, it should be divided into two **district meetings**. In this way, our function will be manifested, and at the same time our caring and shepherding will be more thorough. For example, in a **district** of fifty people there should be at least ten who take the lead, who are responsible, and who take care of others.” (W. Lee, *Being Up-to-date for the Rebuilding of the Temple, Chapter 12, Section 3, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

“Our meetings should include home meetings, small group meetings, and **district meetings**.... Furthermore, we will have to arrange, according to the actual situation, environment, and time, to have a more important meeting on the **Lord’s Day** as our **district meeting**. We should take fifty people as the standard number of people for this meeting. If there are too many people, then we should divide into **two districts**. In this way everyone will be able to function, and at the same time, the care will also be more thorough.” (W. Lee, *Being Up-to-date for the Rebuilding of the Temple, Chapter 12, Section 5, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

The Elders Being Responsible for Meeting Arrangements

The sister also made much of and misused Brother Lee’s words that there are no elders in the bread-breaking meeting, misapplying it to imply that there is no elders’ management of the Lord’s table meeting. Interestingly, the very excerpt which the sister cited from Brother Lee to bolster her claims saying that the elders do not necessarily have to sit in the front row shows, more than anything else, that the setting of the Lord’s table meeting Brother Lee was referring to there was *not* a “house-to-house Lord’s table meeting” but a much bigger one, because there are rows of attendees. While all are mere brothers in the bread-breaking meeting when it comes to functioning like choosing of hymns, singing, praising, and passing of the bread and the cup, both brothers Nee and Lee also taught that it is the elders – the shepherds and overseers of the church – who decide the schedule of the church meetings and other administrative matters related to the meetings, which of course includes the arrangements for the bread-breaking meeting:

“The responsible brothers have to make proper arrangements in the districts for the follow-up work of all the ones received into our **bread-breaking meeting**. You cannot let one name slip away. If a brother or sister has been assigned to your **district**, you have to exercise care over him or her in a proper way.” (W. Nee, *The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, (Set 3) Vol. 62: Matured Leadings in the Lord’s Recovery (2), Chapter 4, Section 2, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

“Even if a local church uses a large cup, but a **district** wants to use small cups, the decision still depends on the elders. It is an administrative matter. There is no need for discussions related to the size of the cup for the **table**

meeting and what to use for the baptistery apart from the **elders**; such discussions can only cause chaos and lawlessness. This indicates a lack of knowing **authority**. In other words, there is no building in the matter of authority.” (W. Lee, *The Administration of the Church and the Ministry of the Word, Chapter 9, Section 5, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

“The **elders** should manage the matters related to the **church meetings** and preaching.... We must wait until the **responsible brothers announce in the meeting that certain people will have meetings in their homes before we can all go.** Otherwise, these kinds of meetings in the homes should not be held. It does not mean that we have no personal liberty. But we should submit to **God's authority** and control and enjoy the liberty of the limitations of the meetings. Our familiarity with certain persons often brings in leaven through conversations with them, and a sect is formed which endangers the whole lump. Therefore, the brothers have to pay attention to this matter, **learn to submit to authority, and not do things that the elders have not endorsed.**” (W. Nee, *The Assembly Life, Chapter 1, Section 3, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

“The **elders** make decisions concerning the **Lord's Day meeting** and write letters of recommendation. Whether the Lord's Day meeting should be held in the morning or in the afternoon is a matter to be **decided by the elders**.... Sometimes, you may write a letter recommending a person to the brothers in another locality. However, only letters written by the elders can represent the church. This shows once again that the **elders represent the whole church.** They are responsible for overseeing the church and keeping the church from trouble. Therefore, the elders have to learn to serve properly and exercise their authority properly, while the brothers have to learn to **submit.**” (W. Nee, *The Assembly Life, Chapter 1, Section 3, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

“The church needs the **elders**, not to control the saints nor to do everything for them, but to fulfill their own duty. The **elders** should decide the **time of the meetings**, and they should represent the church in certain matters.” (W. Lee, *All Ages for the Lord's Testimony, Chapter 2, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

“According to this word [Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:20], the early believers also came together in one place to eat the Lord's supper. This must have occurred in a larger place.... The believers may **break bread** in separate homes or in one place, and this should be decided on by **the church** according to the need and the situation.” (W. Lee, *Life Lessons, Vol. 2, Chapter 17, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

“We even need some ruling in deciding the **times of the meetings**.... Thus, the **elders** need to go to the Lord in prayer, fellowship with the saints, and use their spiritual nose to discern the feeling of the saints so that they can determine what **time** is best for the meetings. Then the **elders** should make a **decision.** This is not control; it is ruling.... **Decisions** such as these are made by the **elders** because the **government** is in their hands.” (W. Lee, *Life-study of Matthew, Message 55, Section 2, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

“You may think it is so easy to be an **elder**; you think you only need my consent to be an **elder**, without bearing any responsibility. To be an **elder** is not merely to make a **meeting schedule** and give some announcements at the end of the meeting.” (W. Lee, *Elders' Training, Book 08: The Life-Pulse of the Lord's Present Move, Chapter 4, Section 3, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

“It is not enough for the **elders** merely to decide the **meeting schedule** of the church and come to the meetings in a routine way without any endeavoring.” (W. Lee, *The Way to Practice the Lord's Present Recovery, Chapter 2, Section 4, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

“We need to fellowship concerning a few practical matters. The **responsible brothers** from each meeting hall should meet together to fellowship concerning how to carry out these points [regarding various meetings]. The **elders** can then fellowship with the saints in each meeting hall concerning how to enter into this burden.... We need to coordinate together and work together in one accord.... These matters require that the brothers and sisters in each meeting hall coordinate and work together. We must follow the leading and arrangements of the **elders and the responsible brothers**. (W. Lee, *Three Crucial Matters for the Increase and Building Up of the Church: Begetting, Nourishing, and Teaching, p. 136, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

“The **elders** may be excited about the fellowship in this book and may be eager to practice it, but we should not practice it too fast. We should do everything gradually. We still need to keep the big meeting on the **Lord's Day** to have the **Lord's table** and to have a time to practice the mutual speaking. In the initial stage this meeting may not be so rich.” (W. Lee, *The Present Advance of the Lord's Recovery, Chapter 4, Section 5, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

“In Taipei there are currently a number of **districts** in every hall; hence, we can say that the halls form a kind of boundary. On the one hand, the co-workers should not interfere with the administration of the halls, yet because of the propagation of **districts**, the elders and co-workers should learn to coordinate. A certain hall may start a new **district**, which requires buying or renting a meeting place; this matter is the **responsibility** of the **elders**. Although this matter occurs in the **district**, it is related to the business affairs of the church; hence, it is under the **administration** of the **elders**. However, if there is a co-worker who has the burden to minister to the saints a message of eight to ten minutes, he does not need the elders' permission, because this is something spiritual.” (W. Lee, *Crucial Words of Leading in the Lord's Recovery, Book 2: Leading the Saints to Practice the New Way Ordained by the Lord, Chapter 16, Section 2, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

“The **elders** manage the matters and **meetings** related to the sisters. In the Bible, we see only brothers as elders; we do not see sisters as elders. The place God has assigned for the sisters is to be under someone's ruling; they do not have a place in ruling over others. God does not allow women to manage the church. In the Bible, there are deacons and deaconesses, but there are no female elders. This shows that in managing the affairs of the church, God wants

the man to be the head of the woman. Therefore, the sisters should learn to submit by the grace of God. If there are some among the sisters who can serve others, they can do the work of this service. But if anything needs to be decided, the decisions should be made by those who are responsible as the elders.” (W. Nee, *The Collected Works of Watchman Nee*, vol. 22, pp. 26-27, LSM) [Emphasis Added]

From all the aforementioned teachings of brothers Watchman Nee and Witness Lee based on the Word, it is clear that God has in His wisdom and divine sovereignty ordained for elders and responsible brothers to be responsible for the arrangement and decision on spiritual and other matters such as the details pertaining to the church meetings. It is a blessed portion for the saints to follow their leading and arrangement to keep the oneness and one accord in the Body. To criticize the elders and cast aspersion on their leading, particularly on the matter of the Lord’s table meeting, like what the sister is doing and at the same time prod others to do the same, is both improper and unscriptural. The apostle Paul clearly taught that we must obey the ones leading us (Heb. 13:17). May we be ones who recognize God’s authority and subject ourselves to God’s deputy authority in the church. This way, we will be blessed, and the church will be blessed.

Conclusion

Our Christian life is a meeting life. Meeting is a characteristic of the church. Much of the grace a Christian receives is in the meetings, and much of the work the Lord does is also in the meetings. Of all the Christian meetings, the bread-breaking meeting is the sweetest and the most important. It is significant in many respects, as Brother Lee cited:

“The church, as the pillar and base of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15), meets together to express the Lord corporately in its locality. The meetings of the church perform a special function that no other gatherings of the believers can. The most important meeting of the church is the Lord’s table meeting, or the bread-breaking meeting (1 Cor. 10:14-22; 11:17-34). In this meeting we the believers gather to participate in the fellowship of our Lord’s blood and body for our enjoyment (1 Cor. 10:16-17) and to remember the Lord for His enjoyment (1 Cor. 11:24-25). The bread we partake of signifies not only our Lord’s physical body, which was once broken for us on the cross, but also His mystical Body, of which we are the many members. In partaking of the Lord’s table, we ‘discern the body,’ as the apostle Paul exhorts us to do (1 Cor. 11:29); that is, we examine ourselves concerning the Lord’s Body, asking whether we are divisive individually or whether our meeting is a meeting in division. Here our standing as the church, expressing the oneness of the Body of Christ, is made manifest. We participate in, partake of, and display openly this oneness through our gathering at the Lord’s table.” (W. Lee, *Our Meetings*, Chapter 1, Section 1, LSM)

In the bread-breaking meeting, not only do we come together to remember the Lord and to display His death, our mutual breaking of the bread expresses the oneness which His Body signifies. Therefore, it is predicated on us to partake of the bread and the cup in a proper way, with a proper spirit and a right attitude.

Concerning the proper way of breaking bread, firstly, the Lord Himself called His disciples to come together to institute the first Lord's table meeting to partake of the bread and the cup together. This lays the solid principle for the Lord's table as one that exhibits the oneness and fellowship of the Body. Any other table outside the fellowship of the Body is a table of division which we must not partake of. His emphasis was for the disciples to gather together and corporately partake of the bread and the cup to remember Him and display the oneness of His Body, and not the venue for such a remembrance or display. As a corollary, that the apostles later on broke bread with the early believers from house to house and in other venues instead of turning the Lord's descriptive pattern into a legalistic mandate for the Lord's table to be done only in a borrowed furnished upper room is sufficient proof of this.

Second, the Bible reveals that there was the bread-breaking meeting in a small scale at home and there was also the bread-breaking meeting of the whole church coming together in a larger group. In the book of Acts, the earliest believers in Jerusalem broke bread every day along with their meals from house to house (2:46). However, that was the practice of the saints *in Jerusalem* particularly and specifically during the earliest church life after three thousand and five thousand new believers were baptized within a few days. That the attendant details for this practice are markedly missing indicates that it was not meant to be a blueprint for the other churches at other times to follow altogether. We do not see the same narrative of a similar church life and meeting practices after this record in Acts 2:46.

Third, of the fifteen practices that the earliest believers in Jerusalem experienced in Acts 2:42-47, had the apostles considered the "house-to-house" aspect of the Lord's table meeting as a vital practice for the churches to follow universally, they would have made mention of this in their writings. Instead, Luke emphasized on prayer and ministry of the Word (Acts 6:4) and the one accord that was repeatedly mentioned in Acts, while the other apostles, particularly Paul, reemphasized the importance of continuing steadfastly in the teaching and fellowship of the apostles in the line of God's New Testament economy, and not to teach differently.

Fourth, both brothers Nee and Lee acknowledged that in the Bible, there is the bread-breaking meeting from house to house and also the whole church coming together in a larger meeting. Brother Nee had a personal experience of the Lord's table meeting of three persons at home during his earliest Christian life but never promoted it in his entire ministry. Instead, particularly during the period of his matured leadings in the Lord's recovery, he repeatedly mentioned the bread-breaking meetings that were practiced in the districts; this was clearly the practice of the churches during his time. Brother Lee likewise had a brief experiment which included the Lord's table meeting at the new believers' home during the initial stage of the practice of the new way in Taipei, but later on conclusively and definitively taught that the best venue for bread-breaking meeting is in the *districts*, some of which are held in halls while others are in homes.

Today, a sister has elevated the descriptive practice of house-to-house Lord's table meeting seen *briefly* in Acts 2:46 to an absolute teaching and eccentric practice, promoting it as a major part of the God-ordained way. However, we find this to be *different* from what we have received and learned from brothers Nee and Lee. The blueprint of the God-ordained way they showed us are in the four steps of gospel (for begetting), homes (for nourishing), groupings (for teaching), and districts (for building).

While we see the instances of counting the number of new believers in Acts, we do not see the counting of the number of homes opened for Lord's table meetings such as what the sister emphasizes today. Most importantly, if the primordial motive of opening more homes for bread-breaking meeting is to accommodate believers who are not willing to pay the price of going out to attend the meeting, break bread and blend with other believers, but instead opt for the comfort and convenience of breaking bread in their own home so that they can have more time to rest or focus on their personal affairs on the Lord's Day, that belies the very spirit of the early believers who practiced the daily breaking of bread from house to house out of zealous enthusiasm and fervent love for the Lord and for His church. If we are to repeat the house-to-house Lord's table meeting in Acts 2:46, we must chiefly emulate their intrinsic spirit in practicing it rather than reenact the extrinsic factors in doing it, for, after all, what is the use of one more head count or house count if the heart, which counts the most, could hardly be accounted for?

The sister's peculiar practice has now become a different teaching that threatens the unsuspecting saints and churches. Her insistence of promoting it without restriction has led to the subversion of God's authority in the church with the setting up of a separate administration within the church. It has developed into a dangerous system of error which we shall present in the second part of this series.

March 28, 2010