**Authority of God**

**Why This Example and Not That?**

We learn from Acts 20:7-12 that Christians in Troas met on the first day of the week in a 3rd story room to break bread, Paul preached to them and raised a man from the dead. We give serious consideration to these proceedings because Paul told us to “join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us” (Phil. 3:7). With regard to the Troas example, we need to ask ourselves some important questions. How many of the details are truly part of God’s pattern and which are purely coincidental? Which, if any, were unique to their circumstances, thus not applicable to us today? Did God approve of what they were doing and how they were doing it?

**Approval**

The activities of the Troas church on this occasion provide excellent examples of approved actions because the apostle Paul participated with them in those things and the scripture offers no criticism. Thus partaking of the Lord’s Supper on the first day of the week and proclaiming God’s word are excellent examples to follow.

**Circumstances**

Paul’s example of raising a man from the dead is an excellent example for us to follow when and if similar circumstances ever occur for us today. The simple fact is that those circumstances will never be duplicated in our time, because the age of miracles has passed (1 Cor. 13:8-10). This activity is obviously not part of God’s pattern for the church after the first century.

**General Authority (Coincidence)**

Meeting for worship in a 3rd story room is a perfectly acceptable example to follow. The important question is, did God intend to prescribe 3rd story worship exclusively? Considering other examples ofpeople worshipping God acceptably in other settings, the answer must be ***NO***. Christians worshipped on river banks, in homes and in jail cells and it would be presumptuous of us to try to bind location as an important criteria.

**Present Day Applications**

Many in the religious world overlook these basic principles and attempt to justify their religious activities and doctrines by pointing to New Testament examples that simply do not apply and are irrelevant to their situations.

Thief on the Cross (Luke 23:42-43) – The logic is that if Jesus could save the thief without baptism, a person today can be saved without baptism. If the thief’s circumstances are ever duplicated, the example will apply. In fact, the situation will never again occur because the New Testament of Jesus Christ is now in effect, not the law of Moses (Heb. 9:16). If you want examples of conversion under the law of Christ, the book of Acts is a wonderful place to go.

“Jerusalem Conference” (Acts 15:4-32) – Modern denominations will hold their synods and conventions, decide official church doctrine and convey the decisions to the “faithful” back home. They point to Acts 15 as justification for their conferences, but there is a profound and fundamental difference: the decision maker. When the apostles met in Jerusalem and issued an authoritative document clarifying God’s position on circumcision, the Holy Spirit made the call and the disciples sent the letter (Acts 15:28). What they bound and loosed had already been bound and loosed in heaven (Mt. 16:19, NASB). Modern convention delegates are without divine inspiration and any decisions they might make are without divine authority and thus meaningless.