



# The Tri-Cities Edifier

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## A Church Kitchen at Jerusalem?

- by Frank Himmel

One of our readers asked for help in responding to a brother who is defending church kitchens on this basis: *how do we know the Jerusalem church didn't have one to use in the daily serving of food to its widows (Acts 6:1-6)?*

First, the question is not, how do we know they didn't have a kitchen?; it is, how do we know they did? We can only follow the apostolic pattern (Philippians 3:17) by observing what the Bible says the early Christians did. Guessing about things they might have done, but things about which the Bible says nothing, opens the door to endless innovations.

Second, I doubt the Jerusalem church even had a building at this point in its existence, much less a kitchen! There was so much poverty in the group that many were having to sell land or houses just to meet the physical needs of their brethren (Acts 4:34-35). Given that, and the fact that their number quickly swelled into the thousands (Acts 2:41; 4:4), where would they have gotten the funds to build a meeting house sufficient for so many? Acts 2:46 points to the temple courts as their meeting place.

Third, the only justification for a church having *any* facility is that it is a means of carrying out the work God has assigned the church (collectively). A building is authorized because we are commanded to assemble for worship (Hebrews 10:25; Acts 20:7; etc.). Classrooms for edification/instruction in God's word might be included (Ephesians 4:11-12; etc.).

If one is going to argue in favor of a gym, he must show that recreation is a church function. If one is going to argue in favor of a kitchen and eating hall, he must show that eating is a church function. Facilities for doing unauthorized things are themselves unauthorized. If the New Testament contained any commands or examples that made dinners and recreation the church's work, brethren would not resort to arguments such as the one we are considering. Not only are there no positive statements to support such things, Paul's prohibitions in 1 Corinthians 11 explicitly place eating in the realm of the home, not the church. "What! Do you not have houses in which to eat and drink? . . . If anyone is hungry, let him eat at home . . ." (vss. 22, 34).

Fourth, who's kidding whom? What church has so many members lacking food and cooking capability that a kitchen in the meeting house is legitimately the most practical way to provide for them? And more to the point, in what congregation is preparing meals for indigent members the exclusive, or even the primary, use of such facilities? It is dishonest to justify building a facility for one purpose, then switching (perhaps all the while planning) to use it for others. By such tactics we might console ourselves, but God is not deceived.

## Exalting What God Has Exalted

Jason Hardin

*I give you thanks, O Lord, with my whole heart; before the gods I sing your praise; I bow down toward your holy temple and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness... (Psalm 138:1-2a)*

As David sings and gives thanks to the Lord with his "whole heart," notice what he says in the rest of verse 2: ...for you have exalted above all things your name and your word.

To exalt is to raise in rank, power, or character. When we “exalt” someone, we are elevating them and acknowledging their worth.

Listen to Psalm 138. Your Creator has exalted his name and his word “above all things.” Think about that. Nothing—not one thing in the universe—is higher in rank, power, or worth than the name and the word of God. His name is more important than my name and your name. His word matters more than anyone else’s word.

Life, the way it was meant to be, recognizes these realities and follows the Creator’s lead. In fact, that’s the opportunity before each one of us on this, the Lord’s day—to say, “I give thanks to you with my whole heart. I sing your praise. I honor you for your steadfast love and faithfulness. I exalt your name and your word above all things.”

Let’s worship with that heart-fuel today. Let’s live and view the world through that lens this week. Could your prayers use a breath of fresh God-provided air? You’d be hard-pressed to find something better than adopting Psalm 138:2 and praying it as your own: “Father, help me to exalt your name and your word above all things.”

That’s the key to living with the confidence David expressed in Psalm 138:8: “The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me.”  
~via Charlestown Road Bulletin; New Albany, Indiana.

## Pride

There are a number of sayings that convey the idea of pride – “your too big for your britches”; “your full of yourself”; “why don’t you come down from your lofty perch”. All of these phrases convey the idea of a person elevating himself to a position higher than someone else.

Pride is a heart problem – “*Then Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart...*” 2 Chronicles 32:26 We lift ourselves up and exalt our own life, intelligence, skills or position and look down upon others. However, Proverbs 11:2 reads “When pride comes, then comes shame; But with the humble *is* wisdom.” Proverbs 13:10 “By pride comes nothing but strife, But with the well-advised *is* wisdom.”

I once thought myself brazen enough to reach over into a bank of lights along the edge of a restaurant wall to see what was going on. The brother of a girl I was dating at the time was wondering about the lights. I was showing off and when I reached over the wood where the lights were hidden I hit an exposed electrical wire and yelled out. All patrons of the restaurant were now looking at the showoff walking shamefully back to the table.

Proverbs 16:16 “Pride *goes* before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall.”  
Or in my case a shock! There is nothing beautiful about pride!

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