

# 1 Corinthians 11:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it.

## Analysis

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**For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it**—Πρῶτον μὲν (first of all) signals the first of multiple charges. Σχίσματα (schismata, divisions) recalls 1:10—the same word for factions plaguing Corinth. Paul had hoped chapter 1-4's discussion resolved this; apparently it persisted, now manifesting at the Table.

**I partly believe it** (καὶ μέρος τι πιστεύω)—Paul's measured response. He's heard reports (11:18, 1:11) but withholds full judgment. Yet meros ti (in part) suggests the reports are substantially true, even if exaggerated. Paul's pastoral wisdom: believe credible reports enough to address them, but avoid assuming the worst. The divisions were evident in the social stratification at the Table (v. 21)—rich and poor, honored and shamed, divided by economic class rather than united in Christ.

## Historical Context

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Roman meals were hierarchically structured: the triclinium (dining room) hosted the elite, while lower-status guests ate in courtyards or received inferior food. Banquet invitations specified food quality by social rank. The Corinthian church, meeting in wealthy patrons' homes, replicated pagan social stratification rather than embodying gospel equality. Paul's earlier rebuke (1:26-29) noted that "not many wise, mighty, or noble" were called—the church was largely poor and enslaved, making wealthy members' dominance especially offensive.

## Related Passages

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**James 2:17** — Faith and works

**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

## Study Questions

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1. How do economic and social divisions manifest in modern churches despite gospel proclamations of equality?
2. What does it mean practically to 'come together' as church—how should unity be visible?
3. How can church leaders address credible reports of division without being judgmental or dismissive?

## Interlinear Text

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πρῶτον	μὲν	γὰρ	συνερχομένων	ὑμῶν	ἐν	τῇ
<b>first of all</b>	G3303	<b>For</b>	<b>come together</b>	<b>when ye</b>	<b>among</b>	G3588
G4412		G1063	G4905	G5216	G1722	
ἐκκλησίᾳ	ἀκούω	σχίσματα	ἐν	ὑμῖν	ὑπάρχειν	καὶ
<b>the church</b>	<b>I hear</b>	<b>divisions</b>	<b>among</b>	<b>you</b>	<b>that there be</b>	<b>and</b>
G1577	G191	G4978	G1722	G5213	G5225	G2532
μέρος	τι	πιστεύω				
<b>I partly</b>	<b>it</b>	<b>believe</b>				
G3313	G5100	G4100				

## Additional Cross-References

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**1 Corinthians 3:3** (Parallel theme): For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?