



The Resolved Church

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Enjoying and Avoiding Alcohol

Throughout human history alcohol has been both used and abused in both in the Christian and secular arenas. For the majority of Christian history (see "Drinking with Calvin and Luther: A History of Alcohol in the Church" by Jim West) Christians and pastors have prudently enjoyed alcoholic beverages for the glory of God (1 Cor 10:31) following the example of the Lord Jesus (Lk 7:34).

Many Christians have added a rule onto the Bible saying all Christians should completely abstain from any alcoholic consumption. While this may be a wise choice for some individuals or for various seasons in one's life, we believe making such a rule and expectation for all Christians during all times is too simplistic and goes too far.

In order to provide some guidelines concerning our view on alcohol, below are six statements concerning our church's beliefs on alcohol followed by the statement on alcohol from the Acts 29 Network we belong to.

We believe the wine spoken of in the Bible was alcoholic (Prov 23:29-35; Is 5:22; Jn. 2:10) and Jesus drank enough to be falsely accused of being a drunkard (Mt 11:19).

We believe all drunkenness is sin and is displeasing to God (Deut. 21:20; Eccl. 10:17; Mat. 24:29; Lk. 12:45; 21:34; Rom. 13:13; 1 Cor. 5:11, 6:10; Eph. 5:18; 1 Pet. 4:3).

We believe there are many potential dangers and sins resulting from the abuse of alcohol (Gen 19:32-35; Job 12:25; Ps. 107:27; Prov. 4:17; 20:1; 21:17; Is. 5:11-12,22; 19:14; 28:7; Jer. 25:27; 48:26; 51:7,39; Lam 4:21; Hab. 2:15; Hos. 4:11; Joel 1:5; Lk 21:34; Rev. 17:2).

We believe there are times when Christians ought to abstain from drinking alcohol: not causing oneself or another to stumble in sin (Rom 14:21) or for the sake of mission (1 Cor 10:31-32).

We believe there are times when Christians ought to drink alcohol: honoring cultural preferences for the sake of mission (Gal 2:12-14; 1 Cor. 10:31-32), medical reasons (Prov 31:6; 1 Tim 5:23), or personal enjoyment (Zeph 10:7).

We believe Christians ought to be given the freedom to drink or not drink alcohol (Rom 14:3; Gal 5:13; 1 Cor 10:29,31).

We believe church leaders may drink alcohol if they choose, but must set a Godly example in abstaining from drunkenness or be disqualified (1 Tim 3:3).

We welcome any Godly and biblical rebuke (Ps 141:5) as we seek to walk circumspectly and honorably in this world. In all things it is our utmost desire to serve and worship our Lord Jesus, doing all things to please him, enjoy his gifts, and carry out the mission of the gospel.

Acts 29 and Alcohol

(from the Acts 29 Network website)

Acts 29 is an interdenominational network of church planting churches. As a result, we have both primary issues on which we are unwavering, and secondary issues on which we allow a range of diversity. This perspective enables unity without uniformity in our network. We hold

our essential distinctives in a closed hand; this includes, for example, reformed theology, Christ-like male leadership in the home and church, and commitment to church planting. We hold secondary issues in an open hand; this includes charismatic gifts, eschatology, and various areas of Christian liberty, such as alcohol.

Because our position on alcohol is one that can be easily misunderstood and/or misrepresented, this statement is our attempt to clarify the official position of the Acts 29 Network on the issue of alcohol as we understand the teaching of Scripture.

First, we believe that all drunkenness is a sin (Deuteronomy 21:20; Ecclesiastes 10:17; Matthew 24:29; Luke 12:45; 21:34; Romans 13:13; 1 Corinthians 5:11, 6:10; Ephesians 5:18; 1 Peter 4:3).

Secondly, we believe that many horrendous sins are affiliated with drunkenness. Therefore, getting drunk is a sin that can lead to other sins, such as incest (Genesis 19:32–35), violence (Proverbs 4:17), adultery (Revelation 17:2), mockery and brawling (Proverbs 20:1), poverty (Proverbs 21:17), late night and early morning drinking (Isaiah 5:11–12), hallucinations (Isaiah 28:7), foolish behavior (Isaiah 5:22; Jeremiah 51:39), murder (2 Samuel 11:13), vomiting (Jeremiah 25:27; 48:26; Isaiah 19:14), staggering (Jeremiah 25:27; Psalm 107:27; Job 12:25), madness (Jeremiah 51:7), shameful nakedness (Habakkuk 2:15; Lamentations 4:21), sloth (Joel 1:5), escapism (Hosea 4:11), and depression (Luke 21:34). In summary, sin leads to death and the sin of drunkenness produces only death and misery.

Thirdly, we believe that Christian leaders are to live their lives in such a way as to set a positive example of holiness for others to emulate (Hebrews 13:7). This includes elders, the male senior leaders in the church, who are not to be drunkards (1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7).

Fourthly, we do believe that all Christians must at varying times and in varying ways give up some of their Christian liberties in order to love people of weaker conscience. Christians must make every effort to not lead them into sin by exercising freedoms in their presence (Romans 14:21; 1 Corinthians 10:31–32).

In conclusion, there are different views on alcohol in our network and even on our board. We recognize that this is an issue where Christians can and do disagree, so we have no position on alcohol other than that people should have their conscience captive to the word of God, submit to the leadership of their church or denomination, and do everything for God's glory. The Acts 29 Network permits diversity on this secondary matter and pursues unity on the primary theological issues. We respect the right of Christians, organizations, and denominations to arrive at differing conclusions on this matter. So long as they are within the boundaries of Scripture, we respect those positions and welcome faithful Christians holding them into the Acts 29 Network. Together we can pursue what is most important—the expansion of God's kingdom through the work of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the planting of His church.