

POLICY ON ALCOHOL

Position Paper: The Issue of Alcohol (Guidelines for Officers & Staff)

Approved by Kirk Congregation:
Updated:

THE BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

The Word of God is our authority on all matters of faith and practice. It is our understanding that the teachings of the Scriptures on the issue of the consumption of alcohol is as follows:

1. Consumption is not a prima facie sin
 - a. Jesus Himself drank real wine
 - the kind of wine which breaks wineskins during the fermentation process (Mk. 2:22)
 - the kind of wine which dulls the palate of the tongue because of its alcohol content (John 2:1-11)
 - b. Paul's advice to Timothy to drink wine for medicinal purposes (I Tim 5:23)
2. Consumption can lead to sin:
 - a. Drunkenness
 - b. Violation of the Love Ethic (I Cor. 8/ I Cor. 10)
 - c. Violation of the civil government guidelines (Rom 13)
3. As much as some might wish that all consumption of alcohol be considered a sin per se, we cannot go beyond what the Word of God itself teaches. While we might individually choose not to consume, we cannot mandate a behavior upon this issue which God Himself has chosen not to do. To do so is pharaisism.

THE EXPERIENTIAL PERSPECTIVE

The improper consumption of alcohol is the source of deep serious societal problems today. Improper consumption has destroyed families, destroyed lives, and has threatened to destroy our society as a whole. People drink excessively. People drink to escape. People become addicted without ever intending to do so. People who drink and drive take the lives of the innocent. Alcohol consumption has left a trail of bodies -- the dead and the wounded.

GUIDELINES OF THE KIRK FOR OFFICERS AND STAFF

We feel that two positions are biblically permissible for our officers and staff:

1. **Abstinence:** While this position is not specifically required by the Scriptures, it may sometimes be the wisest choice. It is a position which may be worthy of serious consideration by the mature Christian who desires not to bring his witness for Christ into question by participating in a behavior that has led into much sin. This position also avoids the ever constant possibility of causing a fellow Christian to stumble.
2. **Moderate consumption with great sensitivity to the conscience of others.** The Christian Liberty to enjoy the fruits of creation is biblically extended to the consumption of alcohol. Mature Christians may, in fact, choose to partake in a godly manner which is sensitive to the conscience of others, is moderate in amount, is in submission to civil authorities, and is generally cognizant of the impact which consumption might have upon their witness to the Glory of God.