What was she supposed to do? This is the question that Sarah raised when thinking about what had happened the night before. She was at a birthday party at a local restaurant in Boston. Her friend from China, Yuking, had just turned 20 and had invited Sarah to the party with both her friends and family. Her friends were mainly Chinese which made Sarah even more honored to be invited. All was well until Yuking asked the group, including Sarah, to have their picture taken with each holding a glass of wine. Sarah felt compelled to be included even though she was concerned that not only was she underage but also a picture like that could end up on Facebook with all the possible ramifications.

As she relays this to you, her close friend and fellow believer, over a morning coffee, her dilemma was evident,

“Did I do the right thing? It happened so fast that I didn’t have time to think about it. Janet, I am worried not only about what I did do but what should I have done. This may sound crazy but bear with me. Almost everyone there was Chinese and many were dressed up. It was a karaoke party so each took turns singing, laughing and clapping. Yuking wanted so much to have me feel a real part of the group.”

As you and Sarah talked more about this, she tells how she feels really drawn to witnessing to her Chinese friend. What she didn’t realize at the time was how different their cultures were. Of course, we cannot generalize for all parts of China. However, as Yuking told her after the party, alcohol is an important part of Chinese culture particularly during celebrations. Drinking has been historically integrated into Chinese family life where the young are introduced to alcohol. While drinking to get drunk is generally frowned upon, drinking alcoholic beverages has been traditionally accepted in China during major social events, such as the spring festival, wedding ceremonies and, in this case, birthday parties. However, Yuking admits that Chinese youth in the US are also being influenced by Western practices in which alcohol is more often used and to an extreme. Particularly college age Chinese are increasingly aware that alcohol can be now commonly consumed to hopefully relieve stress, once you take a job, facilitate social interaction and foster good relations between supervisors and employees. In this latter case, drinking may be considered almost mandatory in some Chinese companies.

Sarah continues, “This issue may seem small. Deal with it and move on! I know. However, I am thinking a lot about foreign mission work after I graduate. China is certainly a mission field where there is a need. Our family supports missionary efforts in China and I have really been impressed with their work.”
“Janet, I don’t drink. It is something I decided a long time ago. What if I go to China and am faced with this type of situation again? Yuking warned me that not participating fully in family and group social events is very much frowned upon where she lives in China.”

“What should I do?”

This issue is definitely not something you have thought about. However, you both are in the same Bible study. You respond,

“This is tough. Moreover, we should be able to find some insight from scripture. Let’s study the Bible to see what help God may provide through his word on how you should handle, in the short run, future witnessing with Yuking and, in the long run, how do you deal with this issue in future mission work.”

ASSIGNMENT

Develop a set of 8-10 Bible references that can specifically deal with how Sarah should face her social problem in her effort to witness to Chinese students. Be able to give concrete advice for her based on these scriptural insights.
My Scriptural Research:

Group Scriptural Research:

Decisions / Recommendations:

Primary Scriptural References: