

“The New Testament Church”

1 Corinthians 14:26-40

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Teaching Aim: To examine God’s design for the use of spiritual gifts in the early church and to explore the role of women in leadership. To understand God’s desire that all things be done in an orderly way for His glory and for the edification of the believer in the church setting. To realize the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD’S WORD (*BIBLE STUDY*)

Part I: God’s divine order for the use of spiritual gifts within the church worship service (1 Cor. 14:26-33)

1. According to **1 Cor. 14:26** and **Acts 2:42**, what were some of the characteristics of early church worship services? What are some ways that the modern church has deviated from these practices? What one qualification does Paul place upon the worshipers in **verse 26**? What is the meaning of the word “*edification*?” Why is edification of the people so important to the spiritual health of any church? (See Dictionary)

2. What is meant by the phrase “*speaking in tongues*” (**vs. 27**)? Speaking in different tongues (or languages) was evidently part of the early worship service. Why was it so important to have an interpreter present? How many people speaking in tongues were allowed to share at a worship service? What three requirements did Paul place upon those speaking in tongues (**vs. 27**)?

3. According to **verse 28**, what was the tongues speaker to do if there was not an interpreter present? Have you ever heard a person speaking in tongues at church without an interpreter? Did you understand what the person was saying? How did it make you feel?

4. What two aspects of prophetic ministry do we generally think of when it comes to using the gift of prophecy today (**vs. 29**)? According to **verse 29**, how many people with the gift of prophecy were allowed to speak at a single worship service? Why the limit? How should people respond to the words of a prophet according to **verse 29**? (See **2 Pet. 2:1; 1 John 4:1**) Should leaders within a church ever be above accountability? Why or why not? (See **1 Tim. 5:19-20**) How accountable should church leaders be to the church?

5. The Book of 1 Corinthians was written somewhere around A.D. 55 in the city of Ephesus. Around what year was the New Testament finally completed? (See introduction to the Book of Revelation.) Why was “*immediate revelation*” (*revelation that came directly from God*) so important to the early church (**vs. 30**)? Why is “*immediate revelation*” not as important to us today as it was in biblical days? What is our “*media*” or means for divine revelation today? What should Christians do with any prophecy they hear?

6. According to **verse 31**, what is the purpose of prophecy to the church body? Do you find that you are both challenged and encouraged when you hear the Word of God taught in a church? What does **verse 31** teach us about the need for order within the church service?

7. What do we learn about a person’s ability to control his or her spiritual gifts from **verse 32**? Is this contrary to what we see in some modern churches?

8. According to **verses 32 & 33**, should chaos be the sign of the Spirit’s presence in our church services? Why or why not? (See **Gal. 5:22**) What do you see as the primary purpose for Christians gathering together in worship?

Part II: The role of women in leadership within the church (1 Cor. 14:33-38)

1. Why do so many people find **verse 34** offensive; some even calling Paul a male chauvinist pig? Was he? According to **verse 35**, was Paul implying that women should not prophesy within the church setting? (See **1 Cor. 11:5-6**) What was he implying? What are some ways that you’ve seen the leadership roles of men and women reversed in the church at large?

2. We find a similar teaching in **1 Tim. 2:11-12**. According to this passage, what two things are women forbidden to do in the church setting? Why do you think there are so many women pastors and elders in the modern church? What kind of churches do we usually find women serving as pastors and elders today? On what scriptural basis do these churches ordain woman pastors? In reading **Gal. 3:26-28** in its context, what kind of equality is this passage referring to? Were there any woman priests in ancient Israel? If not, then why do you think so many people find it offensive to acknowledge there were no female pastors or elders found in the New Testament, nor are there to be any in the church?
3. Paul follows this tough teaching in **1 Tim. 2:11-12** with two arguments for his position. What are they? (See **1 Tim. 2:13-14**) To understand the meaning of this passage for the modern church, it is critical that we understand the difference between “*a custom*” and “*a principle*.”
A custom ~ is a practice of a certain people at a certain time at a certain locality, a matter of preference. (In this case Paul would only be talking about the churches of his day.)
A principle ~ is transcultural, applying to all people of all times in all places, it must be maintained. (In this case it would be universal and apply to us today!)
 Was Paul addressing a local custom or an eternal principle in **1 Cor. 14:34** & **1 Tim. 2:11-12**?
4. What can we learn about the attitude of some of the Corinthians from **verse 36**? Do you see a similar attitude at work in some churches today? Why do you think so many people rebel against the clear teaching of Scripture?
5. Many of the Corinthians prided themselves on “*their spirituality*.” According to Paul, what would these individuals believe if they were really spiritual (**vs. 37**)? In light of Paul’s admonishment, what should today’s church leaders do with Paul’s teaching if they are really guided by the Holy Spirit?

6. What do we mean when we say someone is “*ignorant?*” (See Dictionary) According to **verse 38**, how should we treat people when they have their mind set on remaining this way? Have you ever had to learn something the hard way? What kind of consequences did you suffer?

Part III: Paul’s final instructions on spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 14:39-40)

1. Why should believers desire the gift of prophecy over the gift of speaking in tongues (**vs. 39**)? (See **1 Cor. 14:5,12,24-25**) What did Paul command the church not to do in **verse 39**? Why do so many Christians stumble with this teaching?

2. What should every believer expect when attending a church service according to **verse 40**? Describe the most meaningful church service you’ve ever experienced? What made it so special? What are some practical steps you can take to enrich your worship experience this week and every week?

MINER’S CORNER ~ *Manna to live by!*

- Many people were allowed to participate and use their spiritual gifts in early church worship services!
- God desires our church services to be Spirit led; but He also desires they be done in an orderly fashion!
- Spiritual gifts are under the control of the person using his or her spiritual gift!
- Women are not to teach or have authority over a man; perhaps the best picture of this kind of godly submission is found within the Trinity!
- The role reversal within the church today is challenging the authority of Scripture!
- Prophecy that is truly inspired by God will always line up with Scripture!
- We should “*not*” forbid the speaking in tongues, but everything in the church service should be done in an orderly fashion for the glory of God and the edification of God’s people!