

“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 then to explore the role of women when it comes to leadership within a church. To realize it is God’s desire that all things in the corporate worship setting should be done in an orderly fashion. To understand the purpose of corporate worship is: 1) to worship God; and 2) to build the body of Christ up in both maturity and the unity of the faith. To recognize God did not design our worship services to be filled with chaos, but rather to be orderly as we honor Him.

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. What might we find at an early church worship services according to **1 Cor. 14:26** and **Acts 2:42**? How has the modern church deviated from these practices? What command did Paul give to the church in **verse 26**? What is the meaning of the word “*edification*?” Why is this word so important to the spiritual health of any church? (See Dictionary)

2. What is meant by “*speaking in tongues*” (**vs. 27**)? (Search Online) Speaking in different tongues (or languages) was evidently part of the early church worship service. Why was it so important to have an interpreter present? How many people were allowed to share in tongues at a specific worship service? What three requirements did Paul place upon those individuals 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? How did it feel? Did you find that it was a distraction to your time of worship? If so, why?

4. What aspect of prophetic ministry do we generally think of when it comes to using the gift of prophecy today (**vs. 29**)? How is this different than during New Testament days? 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**) Why is it important for church leaders be accountable today?

5. The Book of **1 Corinthians** was written somewhere around A.D. 55 in the city of Ephesus. The letter was written, of course, to the church at Corinth. Around what year was the New Testament completed? (Search Online) Why was "*immediate revelation*" (*revelation that came directly from God without a mediator*) so important to the early church (**vs. 30**)? Why is "*immediate revelation*" not as needed by 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 behind prophecy? 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 today?

8. Today many Christians in charismatic churches believe that the wilder a service gets, the more the presence the Holy Spirit of God is there. Is this what the Bible teaches (**vv. 32 & 33**)? Why, or why not? (See **Gal. 5:22**) What are the primary purposes for Christians to gather together in worship? (See **Heb. 10:25**)

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

1. Why do so many “Christians” 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 being 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 in 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 speaking of? Were there any woman priests in ancient Israel? Can you think of a single example? Can you think of a single female pastor or elder found in the New Testament? Then why do so many in the modern church find this offensive today?
3. Paul follows this tough teaching in **1 Tim. 2:11-12** with two arguments to support the position he is teaching. 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 recognize 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. (It is specific to that culture.)
 - A principle ~ is transcultural, applying to all people of all times in all places, it must be maintained. (A principle is universal for all time.)

To determine if Paul is speaking of a custom or principle, it is helpful to examine the argument that he used. Question: Did the use of Adam and Eve to argue his point apply uniquely to the church in Corinth (A custom), or was this an argument for all ages (A principle)? (See **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 truly 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 have to pay?

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

1. Why should believers desire the spiritual 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. According to **verse 40**, what should every believer expect when attending a church worship service? Describe the most meaningful church service you’ve ever experienced? What made it so meaningful? What are some practical steps you can take to enrich your worship experience with the Lord?

MINER’S CORNER ~ *Manna to live by!*

- Many people were allowed to participate and use their spiritual gifts in the early church worship services.
- God desires our church services to be Spirit led; but He also desires them to 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 in the church; perhaps the best picture of this kind of godly submission is found within the Holy Trinity as Jesus submits Himself to the Father (Equal in essence, yet different in role).
- Role reversal today within the church is challenging the authority of Scripture.
- Prophecy that is truly inspired by God will always line up with the Bible.
- We should *“not”* forbid the speaking in tongues, but everything in the church worship service should be done in an orderly fashion for the glory of God and the edification of His people.

