



## Guidelines for a New Testament Worship Service (1 Corinthians 14:26-40)

- Paul concludes his long corrective on the ministry of spiritual gifts by providing some key regulating guidelines for the use of His gifts (prophecy & tongues) and the participation of women. His instruction is designed to restrain the self-indulgence desires that fomented chaos and disorder while expressing an orderly and well-mannered love that honors the Lord and blesses God's people.
- ❶ **Follow the regulating principle of edification (14:26)**
- The central point of chapter 14 as well as chapters 11-14 (when the church is assembled) is to emphasize the purpose of the gathering and ministry of the church which is to build up the body of Christ.
  - Chaos and disorder was taking place when the church assemble and each one was focused on exercising their voice at the same time without concern for others whether it be a *"psalm"* (song sung on a stringed instrument), a *"teaching"* (explaining God's truth), a *"revelation"* (sharing a new word from the Lord), a *"tongue"* (sharing a language unknown to the speaker and never learned OR speaking in a gibberish that is unknown to anyone), and an *"interpretation"* (someone who can translate the language).
  - **Leaders** edify the body as they *"equip the saints for the work of service, to the **building up** of the body of Christ"* (Eph. 4:12)
  - **Individual believers** of the body do this as they *"pursue the things which make for peace and the **building up** of one another"* (Rom. 14:19). Paul told the Roman church, *"each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to his edification for even Christ did not please Himself"* (Rom. 15:2-3a)
- ❷ **Follow the regulating practice of an orderly worship (14:27-40)**
- These guidelines (or regulations) are designed to provide guardrails that restrain disorder & chaos in the church and to promote order & peace so that spiritual gifts (designed for edification) can function with a well-mannered love (*"properly"* = decent, respectable) and in honor of God's orderly way (v. 33: *"not a God of confusion"*)
  - **The orderly practice of tongues** (v. 27-28): Three orderly regulations
    - 1) Tongues can be practiced *"by two or at the most three"* people (v. 27)
    - 2) Tongues must be practiced *"in turn"* (v. 27), in order or in sequence, not at the same time.
    - 3) Tongues *"must"* be practiced by having *"one...interpret"* (v. 28) or you must *"keep silent in the church"* since the body cannot be edified without a translation.
  - **The orderly practice of prophecy** (v. 29-33a): Four orderly regulations
    - 1) Only *"two or three prophets speak"* (v. 29a) during a service
    - 2) *"let the others pass judgment"* (v. 29b). There needed to an evaluation of what was said since God demands that we *"handle accurately the word of truth"* (2 Tim. 2:15). The "others" who pass judgment are most likely other prophets or could be other believers in the body who had the "gift of discernment" (1 Cor 12:10).

- 3) A new “*revelation*” takes precedence over another message being declared, so the one who is already speaking (an Old Testament truth or one already given by the Apostles) must sit down and “*keep silent*” (v. 30).
  - 4) “*prophecy one by one*” (in sequence) “*so that all may learn and all may be exhorted*” (v. 31).
- Note verse 33 (a central point to Paul’s overall argument): These regulations are needed because “*God is not a God of confusion, but of peace*”. The ministry and worship of the church should manifest the character and beauty of our God which is not disorder, chaos, or confusion. There is an orderliness, a dignity, a beauty that befits the God we represent.
  - **The orderly participation of women** (v. 33b-35): The end of v. 33 “*as in all the churches of the saints*” is better connected to the beginning of verse 34. What he is about to say to the women is not just a Corinthian problem or a cultural problem, but one that needed to be followed in “*all the churches*”)
    - The context of this corrective given to the women assumes they were contributing to the chaos, confusion, and disorder by not honoring their functional roles in the public worship of the church nor with their husbands (v. 35: the word “*improper*” points to shame or disrespect the wives were bringing upon their husbands by their public behavior in the church gathering). **NOTE:** Men and women are created equal before God in their being, personhood, dignity, and worth and designed to complement one another through their God-given roles and functions associated with each gender (refer to messages given on 1 Cor. 11:2-16 – Part 1 & 2 – Heads, Hats and Functional Gender Roles)
    - We don’t know specifically what Paul is referring to (could be their desire to seek the showy gifts, misusing their gifts as the men were, using the gift of prophecy to a mixed audience of men and women, saying things that shamed their husbands in public; offering public judgments against another man’s prophecy).
    - The call to “*remain silent*” in v. 34 is based upon the functional role assignments given in the “*Law*” (can refer to first five books of the Old Testament or the whole Old Testament). Genesis 2 provides a number of things God did with Adam that points to the functional leadership role of the man and the functional support role of the women that are referred to in 1 Cor. 11:8-9 and 1 Timothy 2:11-14.
    - Husbands are responsible to know the Word so they can provide the functional leadership to their wives and be able to answer their questions (v.35).
  - **The orderly priority of following God’s Word** (v. 36-40):
    - v. 36: Paul uses two rhetorical questions to challenge any wrong thinking that would allow them to believe they wrote God’s Word or had a corner on the truth.
    - v. 37: Paul makes sure they understand that what he is writing is not his own opinion, but “*the Lord’s commandment*” to obey.
    - v. 38: Paul reiterates the seriousness of disregarding his instruction as the Lord’s will and command. If they choose to ignore it, they will be dishonoring God as a God of peace, following their own self-prescribed roles and misrepresenting God’s gifts for the good of the church.
    - v. 39: Like Paul said before, zealously seek to have the gift of prophecy exercised in the church, but “*do not forbid to speak in tongues*” (during that apostolic time when tongues were still operative, but now cease due to the fulfillment of their purposes).
    - v. 40: Paul summarizes the heart of all that he has said from chapter 12-14. Everyone “*must*” honor the Lord in “*all*” ministry expressions in a respectable way (“*properly*”) and “*orderly manner*” (in the right sequence and manner that reflects God’s orderly nature).