

1 Cor 14:26-40 Bible Study

1. "A truly Spirit-filled church will be marked by spontaneity". Do you agree or disagree? Why?

2. Read 1 Cor 14:26. Do you think Paul is describing what all Christian church meetings should include?

Each thing has already been mentioned and were most likely being used already in Corinth. Paul is describing their meetings, not all Christian meetings. The emphasis is in the last phrase, that all these are done for the strengthening of the church.

3. Even though the specific details are not for all, there is a principle here for all churches. When you come together (for church or even for Bible study), what do **you** come with in order to strengthen the church?

Encourage each person to think of something realistic and specific. It doesn't have to be something 'out the front'. Some examples might be a book to recommend to someone, a commitment to pray with someone or welcome a new person, an offer of lunch / dinner after the service, your testimony etc.

4. Read 14:27-28. Remember verse 18 – Paul himself exercised this rule! If Paul had given this rule back at the start of Chapter 12, how might the Corinthians have reacted? Recount the things Paul has said to help them to understand and accept this rule.

The Spirit wants to glorify Jesus, not us (12:3), God works in many ways and not just in gifts, ie the gift of tongues (12:4-6), everyone is graced differently according to God's design so that they can benefit others in love (12:7-11, 13:1-13) and so each member needs all the others (12:12-31), and the church is strengthened (and unbelievers challenged) through speech that everyone can understand (14:1-25).

5. Read 14:29-33a. What difference is there between what Paul says of tongues (v27) and prophecy (v29)? Cf v39.

*He seems to **expect** that prophecy will happen in the gatherings ("two or three **should** speak), but **allows** for tongues ("if anyone speaks").*

6. Could those who had the gift of prophecy start to take pride in themselves over other people?

Absolutely! The same principles outlined in Q.4 applied to them, and the restrictions Paul lists in vv29-32 would guard against pride too. This is a good reminder to us that though the Corinthians' problem with tongues speaking is not our problem, we can fall into the same trap and need to do everything in love for the building of the church as a whole.

7. Read 14:33b-40. If taken out of context, the verses about women not speaking in church seem very harsh. What is their context in the passage?

*Part of the guidelines for prophecy, in particular, the **weighing** of it – this is when women are to be silent. Also, in the context of the whole letter, Paul has already assumed women **will** speak in church – when praying or prophesying 11:3-16.*

8. What do these passages say about men and women? What is it that is often rejected or scorned in our culture?

Gen 1:27 Equal as God's image bearers

Gen 1:28 Co-rulers over God's world (under God)

Gen 2:15-25 Man made from the ground to work the ground (oriented towards work); woman made from man to help the man (oriented towards him / relationships), man delights in woman, equal in worth, different in role.

Deut 24:8; Mal 2:7 NB The priests were men – In the OT, God chose men to be the teachers of his people, but all were expected to learn and obey.

1 Tim 2:11-12 In the NT God has given the role of teaching to men also

Perhaps also say that Jesus chose men to be his apostles who would 'teach' everything he commanded to all people (Matt 28:16-20)

*Throughout the Bible, men and women are equal in worth but have different roles, in particular, the man is to lead & teach (in love and self sacrifice Eph 5:25-28) Our culture assumes that what we **do** defines our worth, so if we can't do the same things, we must be different in worth – the very thing Paul has been arguing against in 1 Cor 12-14.*

9. Note on v35: Paul knew there were widows and single women, as well as those married to unbelievers in Corinth (ch7). This verse is not all he could have said to women who wanted to learn more – he is only addressing the question of whether or not women could weigh prophecy in church.

10. Do we take obeying God's word, even in matters of what is fitting and orderly in church, with the seriousness that Paul does in vv 36-38? Discuss and pray about this.