

Sermon 71: Proper Order in Corporate Worship: 1 Corinthians 14:26-40

Text: 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 "How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying. If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God. Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints. Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church. What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only? If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant. Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues. Let all things be done decently and in order..."

Part 1: Paul's pattern for addressing issues:

- **There were four basic principles established in this section**
 - **The principle of love: 14:1** "Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy..."
 - **The principle of maturity: 14:20** "Brethren, be not children in understanding...in understanding be men..."
 - **The principle of edification: 14:26** "Let all things be done unto edifying..."
 - **The principle of order: 14:40** "Let all things be done decently and in order..."
- **His basic approach:**
 - **Establish a General Principle:**
 - **Teach specific applications from the general principle:**
 - **Address potential challenging issues related to the application:**
 - **Tie the principles and applications to a theological rationale:**
 - confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints..."
- **Why this approach is helpful:**

- God wants people to think theologically.
- Thinking theologically should lead to principled living.
- Principled living will lead to specific applications.
- We need to consider nuance in difficult situations.
- We need to teach people from this pattern, so they can develop discernment rather than dependency.

Part 2: Paul's applications:

- **Application 1: Every aspect of the corporate worship setting should promote edification: 14:26** "How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying..."
 - **Question:** Why do you have an attitude of rivalry in the worship context?
 - "Every one of you hath a psalm..."
 - "Hath a doctrine..."
 - "Hath a tongue..."
 - "Hath a revelation..."
 - Hath an interpretation..."
 - **Situation:**
 - **This is likely not referencing the typical formal worship service.**
 - Public scripture reading
 - Prepared instruction
 - Congregational singing
 - **It is probably a more informal setting for local church gatherings.**
 - It might have been similar to a setting like what we do in Sunday School
 - Formal, prepared instruction.
 - Questions, discussion, and exhortation from the rest of the congregation.
 - **Correction:** Let all things be done unto edifying..."
- **Application 2: Genuine tongues had to be practiced in an orderly way that edified the entire body: 14:27-28** "If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God..."
 - Tongues speaking was limited to three or fewer speakers in total.
 - It was not permitted without interpretation.
 - It seemed to be limited to the men in public worship.

- **Application 3: Genuine prophecy had to be practiced in an orderly manner: 14:29-33** "Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints..."
 - Prophecy was different than teaching.
 - It was spontaneous direct revelation from God.
 - Preaching was prepared instruction from the scriptures.
 - Prophecy was limited to three or fewer speakers.
 - It was not received without scrutiny from qualified people.
 - When verified, its message would edify the church.
- **Application 4: Public scrutiny of prophecy was limited to the men of the congregation to maintain proper order: 14:34-35** "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church..."
 - **This statement was not a blanket statement forbidding women to speak in any form in corporate worship:**
 - **Women were permitted to pray and prophecy with certain instructions: 1 Corinthians 11:5** "Every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head..."
 - **Older women were commanded to teach the younger women in several specific areas: Titus 2:3-5** "Aged women...teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed..."
 - **Women were not permitted to assume the role of a teacher or authority over men in local church worship: 1 Timothy 2:12** "I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence..."
 - **This scenario would have violated that principle.**
 - **It also could potentially disrupt the proper order of households in the church in a public and shameful way.**
- **Application 5: The church should never act as if they are an exception: 14:36** "What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?"
 - **This is a question.**
 - **The sense of the question was to prick the conscience.**

- **Simply put:**
 - **Are you the final authority?**
 - **Do you really believe that you are the only person in your situation?**
 - **Are you the only person that God is genuinely working through?**
- **Application 6: Anyone in the church with the genuine gift of prophecy could verify Paul's authority: 14:37-38** "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant..."
 - **Prophecy was active in the church when Paul wrote the epistle.**
 - **There were valid checks and balances for the recognition of apostles as well as prophets.**
 - **Paul was inviting scrutiny for the sake of verification.**
 - **This would be similar to someone teaching a text, being challenged on the interpretation and then inviting people in the audience to verify their work.**
- **Application 7: The church needed to prioritize gifts in corporate worship that promoted edification 14:40** "covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues. Let all things be done decently and in order..."
 - Tongues was a valid gift at the time, and its proper use should not have been limited beyond the instructions given in scripture.
 - Prophecy was superior because it directly edified the church without interpretation therefore it was to be desired more than tongues.
 - These genuine gifts were not to be permitted without careful consideration to the way they were being practiced.

Part 3: Putting this section together:

- **Application 1: Corporate worship must be shaped by principle.**
 - Love
 - Edification
 - Maturity
 - Order
- **Application 2: Principled living starts with a healthy view of God.**
- **Application 3: Principled living should shape every area of our lives.**
- **Application 4: We should strive to conscientiously apply these principles.**

- **Application 5: We should never attempt to excuse ourselves by assuming we are exceptions to the rule.**