



**Sermon Series:** Confusion in Corinth, Part 4

**Sermon Title:** User's Manual for Worship

**Speaker/ Date:** Armin Sommer, February 28, 2021

### 1 Corinthians 14:26-40

The Corinthian believers were either missing or ignoring the “Worship Gathering User’s Manual.” Chapters 11– 14 are that manual.

Paul drills down on two particular gifts: tongues and prophecy. The key verse that unlocks Paul’s teaching comes at the close of the chapter.

**1 Corinthians 14:40**

Paul’s Big Idea is clear. **Worship is to be orderly.**

His “user manual” provides 3 instructions

**Instruction #1: Gifts exercised in public are to strengthen the Body**

Notice his emphasis in...

**1 Corinthians 14:26b**

1 Corinthians 12:28-30 indicates no single gift is universally given. We don’t “claim” spiritual gifts; we receive them with thanksgiving from God as He wills.

The Corinthian church was a network of home fellowships – similar to small group gatherings. The exercise of one’s spiritual gift in such a gathering is for the strengthening of the group. As Ephesians 4:12

The 2<sup>nd</sup> instruction deals with a gift that the Corinthians seemed to value more than any other: the gift of tongues. There are several different manifestations of the gift: (1) Known languages, which may have been used to proclaim the gospel to foreign hearers. As in Acts 2. (2) Another manifestation of the gift is as an unknown language used in prayer, to which Paul points in 1 Cor 14:14. It is a type of prayer on something other than a cognitive level. (3) Still another manifestation of the gift is as a prophetic utterance, and requires an interpreter. **1 Corinthians 14:27–28**

**Instruction #2: Tongues exercised in worship require interpretation**

Several observations: First, the exercise of the gift is not to be merely spontaneous in worship. The gift is to be carefully exercised and regulated in public settings.

Second, there are to be no more than 2 or 3 in any given service.

Third, they just speak one at a time, not all at once.

Finally, there must be an interpretation; otherwise, the speaker is to speak no further . **1 Corinthians 14:23**

**Paul says, it's great to pray quietly in a tongue. 1 Corinthians 14:17**

**Instruction #3: Prophecy requires regulation and evaluation  
1 Corinthians 14:29–33**

Prophecy includes systematic preaching of God's Word, correction, and encouragement. It may at times be predictive, but that's not the norm. It's not on a level of Scripture, since "the others" are to evaluate it.

Prophecy was subject to evaluation by a group of people within the fellowship. If a person in the Corinthian context was to deliver a prophetic insight the speaker would typically rise prior to making his address. But if God's Spirit moved in another person, perhaps while the person may have been running a bit long, then the 1<sup>st</sup> was to sit down. But it was not to go on endlessly. There was a limit to it. Followed by an orderly and disciplined process in which the speaker's words were effectively "weighed" in terms of content, accuracy, and relevance.

I've heard it said, "The Holy Spirit is a gentleman." Each of us is to respect the dignity and orderliness of the worship environment. Being "led by the Spirit" is no excuse to lose control of our faculties. **1 Corinthians 14:32**

Peace (εἰρήνη) is the opposite of disorder (ἀκαταστασία) – unruliness. Our worship should be dignified and orderly. That's not merely preference. It's biblical. God doesn't "call" us to be chaotic. **1 Corinthians 14:33**

Then in the midst of his teaching about tongues and prophecy Paul says something that feels jarring and intrusive. **1 Corinthians 14:34**

It was common in Greek-Roman culture for people to ask questions during lectures - but it was considered rude for the unschooled to do so. Education was a privilege generally withheld from women in ancient times. Paul wants women to learn. The problem is, they had developed the habit of interrupting the teaching with endless questions. Paul instructs them to stop being disruptive, and instead to rely on their husbands for private instruction.

He's not saying, "Women have to keep their mouths shut and have no role in worship." We know from 1 Corinthians 11:5, that women can prophesy in worship. Paul's regulation was dealing with a specific historical issue, not a general principle that muzzles women from public expression in worship. Paul then gets in the face of the Corinthians. **1 Corinthians 14:36–40**

### Discussion Questions:

- What about the sermon stuck with you this week? What part challenged your thinking?
- What are the benefits of orderly worship?
- Does orderly worship contradict, "being led by the Spirit"? Explain
- Would it be acceptable for someone to stand up in the middle of a service at Grace and start prophesying? Why or why not?
- What are acceptable ways for a person to share a prophetic word?
- **1 Corinthians 14:34** says "*Women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the law says.*" Have you ever seen this verse abused? Explain what Paul meant when he said this.

### BIBLE VERSES

**1 Corinthians 14:26–33** What then shall we say, brothers and sisters? When you come together, each of you has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. Everything must be done so that the church may be built up. If anyone speaks in a tongue, two—or at the most three—should speak, one at a time, and someone must interpret. If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and to God. Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said. And if a revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, the first speaker should stop. For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged. The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets. For God is not a God of disorder but of peace—as in all the congregations of the Lord's people.

**1 Corinthians 14:40** But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.

**1 Corinthians 14:26b** Everything must be done so that the church may be built up.

**1 Corinthians 14:27–28** If anyone speaks in a tongue, two—or at the most three—should speak, one at a time, and someone must interpret. If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and to God.

**1 Corinthians 14:23** So if the whole church comes together and everyone speaks in tongues, and inquirers or unbelievers come in, will they not say that you are out of your mind?

**1 Corinthians 14:17** You are giving thanks well enough, but no one else is edified.

**1 Corinthians 14:29–33** Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said. And if a revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, the first speaker should stop. For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged. The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets. For God is not a God of disorder but of peace—as in all the congregations of the Lord's people.

**1 Corinthians 14:32** The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets.

**1 Corinthians 14:33** For God is not a God of disorder but of peace—as in all the congregations of the Lord's people.

**1 Corinthians 14:34** Women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the law says.

**1 Corinthians 14:36–38** Or did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only people it has reached? If anyone thinks they are a prophet or otherwise gifted by the Spirit, let them acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord's command. But if anyone ignores this, they will themselves be ignored.

**1 Corinthians 14:39–40** Therefore, my brothers and sisters, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.