



Sunday November 17, 2019
1 Corinthians chapter 14

Having introduced the gifts of the Spirit and the understanding of believer's functions in chapter 12, followed by the exhortation to do everything guided and motivated by love, the apostle Paul now addresses proper order for these gifts to be exercised in gatherings.

Benefits of Tongues and Prophecy (14:1-5)

- 1 Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.**
- 2 For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries.**
- 3 But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men.**
- 4 He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church.**
- 5 I wish you all spoke with tongues, but even more that you prophesied; for he who prophesies is greater than he who speaks with tongues, unless indeed he interprets, that the church may receive edification.**

vs 1:

Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.

All believers are to "pursue love".
So the rest of the verse also for all believers.
All believers are to desire spiritual gifts especially to prophesy.

Paul mentions "desire spiritual gifts". There is no restriction on how many or which. Hence we state that all nine gifts of the Spirit are available to all believers. We see the repeated use of "all" in this chapter, which affirm that all gifts are available to all believers.

vs 2-4:

We see in these verses a contrast of the benefits of tongues in personal use (as a personal prayer language) and prophecy.

Praying/speaking in tongues enables you to pray mysteries, that is things which your minds has no knowledge about. This makes our prayer life limitless.
Praying/speaking in tongues edifies you - builds you up spiritually.

Prophecy brings edification, exhortation and comfort to people and edifies the church.

[For more insights on the benefits of praying in tongues please see APC's free publications: "The Wonderful Benefits of Speaking in Tongues"]



Do Everything To Edify Others (14:6-17)

6 But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you unless I speak to you either by revelation, by knowledge, by prophesying, or by teaching?

7 Even things without life, whether flute or harp, when they make a sound, unless they make a distinction in the sounds, how will it be known what is piped or played?

8 For if the trumpet makes an uncertain sound, who will prepare for battle?

9 So likewise you, unless you utter by the tongue words easy to understand, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air.

10 There are, it may be, so many kinds of languages in the world, and none of them is without significance.

11 Therefore, if I do not know the meaning of the language, I shall be a foreigner to him who speaks, and he who speaks will be a foreigner to me.

12 Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel.

13 Therefore let him who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret.

14 For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful.

15 What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding.

16 Otherwise, if you bless with the spirit, how will he who occupies the place of the uninformed say "Amen" at your giving of thanks, since he does not understand what you say?

17 For you indeed give thanks well, but the other is not edified.

18 I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all;

19 yet in the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue.

20 Brethren, do not be children in understanding; however, in malice be babes, but in understanding be mature.

vs 6:

But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you unless I speak to you either by revelation, by knowledge, by prophesying, or by teaching?

To benefit people in a congregation, we must speak either by:

- revelation - unveiling of truth not known by the people thus far
- knowledge - imparting spiritual truth to build people up
- prophesying - speaking by divine inspiration
- teaching - teaching truth to God's people

vs 7-11:

Unless what is spoken is understood by the congregation, it will not benefit them

vs 12:

Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel.



Our goal in the exercise of spiritual gifts is to edify (build up) God's people, and hence spiritual gifts must be exercised with this as a motivation.

Notice, Paul is not instructing them not to be zealous about the gifts of the Spirit. Their zeal has to be properly directed.

zealous Greek '*zēlōtēs*' = one burning with zeal, most eagerly desirous of, vehemently contending for a thing

vs 13-15:

13 Therefore let him who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret.

14 For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful.

15 What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding.

When we are speaking with tongues, the only way we can benefit the congregation is by interpreting what we speak.

When we pray in tongues our spirit empowered by the Spirit does the praying and our mind is not involved (vs 14).

We must learn to pray and sing both ways - with the spirit and with the understanding.

Note the term "pray with the spirit" or "sing with the spirit" is used here to refer to praying or singing in tongues. [Some people incorrectly interpret "pray with the spirit" as praying with lot of zeal, fervor, passion, etc. The correct understanding of the phrase "pray with the spirit" as used in the New Testament is that it refers to praying in tongues.]

Side Note: Tongues and interpretation for personal use

When praying in tongues in your personal prayer time it is not necessary for you to interpret everything. You can spend several hours praying in tongues, be spiritually edified and built up, without interpreting. Tongues and interpretation can be beneficial in personal life as you get the meaning of what you are praying. You can get the meaning of what you are praying by speaking out the interpretation of what you are praying, or by just picking it up in your spirit, so that you understand what the Spirit of God is saying.

There are several areas where tongues and interpretation when in personal use, can be beneficial:



- A) For personal guidance and direction, understanding the plans and purposes of God for your personal life
- B) For decision making in matters you are responsible for (e.g. workplace, business, ministry, etc.)
- C) Revelation and insight into the things of God e.g. insights into the Word, into the ways of God in the earth currently, etc.

vs 16-20:

16 Otherwise, if you bless with the spirit, how will he who occupies the place of the uninformed say "Amen" at your giving of thanks, since he does not understand what you say?

17 For you indeed give thanks well, but the other is not edified.

18 I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all;

19 yet in the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue.

20 Brethren, do not be children in understanding; however, in malice be babes, but in understanding be mature.

We can direct our prayer in tongues towards specific purposes. The apostle Paul uses the example of giving thanks (e.g. for a meal).

Like the apostle Paul we must pray a lot in tongues (vs 18) in private. However, when we are in public, e.g. giving thanks or when speaking to a congregation, it is better to speak in the language known to the people, than to speak in tongues.

Paul invites us to be mature in understanding the proper use of tongues in public.

Tongues A Sign To Unbelievers (14:21-22)

21 In the law it is written: "WITH MEN OF OTHER TONGUES AND OTHER LIPS I WILL SPEAK TO THIS PEOPLE; AND YET, FOR ALL THAT, THEY WILL NOT HEAR ME," says the Lord.

22 Therefore tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophesying is not for unbelievers but for those who believe.

The Holy Spirit can prompt the use of tongues as a sign to the unbeliever. The person speaking in a tongue inspired by the Holy Spirit could be speaking in the language that the unsaved person understands and deliver a message from the Lord pointing that person to Jesus Christ. What happened on the Day of Pentecost is an example of this.

Prophecy Impacting Unbelievers (14:23-25)

23 Therefore if the whole church comes together in one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those who are uninformed or unbelievers, will they not say that you are out of your mind?

24 But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in, he is convinced by all, he is convicted by all.



25 And thus the secrets of his heart are revealed; and so, falling down on his face, he will worship God and report that God is truly among you.

While tongues are primarily a means to pray to God, tongues can also be used as a sign to the unbeliever, as we saw earlier in verses 21-22.

In the proper use of tongues, we must be aware, as stated in verse 23, that when we are all together and pray in tongues, it is possible that those who are uninformed or unbelievers, will consider us mad. This does not mean that we should not speak in tongues when we come together as a congregation. Paul explains how to do this correctly.

But our objective is to find ways by which the uninformed or the unbeliever can be ministered to. This is where prophecy comes in - if tongues as sign to the unbeliever (as given in verses 21-22) is not in operation.

While prophecy serves to edify the believer/local church body, prophecy can also serve to impact the life of a non-believer by exposing the secrets of his life (vs 24-25).

Order In Exercise Of Spiritual Gifts (14:26-33)

26 How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.

27 If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be two or at the most three, each in turn, and let one interpret.

28 But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church, and let him speak to himself and to God.

29 Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge.

30 But if anything is revealed to another who sits by, let the first keep silent.

31 For you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged.

32 And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

33 For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.

"How is it then, brethren?" implying "what should you do, brethren?", or here is what you should do.

These verses set out clearly how spiritual gifts are to be exercised each time God's people gather together, whether in a small group (e.g. life groups) or in a larger gathering.

We need to emphasize that this is what believers gatherings should look like - everyone comes with something to give spiritually to someone else (vs 26).



Here are Biblical instructions on the proper **public** use of tongues and prophecy in gatherings:

- Tongues with interpretation to a congregation can bring edification to the gathering (1 Corinthians 14:5) and could have the same benefit as prophecy bringing edification, exhortation and comfort (1 Corinthians 14:3). Those speaking in tongues to a congregation should pray for interpretation. The interpretation could be brought forth by the same person who gave the message in tongues or by someone else (1 Corinthians 14:5,12,13). At any point let there be up to 3 people in front to give messages in tongues with interpretation. (Then you can have another set of 3 people to give messages in tongues with interpretation, and so on - inferred based on similar instructions given to the exercise of prophecy).
- Similarly, if there are prophecies being brought to the congregation, at any point let there be up to 3 people in front taking turns to prophesy. When one is speaking the others judge. Then you can have another set of 3 people up in front to prophesy, and when one is speaking, the others keep silent and judge. This way, all can take turns to prophesy, while others judge.

Note a few points here:

- All prophecy must be judged. This means, that if there is anything wrong that is said, this must be discarded.
- The spirit of the prophet is subject (under the control) of the prophet. So we work in cooperation with the Holy Spirit, and have control over when and how a prophetic utterance is released.

Everything must be done in an orderly manner.

This is what Paul directed in all churches - which indicates to us that spiritual gifts were an integral part of the local churches during the Book of Acts.

Women Keep Silent (14:34-35)

34 Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says.

35 And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church.

Earlier in 1 Corinthians 11:5 Paul has indicated that women can pray or prophecy publicly in church gatherings.



Also, according to 1 Corinthians 14:1, all, including women, are to walk in love, desire spiritual gifts and especially to prophesy.

Our interpretation of these verses (vs 34-35) must be consistent with the context in which these were written, as well as with the rest of Scripture.

The primary objective of 1 Corinthians 14 is to encourage the use of spiritual gifts in church gatherings while maintaining order and decency in expression.

women Greek '*gunē*' a woman, a wife.

Here Paul is specifically referring to married women, as he mentions that they should ask their own husbands at home. So vs 34-35 cannot refer to all women in general, but specifically to married women.

The issue here is not about them preaching or prophesying but as it is clearly stated in the text: "IF THEY WANT TO LEARN SOMETHING, LET THEM ASK THEIR OWN HUSBANDS AT HOME". It had to do with a wife wanting to learn something for which she speaks and asks her husband about the matter. It is in this regard that the apostle Paul instructs them to "keep silent". They do this out of being willingly submissive to their own husbands as taught in the Old Testament Scriptures.

If we also took the prevailing culture into account, we could envision what would have happened. Typically in those cultures, as well as in Jewish synagogues, men and women would sit apart on different sides of the hall. So if a wife wanted to ask a question or clarify something, for her to call out to her husband on the other side, would be disruptive to everyone. Hence, it can be readily seen why the apostle Paul is instructing them to keep silent (quiet) and instead ask their questions at home.

"...as the law also says" is a reference to Genesis 3:16 "*.....Your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you.*"

In this chapter Paul gives the injunction to "*keep silent*" with regards to three different situations: speaking in tongues, prophecy and women asking questions.

- Speak in tongues to the church audience if there is someone who will also flow in interpretation. Else "*keep silent*" (1 Corinthians 14:27,28).
- Take turns to prophesy, when you have delivered your prophecy then "*keep silent*" when some else has the inspiration to prophesy (1 Corinthians 14:29,30)
- Women, if you have questions "*keep silent*" in church. Ask your husband at home later (1 Corinthians 14:34,35)



The objective is order, not the stopping of the exercise of the spiritual gift. We don't use the "*keep silent*" injunction to prevent speaking in tongues or prophecy. So why should we prevent women from preaching in church using this same injunction? The correct understanding of this passage is that if a wife had questions she should ask them at an appropriate time (at home with her husband) rather than during the church service.

[See chapter 22 in APC's free publication: "The House of God", for further comments on Women in ministry].

Let All Things Be Done, Decently (14:36-40)

36 Or did the word of God come originally from you? Or was it you only that it reached?

37 If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord.

38 But if anyone is ignorant, let him be ignorant.

39 Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues.

40 Let all things be done decently and in order.

All that the apostle has stated here in the proper exercise of spiritual gifts are the commandments of the Lord. So we see God's heart for decency and order among His people.

vs 40:

"Let all things be done...."

All the gifts of the Spirit, including prophecy and the gift of the diversities of tongues are wonderful gifts of the Spirit and all believers should be encouraged to have these in operation in their lives.

MINISTRY TIME | SALVATION CALL



LIFE GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Sunday November 17, 2019
1 Corinthians chapter 14

The is a simple guide for use in Life Group discussions. Our objective is to focus on the application of the Sunday sermon - how each one is becoming a doer of the Word and building their life on God's Holy Word. The Life Group meeting would normally last for 2 hours. Each Life Group would have up to 12-15 people.

Preparation

To prepare for the Life Group meeting, you can listen to the Sermon Key Points (sermon summary in five minutes) or the full length Sunday sermon. You can also review the Sunday Sermon notes. All these are available in the "All Peoples Church Bangalore" mobile App or online at apcwo.org/sermons . Pray for the Life Group meeting and invite the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Welcome

The Life Group meeting may commence with a time of prayer, worship and a fun activity.

LISTEN to God's Word

Read the following Scripture passages: *1 Corinthians chapter 14*

INVESTIGATE God's Word Together

Please discuss a few of these together, giving time for people to share their insights. We encourage each one individually to make notes of their personal learning during the Group discussion.

1, Jesus desires for all believers to walk in love, desire spiritual gifts and especially to prophesy. Try to envision and describe what a local church would look like where all the believers were actively flowing in all the gifts of the Spirit. What would small group meetings look like, when such believers got together? What would the larger church gathering look like when such believers got together?

2, What do you think is required to get our local church to be that kind of church, where all believers were actively flowing in all the gifts of the Spirit?

If time permits, each one takes a few (3 minutes max) to share one or two key learning and how they see themselves applying it into their specific life situations. Encourage each one to participate and share.



FELLOWSHIP by sharing your life and spiritual journey

Each one takes a few (3 minutes max) to share anything from their walk with God, something God has been teaching them, a testimony of answered prayer or a specific challenge that they would like prayer for. Encourage each one to participate and share.

ENCOURAGE each other by praying and ministering to one another

Get into small groups of two or three and take turns to thank God and pray for each other in the light of what was learnt today. Listen to the Holy Spirit. Expect the gifts of the Holy Spirit to flow bringing healing, releasing miracles, prophecy, etc.

Regroup and pray together for:

1, families to be protected and strengthened

2, a mighty outpouring of God's Holy Spirit on us as a church and through us to bless many others in our city and nation. Nothing but a mighty work of God's Spirit can change our city and nation.

3, for the BUILD TO IMPACT project - for God's hand to guide us through the land search and acquisition process, and for finances to be more than enough to get this project done.

Close by thanking God together.