

BRIARCLIFF CHURCH

Small Group Study Guide: 1 Corinthians

Week of November 10 (Week 15)

1 Corinthians 14



1 CORINTHIANS 14: SUMMARY

“In 1 Corinthians 14, Paul narrows his focus to the presenting issue, ‘tongues-speaking,’ a phenomenon which may have arisen in the Corinthian church since his departure from the city. For most of the chapter he sets up a contrast between ‘prophecy’ and ‘tongues-speaking’ (vv. 1-24). Beyond that, he addresses more general questions relating to ‘decency and order’ within the gatherings of the congregation (vv. 25-40)” (Paul Barnett, *1 Corinthians: Holiness and Hope of a Rescued people*, 251).

OBSERVING & APPLYING THE TEXT

Expect to Experience God (22-25)

1. For whom are the gifts of tongues and prophecy intended, as stated in verses 22-25?
2. How do verses 24 and 25 explain why prophecy is a more significant spiritual gift than tongues? Read also verses 1, 3, 4, & 5.

Reflection: “When gifts are used intelligibly for the purpose of edification, the result is that the message of the gospel rings clear and true. For unbelievers and believers alike, as God’s word is declared, we experience conviction.” (Richard L. Pratt. *1 & 2 Corinthians*. 494).

Expect to Discipline Yourself (26-29)

3. Keeping in mind the aspect of “expecting to discipline ourselves” what are the key phrases in verses 26-29?
4. What do verses 26–29 tell us about the Corinthian church, and what is Paul’s admonition in these verses? Read especially v. 26.

Reflection: While Paul envisions every member of the church bringing a distinctive contribution to its worshiping life, he argues that there needs to be a controlling factor. The controlling factor is not personal enjoyment but general edification—whether in the larger context of the city-wide church or in the microcosm of the home church.” (David Prior, *The Message of 1 Corinthians*, 250).

Expect to Participate (30-33)

5. Regarding the use of spiritual gifts particularly “prophecy,” in worship gatherings, what does Paul say in verse 31?

6. In what sense does Paul say, “For God is not a God of confusion but of peace” in verse 33?

Expect Unity (34-40)

7. Why does Paul say that “women should keep silent in the churches” in verse 34? What does this prohibition mean?

8. Verse 39 circles back to verse 1, and in verse 40, Paul drives home his point. What does verse 40 suggest about the Corinthian church?

Reflection: *On doing everything in an ordered manner* (v. 40): If God is a God of *order*, should “*orderliness*” characterize everyday living as God’s people? Might some Christians lack a degree of effectiveness because some goals point in different directions, and some of their energies verge on chaos or even self-contradiction? (Anthony Thiselton, *1 Corinthians: A Shorter Exegetical & Pastoral Commentary*, 253).

PRAYER

PRAYER GUIDE

November 11-15, 2024

Read 1 Corinthians 14

Monday: 14:1-4 *“Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. ²For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit. ³On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation. ⁴The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church.”* The exhortation for us from these verses is to “pursue love” and desire spiritual gifts, so that they may be a means of helping others and fulfilling love. Clearly, the one spiritual gift that is most effective in that direction is prophecy. The gift of prophecy is exercised in the pulpit by preachers, but also by believers with one another through the use of Scripture for “encouragement and consolation” (v. 4) and to build up others.

Tuesday 14:12 *“So with yourselves, since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church.”* In this verse, Paul seems to be addressing the super-spiritual ones with some irony. Regardless, as believers, we are called to “strive to excel in building up the church” with our spiritual gifts. Prayerfully seek God’s direction in how you may be used to build up the church.

Wednesday: 14:15-17 *“What am I to do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will pray with my mind also; I will sing praise with my spirit, but I will sing with my mind also. ¹⁶Otherwise, if you give thanks with your spirit, how can anyone in the position of an outsider^[b] say “Amen” to your thanksgiving when he does not know what you are saying? ¹⁷For you may be giving thanks well enough, but the other person is not being built up.”* Since spiritual gifts are manifested in worship primarily to edify others, interpretation is crucial to their proper use. The need to edify others makes it necessary to pray and sing in comprehensible ways. Worship should never be self-centered, and it should always be intelligible and edifying.

Thursday: 14:24-25 *“But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all, ²⁵the secrets of his heart are disclosed, and so, falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you.”* Consider the importance of the gift of “prophecy.” Through the intelligible proclamation of God’s word, sinful secrets hidden in the heart of the unbeliever would be laid bare and many unbelievers would fall down and worship God. Pray that the gift of “prophecy” will have a prominent place in our church.

Friday: 14:40 *“But all things should be done decently and in order.”* The Corinthians’ fascination with spiritual gifts, particularly speaking in tongues, resulted in some degree of disarray when the Corinthian believers gather to worship. The foundational principles

that should underlie what takes place in church meetings are these: Christians should do everything “properly,” that is, in a decent and “orderly” manner; everything should be edifying (v. 26); and a spirit of peace should prevail (v. 33).