

1 Cor. 14:26-33, 36-40 “Decent and Orderly”

For the Children: You have probably been in situations where everyone is trying to talk at once. When that happens, hardly anyone gets heard. That would be a big problem in the church, because we need to hear God’s Word in such a way that we can think about it and, with His help, understand it. To help us do that, the Lord has commanded that church services be orderly (doing things in turn); and well-organized so that we do everything in worship that He wants us to do. **Questions:** How does an orderly, well-organized service show God’s character? What did God command that stopped everyone speaking at the same time? Why was it important to “test” those who claimed to have a message from God?

Introduction:

First Point: Charismatic Worship in Corinth

- 1) Chaos in Worship: At the time the apostle wrote these words, worship services could lawfully include prophesy, testing of the prophets, speaking in tongues and the interpretation thereof. Hence the urging to desire the gift or prophecy and to allow tongues (v. 39). However, due to the excesses of some, the apostle must introduce another 2 qualifications – decency and good order (v. 40). For some were prophesying and others were speaking in tongues, all at the same time.
- 2) The Brakes Are Put On: The apostle “puts the brakes on” this chaotic practice by insisting that only 2-3 would prophecy or speak in tongues per service. Moreover, they are to speak in turn. If a new revelation or tongue comes to someone while the first person is speaking, the first one must fall silent and allow the second to have the floor. Tongues had to be interpreted and prophecy had to be tested. All were to remain self-controlled – the spirit of the prophet is subject to the prophet. The idea here is that the Holy Spirit has the right to “interrupt” Himself, not that man has that right.
- 3) Testing the Prophets: In line with Dt. 18:15-22, prophecies were tested as to their consistency with Scripture and whether their predictions came true. Any who reject this, or who are found false, are not to be “recognized” – which is strong, disciplinary language.

Second Point: True Worship in Corinth

- 1) Worship Reflecting God’s Character: The Corinthian Charismatics were reflecting the kind of disorder and chaos that characterized the pagan religions of the time. But the God of the Bible is the God of peace, decency and order. Biblical worship reflects the character of this Living God. It is decent and orderly (v. 40).
- 2) Orderly Worship: “orderly” means “disciplined,” as in army drill, with a fixed sequence or succession. Hence, the need to speak in turn. This does not prevent sincerity.
- 3) Decent Worship: God’s character is also reflected by “proper” worship (fitting, decent, well-formed, beautiful and balanced). It is to be “well-proportioned,” rather than letting some things get over-emphasized e.g., speaking in tongues at that time.
- 4) The Lord’s Regulation: Some may think that these restrictions hinder the “freedom of the Spirit.” However, this is often an excuse for human autonomy. Those who were true prophets or truly spiritual had to recognize that these were the *Lord’s* commandments (v. 37). It is therefore the practice in all the churches (v. 33). Just because we have a certain gift does not necessarily mean we can exercise it whenever or wherever we want. The Lord/Word regulates the use of gifts in the worship service. He does not foster individualism. Rather, He acts to edify the Body of Christ

Conclusion:

