

## Bible Study: 1Cor 14:26-40 Church Meetings

Author: Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ

Audience: the church at Corinth

Date: approximately 56-57 A.D.

Location: Ephesus

Theme: Dealing with a wayward church

Genre: epistle/prose

### Outline

Earnestly Desire Spiritual Gifts (14:1-5)

Tongues Are of Limited Value (14:6-12)

Tongues Must Be Intelligible (14:13-19)

Prophecy Convicts the Unbeliever (14:20-25)

Let All Things Be Done for Edification (14:26-33)

Women Are Not Permitted to Speak (14:34-36)

These Are the Lord's Commandments (14:37-38)

Do Everything Properly and Orderly (14:39-40)

### Observation

Paul's first guiding principle: let all things be done for edification

Many of them had supernatural gifts, but regulations were needed

A message in a foreign language required an interpreter to be edifying

Prophets had the same limitations as those speaking a foreign language

God is not a God of confusion but of peace; congregations should be similar

Ladies should be silent in the assembly; they are not permitted to speak

They should defer to the men (in public) as the Law also affirms

These are not just Paul's ideas; they are the Lord's commandment

Anyone who ignores this rule should be ignored by the church

Paul's second principle: let all things be done properly and orderly

### Interpretation

1. What is the meaning of the term edification (14:26)?

Edification (*oikodome*) refers to 1. building, 2. construction, or 3. making more able

The basic idea is to "build up" (i.e., aid, assist, or support) the church

2. What did Paul mean about women being silent in the churches (14:34-35)?

Paul was referring to public presentations before the assembly (14:26)

- Two or three could speak (*laleo*) in turn in a foreign language with a translator
- If no translator was present, they should remain silent (*sigao*)
- Two or three prophets could speak (*laleo*) while the others deliberated
- If a spontaneous revelation occurred, the first man should remain silent (*sigao*)
- Ladies were also not to speak (*laleo*) but remain silent (*sigao*) in assemblies

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### 3. Were Paul's instructions culturally limited or universal, timeless in nature?

This passage contains a mixture of cultural sensitivities and timeless commands

- Greek & Jewish society restricted women's rights; Egypt and Macedonia less so
- Hellenistic men would have been perturbed by women exerting a leadership role
- A wife asking questions in public would have been an embarrassment to her husband

Paul's instructions also reflected his views on male headship

- Male headship is derived from the creation of humanity (1Cor 11:8-9)
- Paul wanted ladies to wear a traditional symbol of submission (1Cor 11:10)
- Paul based his teaching on "the Law" (cf. Isa. 28:11-12, 1Cor 14:21, 34)
- Paul did not permit women to teach or exercise authority over men (1Tim 2:11-12)
- Male headship is derived from creation (first) and the fall (1Tim 2:13-14)
- Paul wanted older women to teach good things to younger women (Titus 2:3-4)
- Christian families should be a reflection of Christ and the Church (Eph 5:31-33)

The Mosaic Law regulated the rights and responsibilities of men and women  
God gave women legal protections and opportunities to serve Him and others  
God holds husbands and fathers responsible for directing the family, society

### Application

A command to obey: let all things be done for edification (building up)

- Song service should be encouraging and uplifting
- Sermons and Bible studies should address people's spiritual needs

A command to obey: let all things be done properly and orderly

- We should not be talking during the sermon or congregational prayers
- We should take turns singing favorite songs, choosing Bible study topics
- Men should lead congregational prayers, worship and instruction