

Pursuing Love in the Worship of the Church – Part 4

1 Corinthians 14; Coast Community Church; Pastor Earl Miles; 2-4-2024

Introduction

1 Corinthians 14: Outline

- Pursue love. (1)
- Love seeks to edify. (1-5)
- Love that edifies is clear. (6-19)
- Love that edifies understands purpose. (20-25)
- Love that edifies is orderly. (26-40)

How do we pursue love in the exercise of spiritual gifts in worship?

- 1. Pursue Love. (1)** Pursue love (for God and for others with a God-like love while pursuing other loves). The pursuit of this love is to govern the worship of the Church and Paul tells us what this looks like in 1 Corinthians 14 (with commands regarding what to do or what not to do in corporate worship).
- 2. Love seeks to edify. (1-5)** So edification is the emphasis: “edification” or “edify” (3, 4, 5) = build up. Seek to build up other believers in (faith, hope and) love with the resources you have!
- 3. Love that edifies is clear. (6-19)** Paul uses some illustrations to make the point that understanding is crucial for speech to be beneficial: The Preaching Illustration (6); The Music Illustration (7); The Military Illustration (8); The Barbarian Illustration (9-12). Clarity is important in worship. (9) Understanding (engagement of the mind) is vital! – Romans 10:13-15; 12:1-2; Ephesians 4:20-24
- 4. Love that edifies understands purpose. (20-25)**

Love that edifies understands purpose so that we value supernatural things appropriately.

- Paul commands them to be mature in how they think about, value and use spiritual gifts. (20)
- The purpose of tongues appears to be witness and worship but also judgment! (verses 17, 21; Acts 2:11)
- The purpose of prophecy is edification and exhortation and consolation. (verse 3)
- A sign points to God and His activity. (22)
- Paul’s point from Isaiah 28:9-13, especially verse 11 (see also Deuteronomy 28:49) seems to be that to be ‘childish’ is to be satisfied with a ‘babbling experience’ instead of learning and growing through engaging their minds regarding the revelation of God to them; and to be satisfied with a mere incoherent experience and without understanding of God’s Word is to incur the judgment of God rather than the blessing of God. (Jeremiah 9:23-24) (20-22)

- For everyone to speak in tongues at once is to invite the conclusion that the church is filled with madmen. (23)
- Any worship service may include believers with certain gifts and believers without certain gifts and unbelievers with no gifts. (24)
- The gift of prophecy is a revelation from God for believers that might also make believers out of unbelievers. (24-25)

5. Love that edifies is orderly. (26-40)

Love that edifies is orderly so that we see the need for self-control and proper evaluation of all that happens.

- The worship of the Corinthians was highly participatory. (26)
- Paul gives specific guidelines for the exercise of the gifts of tongues and prophecy in the public worship of the church. (27-33)
- Paul says that women in the worship service are to ‘keep silent.’ (34-36) What does Paul mean? According to the Scriptures, women cannot be elders or exercise that kind of role in the governing and worship of the church. (1 Timothy 2:9-15) Earlier in 1 Corinthians, Paul emphasizes the headship of the man. (1 Corinthians 11:3-5) Paul applies these principles in Corinth by saying: Women should not evaluate prophecies given in the worship service. Women should not ask questions about the prophecies in the worship service.
- Paul says that if the Corinthians refuse to recognize the Word of God through the Apostle Paul, then God will not recognize them as true prophets or maybe not even as true believers in Jesus! (37-38)
- Paul speaks of ‘desiring earnestly’ to prophesy which speaks of priority but says ‘do not forbid’ to speak in tongues which speaks of permission. (39)
- Paul’s primary principle in this portion of 1 Corinthians 14 is that love in the worship service has a proper orderliness to it. (40)

Application

1. Should we be following Paul’s guidelines for worship today as seen in 1 Corinthians 14 (regarding tongues and prophecy)? – 1 Timothy 3:14-15; 2 Timothy 4:1-5
2. Is what is happening today what was happening in the 1st century Corinthian church in regard to prophecy and tongues? – 1 Corinthians 12:4-7, 11
3. Should we dismiss reports of God’s supernatural work in the lives of people around the world? – Isaiah 55:8-9
4. What is the primary ministry of the Spirit today among believers? – Psalm 119:18; Ephesians 1:15-23
5. How should we handle subjective experiences? - Nehemiah 7:5; 2 Corinthians 8:16; John 13:2; Revelation 17:17; 2 Timothy 3:14-17
6. How should we handle imperfect spiritual movements and people in those movements? – 1 John 4:1-7