

**Preaching Christ....
...by the power of the Holy Spirit
...and the authority of the Word of God**

Date: 12 September 2021
Services: Across the diocese
Series: **God's church** - 1 Corinthians
Title: **Everything in order**
Passage: 1 Corinthians 14:26-40
Outline:

1. **Everything for building up**
2. **Everything in order**

Given that the differences between men and women are **beautiful** and **significant**

Given that both **men and women pray** and **prophecy** in the **congregation**

Given that the **Lord's Supper** ought to be celebrated in a way that **unifies** God's people around Jesus not divide them along the lines of rich and poor...

Given that each one of us have been given **gifts** by God's Holy Spirit that we may **serve** one another....

...given that no **gift** makes any one person more **important** than another...

...given that the gifts are given for the **common good** and are to be exercised with **love**...

...given that **5 words** of prophecy will be more helpful and significant than **10,000 words** in ecstatic speech...
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...what **should** happen when God's people come **together** to **sing** his **praise** and **hear** his **word**?

That is what **this** passage will now explore... as God applies for us, all that he has been saying over the last **few** passages, to the **specific context** of when God's people gather for what we call 'church'.

What should happen in **church**? /

Well – here are the **two principles** which we'll unpack from the passage...

1. **Everything for building up**
2. **Everything in order**

First then:

1. EVERYTHING FOR BUILDING UP

Have a look with me at v26 – *What then shall we say, brothers and sisters? When you come together, each of you has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. **Everything must be done so that the church may be built up.***

That is the **purpose** of the **gathering** – **building up** – **strengthening** the **church**.

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Now the situation envisaged is of a group of Christians in Corinth meeting in a **home** – there were no church **buildings** in the 1st century – and in that **less formal – house-church context** someone may say – let's start with that song about Jesus' **miracles**... and then someone might say – let's sing that one about Jesus leaving the **glory** of the **Father**... etc etc...

...and then someone might bring a **word of instruction** or a **revelation**... about how the rest the service should run...

Now in the context of **our** services today it's not **easy** to be so **spontaneous**...

... but choosing the **songs or hymns** – well the musicians may run something past the **minister** and the minister may run a choice past the **musicians**... and a member of the church may email in a **request**... so there is input from people – but in our context it generally happens prior to the service...

In regard to a word of **instruction** or **revelation** – that will be in the hands of the **minister** or the one leading the service as they link the **hymns** with the liturgy and **guide** people through the **service**...

And then the **order** of service, **music, hymns, readings, prayers** will be carefully **thought** out, **prayed over** and **prepared** for the congregation – everything done **so that the church may be built up**

Because of the size and nature of our gatherings, things will be prepared in **advance** – but that doesn't make them any less **helpful** or **edifying** or for that matter – any less – **led** by the **Spirit!! //**

speaking in tongues might even happen in our services... but only under the circumstances mentioned in vv27-28 - *If anyone speaks in a tongue, two—or at the most three—should speak, one at a time, and someone must interpret. ²⁸ If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and to God.*

That's because of all that we saw LAST week... a person speaking in tongues WITHOUT **interpretation**, only edifies **themselves**, not the **congregation!** //

Then **prophets** - vv29-30 *Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said. ³⁰ And if a revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, the first speaker should stop.*

In the last couple of weeks we've seen that **prophecy** in the 1st century church was probably very similar to what we call '**preaching**' today... that is, it was **bringing** the word of God to bear on **people's life situations**.

We usually only have **one speaker** bringing such a message... but the exhortation to *weigh carefully what is said* needs to be duly **noted**.

Unlike **OT prophecy**, prophets or preachers today don't have a word **directly** from the Lord. So everything we preachers say, **you** need to carefully **reflect** on... that is why I always urge you to have the passage open in front of you so you can **weigh up** what I'm teaching and ensure it is **consistent** with the **Word of God!**

As for one speaker sitting down when another stood up, that was so someone doesn't go on **too long** – AND that people don't end up **speaking over** each **other**... //

And that leads to our **second** point...

2. EVERYTHING IN ORDER

If everything that happens when God's people come together is so that the **church** may be **built up**...

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...it will **help** that aim no end if everything therefore is done (the older versions used to say) 'decently and in order' or as this version puts it in v40 – *in a fitting and orderly way*

Simply put – our gatherings ought not to be **chaotic!**

As we just saw, those bringing prophecy should not speak **over** one another... but should stop and let someone else speak – again – this is the context of meeting in someone's home... we generally only have **one preacher** lined up so perhaps not an **issue** for us...

But there was **another** matter in **Corinth** that goes to good order...

...and that was not those **prophesying** speaking **over** one another... but **wives** speaking **up**... /

Have a look with me at v34ff - *Women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the law says. ³⁵ If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church.*

Now did you note? – we just had Joy Harris read the Bible for us... were we wrong in that? No. //

This is **NOT** about silencing all women from saying anything as some have thought... it **cannot** be that because we saw back in 1 Corinthians 11 – just three chapters earlier – that both men **AND** women were **praying** and **prophesying** in the **gathering**... //

V35 suggests that the challenge was **wives** wanting to **ask** their **husbands** something... and calling **out** in the congregation so that the **meeting** was **disturbed** and you couldn't hear what those bringing the **word** of were saying...

Like when I was a teenager at church – I remember our rector at St Paul's Carlingford, Les Vitnell having to stop his sermon from time to time to ask some of the young people down the back of the church to stop talking... (not me of course – I was never down the back with those talking teenagers!)

But it's the same issue... except – EXCEPT – that Paul was so counter-cultural – he **encouraged** women to **learn** – which was not the norm – my guess is there is that women had begun to be **excited** about what they were **learning** – and therefore wanted to ask **questions** about what was being **said by those prophesying**. Paul says – that's **fine** – but just have them ask their husbands at **home** rather than disturb the **church service** so that everything might be done **decently** and in **order!** /

I remember one time at St Andrew's Roseville in my first couple of years, someone had not come forward at the appropriate time for the Bible Reading... and I was wanting to cover for the person who hadn't realised... and to ensure the service ran smoothly – so I quickly moved to the lectern to read the reading without saying anything... as if I was the one meant to be reading... but the wife of the man who did the rosters piped up from the congregation – naming the said person on the roster and saying that they should be reading...! This poor lady was most upset with me when I wrote a gentle note during the week to ask her not to do that again as everything should be done decently and in order and calling out in the service the name of the person who hadn't shown up to do the reading was not helpful!

So **here** – a **specific situation** in the **Corinthian church** – wives keen to **learn, asking** their **husbands**... but God says this should happen at **home**.... //

As the whole subject of gifts and prophecy and the Christian gathering is rounded **off**... Paul takes a moment to do two things...

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the **FIRST**, as it were, was to put the Corinthians in their place – v36 – *did the word of God originate with you?* – basically – **who put you in charge??** – **THEY** were wanting to call the shots in regard to gifts... and make them all about **them**... and Paul says v37 – look if you are claiming the gift of prophecy or have any other gifts of the Spirit – what I've been writing these past chapters is – from to being all things to all people to win some – to the Lord's supper - to tongues and prophecy – to the primacy of love – what I'm writing is the Lord's command! – **take careful note of it....** Don't **ignore** or it or **dismiss** it! It is the **Lord's command!** Not just something from **me!** //

And the **second** – summarising re gifts and prophecy and everything being done in order - *Therefore, my brothers and sisters, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. ⁴⁰ But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.*

Eager to **prophecy** – so the word of God will be **proclaimed** and be **powerful** and **build up the church!** /

Allow **tongues** – but only as I've been laying **out** – so that everything is done **decently** and in **order**.

So as we close – let's think about what all this means for **us!**

If we think about the passages of these last few weeks

- everyone **gifted**
- for the **common good**
- gifts to be used in **love**
- everything done so that the church may be **built up**
- and everything done in **order**

Here then are some questions for your church

1. Do you think everyone is **aware** that they have been given **gifts** by **God** to use for the **common good**?
2. Do you think that people are using their **spiritual gifts** by and large, for the **common good** – for the **building up** of the **church** – OR for the **building up** of **themselves**?
3. What **more** could be done in the overall **life** of your **church** – and in the **church services** – for the **building up** of your **church**? //
4. Is **everything** in your church being done **decently** and in **order**?

Good **questions** aren't they? (Small group... zoom this week)

Here's my prayer for churches across the diocese...

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That everyone will **know** their gifts and seek to **use** those gifts for the **common good** – that **great** good of **building up the church**

That there be no one trying to **big note** themselves with their gifts but following the most **excellent** way of love

That **everything possible** might be being done so that **your** church is **built up**

...and done with **careful thought** and due **preparation** so that nothing is **chaotic**, but **everything** is done in **order**.

.....

And do you know what happens when the church of God is built up through the **loving** use of gifts God has given?

As God's people grow **spiritually**... so a healthy church will grow **numerically**!

Because others know you are disciples of Jesus by your love...

And people will exclaim when they come and meet with you – **God is truly among you!**