



Build Up Others

By Terry Kountz on April 18, 2022

TODAY'S READING: 1 Corinthians 14

Have you ever had a conversation with someone who was using the jargon of their field? You might be able to follow along somewhat, but you may not know what all the acronyms or inside slogans mean and you end up nodding your head, pretending to understand.

This is what Paul was warning us about in 1 Corinthians 14. We do not want to be confusing when we gather together at church. Paul outlines three principles in the public meeting of the church: edification, understanding and order.

The mistake the Corinthians were making was emphasizing their own personal spirituality (edification) to the neglect of the church. They wanted to build themselves up but did not want to build up their fellow believers. Our culture can often highlight a "God and you" type faith that emphasizes how worship makes you feel rather than worship being something we do as the body of Christ. This is a temptation to make church about an individual experience with God. But throughout this whole section in 1 Corinthians (12-14) Paul helps us see the role we play in the church community to love and serve one another. We are reminded that the only enduring thing we can do is to love rather than compete. Paul wants us to live with that truth in mind.

Regarding understanding, Paul uses musical instruments to make his point. He discusses flutes and harps in verse 7 and a military bugle in verse 8. Musical instruments are used for differing purposes (i.e., to make music or to signal). If the instrument makes the wrong sound, it causes confusion. The human voice is meant to communicate information to other humans. If it makes sounds that have no significance to other humans, it fails in its purpose. We must communicate in a way that people understand and, therefore, respond.

Lastly, Paul discusses order. In verse 33 Paul states that, "*God is not a God of confusion, but of peace.*" In verse 40 Paul says, "*All things should be done decently and in order.*" Most people live their day-to-day lives with some level of predictability and order. In many ways, order leads to greater freedom. If you have ever driven in (or seen) the traffic in a major urban area of another country, you know how lack of order can lead to chaos. Paul instructs us to come to church ready to contribute in worship. We are wired by our culture to come ready to receive, but each person has something to give to build up the body in Christ to be used in an orderly way.

Our desire when we gather together for worship should be to praise God and to desire spiritual gifts for the purpose of contributing to one another's faith. Your relationship with Jesus is about your growth in faith, as well as your fellow member's growth into Christlikeness. These passages help us to be other-centered in our worship and in our service in the church.

PRAYER: Lord, help me know how I can use my giftedness to contribute to the life of our church.

TOMORROW'S READING: 1 Corinthians 15

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