

One Voice, One King
(1 Corinthians 14:26-40 March 28, 2021)

One Voice
One King

— 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 —



Homegroups are a blessing – *and* a danger.

They are a blessing because everyone gets to contribute.

They are a danger because – well – everyone gets to contribute.

Have you ever sat in a homegroup where two or three participants have very different approaches to a text – and are very passionate?

If you don't have a good homegroup leader who navigates the group to what is crucial and biblical – you can leave confused and frustrated – or worse.

This is awkward and certainly not ideal when dealing with peripheral truths – the sequence of end time events – the best ways to school children – **but** – it can be catastrophic when you are dealing with the core truths of the gospel.

Now imagine this in a church service. Many voices – some speaking – some questioning – some you have no idea what they are saying.

Voices that mix gospel truth and error with equal passion.

That is as dangerous as it gets.

In Corinth – we have already seen there were some voices saying – Jesus is accursed – Jesus – the man of flesh and blood – can't be God.

In chapter 15 we will see this thinking expand. Some were saying – there is no resurrection from the dead. Bodies of flesh won't rise.

So, there were voices saying – Christ did not come in a body – and our bodies won't rise.

These voices are not just wrong – these voices destroy the gospel and must be silenced.

It is the silencing of these voices – and the shaping of our time of worship to promote the voices that speak the clear message of God that Paul now turns to address.

Here is the point of this morning's message.

Everything in our corporate worship
must be done decently and in order to
ensure His voice alone is heard



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In the Bible – from Genesis to Revelation – our corporate worship is a vital and central part of our life in Christ.

There are entire books – like Leviticus – dedicated to corporate worship.

The Bible is clear – we don't get to decide what our worship looks like and what is proclaimed in it. Nadab and Abihu tried that and God consumed them in a fireball.

We worship the true God in the way He commands – and the voice heard is to be His.

One of the main purposes of our time of worship is to hear the voice of the King especially regarding Christ and the cross and the way of salvation.

But this requires a lot of effort and planning to shape a service in this way.

In Corinth, perhaps they were influenced by the ideals of Greek democracy – my voice matters.

Perhaps it was the influence of their pagan former life.

Perhaps it was just sin and pride – I am important.

But the result was a worship service that can only be described as chaos and confusion.

Paul is clear, the kingdom of God is not a democracy – it is a theocracy. Only one voice matters – His. Only one authority is recognised – His.

If there is one place in this world where the people of God must be sure that the voice they are hearing is that of their King – it has to be in a church service.

A true child of God does not come on a Sunday to hear my opinion – my voice – or your opinion – and your voice.

We come to hear God and His glorious message of salvation.

We are working our way through 1 Corinthians and are in chapter 14.

Last time we saw the chaos of a Corinthian worship service. Many voices – especially tongues – often uninterpreted tongues – and the result was a confusion in the message.

In our passage this morning – Paul seeks to correct this situation.

Here is how Paul makes this point.

In our corporate worship:

Everything must be ordered to ensure His voice is heard 26

Order through limits and affirmation 27-31

Order through submission and restraint 32-39

Everything must be ordered to ensure His voice is heard 40



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One voice – one King!

Paul sets the scene for us in verse 26:

What then, brothers and sisters? Whenever you come together, each one has a hymn, a teaching, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation.

The first question for us is – is this something Paul says *should* be done – or is Paul describing what *was* happening and suggesting this was a problem?

Is Paul saying – you know what – when the church gathers the ideal thing is for everyone to bring something to share – a hymn, a teaching, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation?

Is the idea that all believers *should* have some speaking part in a service?

Some churches have understood this verse like that.

They encourage all who come to have something ready to share – a short message – a prayer – a song – something to bless the flock.

I would assert that the context argues very strongly against this. This chapter pictures a church where *everyone* wants to share – in particular in tongues. It is chaos.

My voice should be heard. I'm important.

And tragically some unfettered voices were sharing a false gospel.

Notice if you will that there are some key words in our passage:

Order and disorder.
Speaking and silence.
Command and submission.

One key phrase that helps unpack this passage is found in 1 Corinthians 14:33:

God is **not** a God of disorder but of peace.

You might think Paul would say – *God is not a God of disorder but of order.*

However, the opposite of disorder is much more than mere order – it is peace.

Peace is the Greek word – **eirene** – which translates the Hebrew word – **shalom**.

When we think of peace – we think of a cessation of hostilities.

But biblically – peace is far, far more than that.

Alvin Platinga says – *Peace – shalom – is the way things ought to be.*

I want to refine that a little:

Biblical peace is when everything
is ordered as it should be



Biblical peace is when everything is ordered as it should be.

We are at peace when every relationship is in the right order – the way God designed it to be.

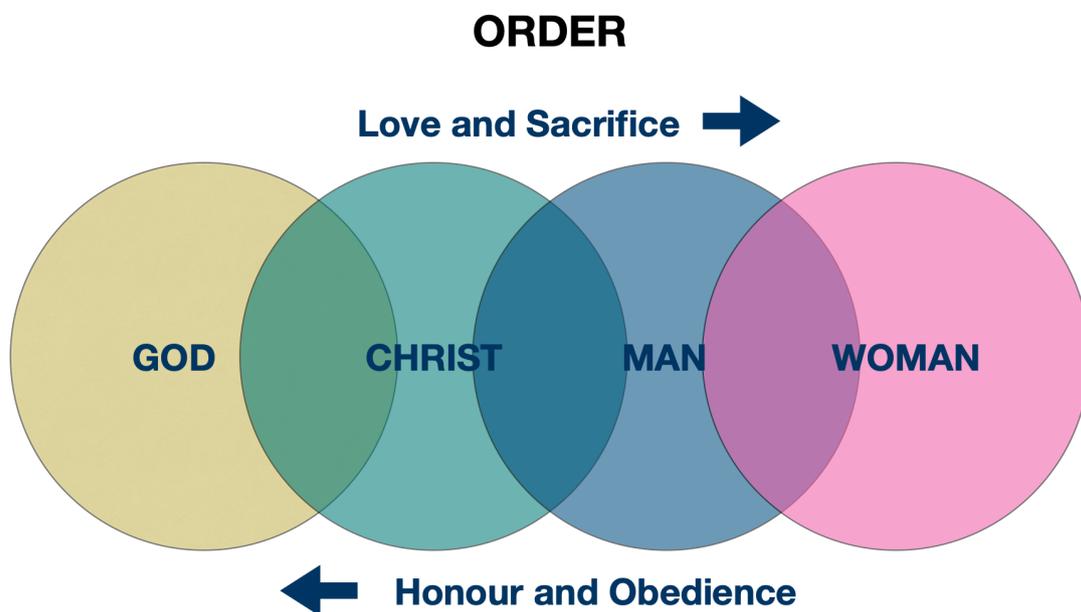
In a sense you could say that through the gospel God brings peace out of disorder.

What do I mean?

God is a God of order. In chapter 11 we saw Paul make it clear – even within the Godhead – there is an order.

He told us – God is the head of Christ.

Then when God created this world – He created it with an order to our relationships.



For example, God created the world where there is a headship in the home and in the church that pictures the gospel and ultimately reflects the supremacy of God.

Read Genesis 1 and 2.

When God finished created – everything was in shalom – ordered as it should be.

God was King. Adam was His regent over the creation. Eve was by his side as a helper to rule the creation.

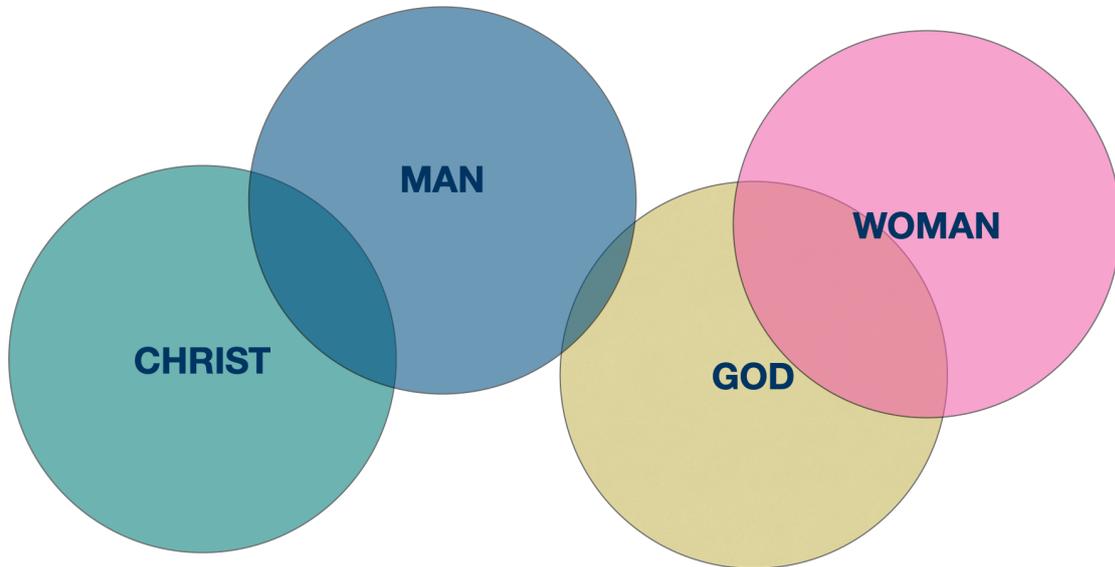
Every animal, bird, fish and plant was theirs to rule over.

God, man, woman – all in a right relationship.

However, this peace and order was shattered.

Adam sinned – and nothing was ever the same.

DISORDER



Man sought to usurp the authority of God.

Women sought to usurp the headship of men.

And the result was disorder throughout the universe.

The creation was cursed.

Every relationship was marred.

And crucially – the relationship between humanity and God was shattered.

Instead of heeding God – everyone did what was right in their own eyes.

We need to understand that salvation does not just involve restoring peace between God and man – but a restoration of order in all relationships. Order in the home, the church, society – in the creation.

God had a plan – a plan to restore the creation to peace – to order.

This becomes a dominant theme in the Bible.

Abraham meets Melchizedek – King of Salem – King of Shalom – King of peace.

After this meeting – God makes a covenant with Abraham – a covenant that points to the One who will bring peace.

Numbers 6 tells us way Jews were to greet one another:

May the LORD ... give you peace.

The Law promised a covenant of peace and a peace offering for sin.

Isaiah promises that a Prince of Peace – a Prince of Shalom – will come who will restore all things.

And in the fullness of time – on the day of Jesus' birth the angels announced:

Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to people he favors!
Luke 2:14.

At last – the Prince of Peace had come.

Jesus Himself announced:

Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. John 14:27.

When Jesus rose from the dead and stood before His disciples – His first words were – Peace be with you.

In Colossians 1 Paul spells it out. He says – all things were created by Jesus and for Jesus. He created with an order – a peace.

But this order was lost – but – listen to this verse. Colossians 1:20:

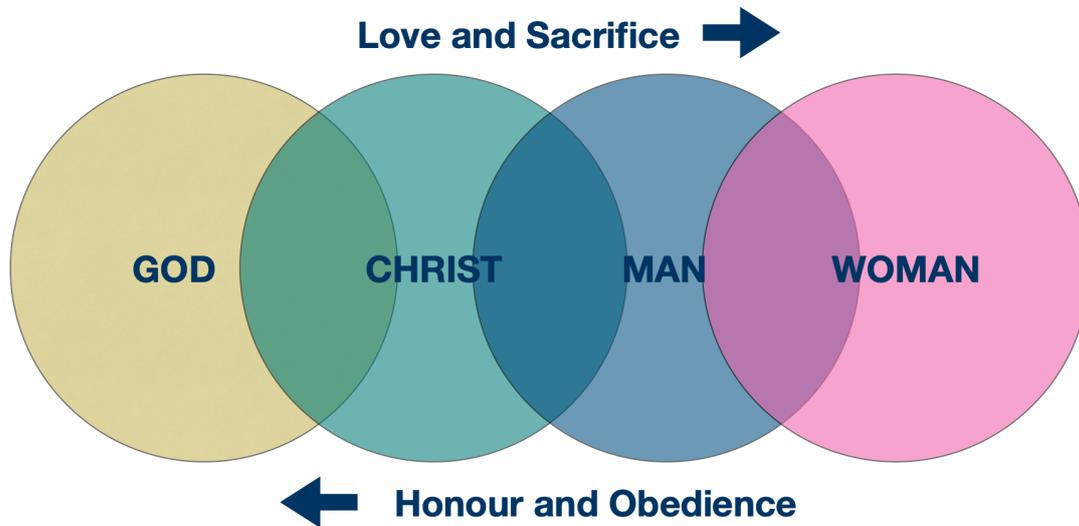
Through [Christ, God was pleased] to reconcile **everything** to himself, whether things on earth or things in heaven – how? – by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

Through His death – the penalty is atoned – His blood restores shalom – peace – harmony – to all things. The blood of Christ will restore order in every relationship.

And thus, the way Paul and Peter opens every single epistle is – **grace and peace**. Through the gift of grace on the cross – Christ will bring peace.

He will restore all relationships.

ORDER



And here is something crucial to understand. The church must reflect this order – this peace. The church is a picture of the gospel.

You can't say the gospel brings holiness – yet the church be impure.

You can't say the gospel brings unity – yet the church be divided.

And crucially – you can't say the gospel brings order – then worship God through disorder – voices other than God's – structures other than God's design.

However, if you had to describe a worship service in Corinth – the words that come to mind would be – chaotic, confusing, disordered.

Just as your room and your kitchen naturally run to disorder – so does out worship if we don't impose order.

Consider Exodus 32 – Moses is up on the mountain receiving the ten commandments. Aaron is down below and getting tired of waiting.

So, Aaron lets the people have their way.

The result is a golden calf and chaos.

As Moses comes down the mountain, he hears this raging sound. Joshua is with him and says – wow – it sounds like a war down there.

They draw closer and are stunned – the whole nation is singing and dancing – total pandemonium.

Exodus 32:25 says the people were so out of control they were a laughingstock to their enemies.

So, Moses sent the Levites through the camp with a sword to impose order.

Fortunately for us – Paul has a less bloodthirsty method of imposing order on our worship.

As we saw last time – in Corinth – the services were anything but orderly.

Worship had become a competition. Everyone brings something – **not** to build up the body – but to say – I’m important – listen to me.

Clearly the major speaking gift people wanted to use was tongues.

And as we saw last time – not only were many speaking at once – but it was often uninterpreted.

This week we see it gets worse. There is interruption, questioning, confusion – and it was done in a way that is disgraceful and violates the order God expects.

The worship services were more a reflection of their chaotic pagan life – than their new life in Christ and the peace He brings.

Paul now gives instructions to regulate this chaos.

This is not how we are to worship. **In our corporate worship:**

Everything must be ordered to ensure His voice is heard.

Over the years – this passage has affected me profoundly.

How should we order our services so it is Christ alone who is heard and exalted?

How should we order our services so they reflect the gospel and the peace it brings?

For us it means things like striving to make the word the centrepiece.

It means having an order to our service.

It means doing what we can to make sure the voices you hear are clear and speak the gospel.

It means making sure the biblical lines of authority all point to Christ as King.

This is what Paul asks the Corinthians to do.

First, He commands them to bring:

In our corporate worship:

Everything must be ordered to ensure His voice is heard 26

Order through limits and affirmation 27-31



Order through limits and affirmation 27-31

Here is Corinth – many voices – some true – some false.

Paul says – *limit* the voices and *affirm* to the church the ones they hear are actually speaking the truth of God.

Notice if you will that Paul gives parallel instructions for the ordering of tongues and prophecy.

He says they are to limit the speakers, use a spiritual gift to affirm the truth – and then gives an instruction – if no affirmation – be silent.

First – there is a limit to the number of speakers.

Not everyone should speak.

In chapter 12 verses 27-31 – Paul made it clear that not all believers are gifted with word gifts.

Not all have prophecy or teaching gifts – and not all have the genuine gift of tongues.

But even for those with the gift of tongues or prophecy, there are differences in the way Paul handles these two gifts.

With tongues he says – **if** anyone speaks in a tongue. Since tongues was not primarily designed for use in a worship service – you can have worship services without it. The subjunctive – **if** – implies there doesn't have to be tongues in a service.

But, **if** there are tongues – then keep it to two or at most three.

However, when he speaks of prophecy – there is no ‘if’ and no – ‘at most’. Two or three prophets *should* speak. You have to have the word communicated clearly in a worship service and in Paul’s mind the best gift for the Corinthians was prophecy rather than tongues.

The idea seems to be – tongues is incidental – you can have it or not – but prophecy is central.

But above all – make sure what is voiced – is the voice of God.

Look at the ordering of tongues. Verses 27 and 28:

If anyone speaks in a tongue, there are to be only two, or at the most three, each in turn, and let someone interpret. But if there is no interpreter, that person is to keep silent in the church and speak to himself and God.

Remember, tongues was *not* primarily designed to teach – it was a sign to unbelieving Israel.

But, couple it with interpretation and it *could* teach and edify.

But if you have it then there is a **limit – two or at most three**.

And not all at once – each in their turn.

How do you affirm that the voice that is heard is the voice of Christ?

Interpretation.

The genuine gift of tongues **with** interpretation – results in a message from God.

Tongues with interpretation affirms what you hear is genuine.

This means – absolutely no uninterpreted tongues.

If there is **no interpretation – then silence** – it is for you and God.

Let me say this. Even in churches that believe the gift of tongues is for today – very few follow these clear instructions.

As well there was to be ordering of prophecy. Verse 29:

Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should evaluate.

I know this instruction was clear to Paul – and probably to the Corinthians Paul – but can I say – while the intent is clear – they need to hear God’s voice – the practical nuances are not clear.

Again, Paul says there is to be a **limit – two or three**.

Some have understood Paul to mean 2 or 3 prophets are to speak then there is an evaluation – then 2 or 3 more speak – with evaluation – till all who wish to speak have had the chance.

However, the context here and what he says about tongues make it much, much more likely he is saying – just 2 or 3 prophets should speak in any service.

As well – there is to be a spiritual gift that ensures what is heard is **affirmed as the genuine voice of Christ**. Here it is called the gift of **evaluation**.

Exactly how this gift operated – we don't know.

Is it the prophet or the prophecy that is evaluated?

Do you evaluate the prophet once and then he is approved?

Do you evaluate each prophecy as it is given?

Is the evaluation done before, during or after the prophecy?

Who is to evaluate and what is the criteria for evaluation?

Most continuationists – those who say prophecy is for today – say it is the prophecy itself that is evaluated. Oftentimes some of it is approved and some of it is rejected – other times the whole lot is approved or rejected.

As an example – Sam Storms the pastor of *Bridgeway Baptist Church* – who is one of the most balanced and theologically accurate continuationists describes his practice.

At his church they have set up a prophetic council. If you believe you have the gift of prophecy and God has given you a message – you are to submit it to the council.

They discuss it – pray over it and decide if any or all or none of it is to be presented to the church in a worship service.

I understand why they do this – but this doesn't seem to be what Paul is saying to do. Verse 30 seems to indicate that the evaluation is live – in the service.

My best understanding is this.

Back in 1 Corinthians 12:10 – Paul is listing out prophetic gifts. The last ones he lists are these:

Prophecy, distinguishing between spirits, different kinds of tongues and interpretation of tongues.

The word translated – **distinguishing between** – it is the same word here in verse 29 translated **evaluate**.

It seems that **interpretation** and **evaluation** were spiritual gifts that ensured tongues and prophecy were ordered – so they were understandable and affirmed as genuine.

It seems there were some prophets in the church known to have the gift of distinguishing or evaluating.

It was a spiritual gift that showed them if the prophet spoke for God or not.

We have to assume that this gift had been tested and approved – perhaps by the Apostles or by the leaders.

If someone has the genuine gift of tongues – interpretation allows the church to know what they were hearing is the voice of God.

If someone has the genuine gift of prophecy – evaluation allows the church to know what they are hearing is the voice of God.

But, verse 30:

If something has been revealed to another person sitting there, the first prophet should be silent.

In the context, the other one sitting there is a prophet with the gift of evaluation.

If the Holy Spirit reveals to the evaluating prophet – this one is **not** from the Lord – then they are to make that known and the prophecy is to cease – and the church is to know – do not heed this message.

Tongues without interpretation is to be silenced.

Prophecy without evaluation is to be silenced.

You cannot tolerate someone saying they are a prophet – who stands and says – Jesus is cursed – or that there is no resurrection from the dead – with no one saying – church – this is simply not true. This is **not** the gospel.

Unfortunately, there are so many questions I have about this practice that do I not have clear answers to.

Clearly a lot of Corinthians wanted to speak – in tongues and in prophecy. If there are more than three – how do you decide who gets to be one of the speakers?

Have a rotation, draw lots, have the leaders choose? It seems likely from verse 32 that it was the leaders among the prophets who made the decision.

Another question – what you do with a prophet who fails the test? – You silence them? Anything else?

At the time of 1 Corinthians, the church was not under the Law, so it is not like the church was to stone them. Instead – they are to brand them as a false prophet.

If they don't stay silent – then remove them.

However, if they are genuine prophets and the prophecy is from the Lord – verse 31:

For you can all prophesy one by one, so that everyone may learn and everyone may be encouraged.

Who is the 'all' here?

It can't be everyone in the church. In 12:29 Paul is clear – not all are prophets.

It doesn't even seem to refer to all the prophets in the church because Paul limits it to 2 or 3 to prophesy.

The 'all' here seems to refer to all those slated to prophesy that day – the 2 or 3 who speak a message.

One at a time – and because their message is affirmed as genuine – all those present learn and are encouraged.

The message of God – the gospel in Christ – the way to peace with God – is heard clearly.

Paul is clear:

You can't have everyone speaking in untranslated tongues at once.

You can't have everyone fighting to have their unapproved, unevaluated prophecy heard.

How do we apply this today?

Our understanding is that tongues and prophecy are not the primary way of making God's voice heard in today's worship services.

Preaching is.

But there are other voices – the worship leader – testimonies – rotation spots.

So, we have **limits**.

One sermon – one worship leader – a rotation spot. Two or three voices.

Ultimately, the elders decide who stands here on a Sunday – who preaches, who the worship leaders are – who gets to speak.

We have **affirmation**.

We strive to affirm that what is said is true to the word.

We work hard to base our messages on the Bible alone. We want you to hear His voice not our opinions.

We have discussions and pre-preaches.

We do our best to screen those speaking and what they will say.

We want you to be able to trust what is said publicly in our services.

We work hard to make our messages clear – to make Christ and the gospel at the front.

We love Christ – we love the gospel. We want this to be what is heard.

We want you to know of the One who left the glories of heaven and humbled Himself to death on a cross so you might find peace with God through His blood.

Anything we can do to make this clearer, more available, more glorious – we will do.

But that is not the only instruction Paul gives to impose order on our worship services. He commands:

In our corporate worship:

Everything must be ordered to ensure His voice is heard 26

Order through limits and affirmation 27-31

Order through submission and restraint 32-39



Order through submission and restraint 32-39

Submission and restraint – this is clearly what Paul speaks of – but I asked the guys – can I even use these words today?

It would be fair to say that neither of these are popular concepts in our world.

Submission is seen as a patriarchal, authoritarian construct.

Restraint is seen as a silencing of the voices of the people.

I asked, “Guys am I going to get stoned for saying this is what the Bible teaches?”

This teaching is more unpopular today than any time since Paul wrote this to the Corinthians.

But, I have to be true to the word – these are a part of the plan of God – whether any of us like it or not.

God authored the plan of salvation. He accomplished it. He alone reveals it.

No one gets to question it – alter it – revise it – or add to it.

What we have to grasp is that as part of this plan God implemented an order – a structure in the creation – in society – in the home – in the church – that is designed to demonstrate that His authority is ultimate.

God delegated authority to some – to demonstrate that **all** authority ultimately derives from Him. He gave some authority to:

Secular leaders.

Church leaders.

Home leaders.

Their authority is all delegated authority – designed to show – God alone is King.

Consider **church** and **home**.

CHURCH	HOME
God	God
Christ	Christ
Apostles	Husband
Elders	Wife
Flock	Children



Even the submission of Christ to the Father is designed to demonstrate that – no one is ultimately great – but God.

Elders are subject to God.

Husbands are subject to God.

Their authority comes from God.

That is God's plan – God's design.

This also means that different roles is not an indication of inferiority.

Christ and the Father are one.

The Genesis account is clear – every man and woman are created equal in the image of God. There is a fundamental equality of person between husband and wife.

In the same way, an elder is equal before God with a member.

In fact – you don't have to look far to find many members who far smarter and more able than their elders.

Or wives who understand the Bible better than their husbands.

But authority and submission are not based on merit – or gifting – or importance – why?

Because all of these institutions are designed to picture the ultimate authority of God.

His will be done. His kingdom comes. His way of salvation is preached. His voice is heard.

However, there is something ugly in us that says – wait up – I am smarter than him. I'm better than him.

No submission for me – no restraints on me.

But, what happens when we oppose this order is we violate God's plan and design.

We draw attention to us. We rob God of the glory and the ultimate authority.

We draw attention to our flawed voice.

In Corinth – it seems two groups in particular were causing an issue and disrupting the services – some prophets and some women. They were violating these streams of authority.

So, Paul gives instructions for making sure order is restored.

First, he addresses the prophets who were causing an issue.

Verses 32-33a:

And the prophets' spirits are subject to the prophets, since God is not a God of disorder but of peace.

The word here translated *subject* is *hupotasso* – a military term – subordinated to – under the authority of.

Something inside these prophets said – if God has chosen to speak through me – I should speak. Don't limit me – don't restrain me.

If anyone speaks – I should speak. No one gets to tell me to be silent.

However, no prophet has the authority to do as they please.

Prophets are merely mouthpieces.

Let's be honest – God even chose to speak through Balaam's donkey.

So, Paul says – even if you are a prophet – you don't get to speak when and where you want.

There must be order.

No one should dominate a service. No one should make it about them.

So, God sovereignly works through other prophets to order the service.

It seems the prophets themselves were to decide who spoke and when.

The prophets were subject to the prophets.

Why? Because God is not a God of disorder but of peace.

It seems clear some didn't like this.

I have the gift – I should speak when I want.

Paul says no – someone who cares more about God's glory than their own will willingly be subject to the other prophets – and if they don't do it willingly – Paul says – the church must implement this instruction and bring order to the service.

There is another area of order Paul needs to address – some disruption by women.

Look at verses 33b-34:

As in all the churches of the saints, the women should be silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak, but are to submit themselves, as the law also says.

Look, without doubt, this is one of the most difficult passages in the Bible.

As in **all** the churches – women are to be **silent** – not **permitted** to speak – they are to **submit** themselves.

Wow – is Paul a patriarchal, sexist male?

Many would say – these words speak for themselves – yes he is.

I don't believe so. Paul understands that when He created, God established an order – with one purpose – to picture the fact that ultimately God is sovereign.

Loving female submission in the home and church was a part of that order and our worship has to confirm to that order.

But, we still need to ask – just what does Paul mean?

Does he mean all women have to be silent in a worship service? No singing, praying, talking.

A few years back we received a scathing Google review – because we supposedly violated this verse – we allow women to sing, pray, even read Scripture.

So no, we don't believe this means women have to be silent throughout a worship service – but what does it mean?

And perhaps the hardest part of this to grasp is how it relates to 1 Corinthians 11:5:

Every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head.

Paul seems to allow women to pray and prophecy if her head is covered – so why now does he command the women to be silent?

Frankly, there is no easy answer to this.

In fact it is so hard that some good scholars have said – the way to deal with this is to say that verses 34 and 35 were not written by Paul. Some scribe came along after Paul and slipped these verses into Paul's letter. So they just ignore them.

That is an easy way out – but the main problem with this view is that every single Greek manuscript of 1 Corinthians that we have includes these verses. There are a handful of manuscripts in which these verses appear after verse 40. It seems one scribe did think the flow of Paul's argument worked better by moving these two verses to the end of the passage.

But these are just a few later manuscripts and anyway – they still include these verses.

I want to suggest that there are **three** main views worthy of our attention on how to understand these verses.

View 1 – Some argue that chapter 11 describes a situation outside the public worship services.

Paul is saying that women can pray and prophesy when it is not a public setting with both men and women present – but they can't do this in a mixed worship setting.

A bit like women can teach women – but they can't teach in a worship service with men and women.

This view is certainly possible. Personally, it seems more likely to me that Paul is describing the church gathered for worship in all of chapter 11 – and it still begs the question – which women should be silent in the church and silent when they do what?

Still, it is a strong view.

View 2 – Paul is commanding prophetesses with the gift of evaluation not to exercise it in public settings.

The women here are women prophetesses – who also have the gift of evaluation.

Paul is saying that – women can prophesy – but what they can't do is evaluate a prophecy. It is the evaluation of a prophecy that is authoritative and forbidden to women.

This is like saying a woman can read Scripture in a mixed setting but not teach on it – it is the teaching that is authoritative.

This is a strong view with a lot going for it. It fits the context well.

The hardest part about this is how to reconcile it with verse 35. How does evaluating whether a prophecy is genuine or not relate to learning something from their husbands at home?

View 3 – Paul is instructing some women who were disrupting the service with questions and interruptions to be silent.

While certainly not a perfect view – and I find much to like about all 3 views – I tend to favour this one.

In verse 31 – Paul says – prophets are to speak one at a time so everyone can *learn* and be encouraged.

Then in verse 35 – Paul says – if these women want to *learn* – same word – let them ask their husbands at home. Let them ask their questions at home.

So, it seems likely that just as some prophets were disrupting the service wanting to prophesy – verse 32 – that some women were disrupting the service with questions, comments and interruptions.

Is it all the women of Corinth doing this? – almost certainly not.

Were no men involved in the disruption? – almost certainly there were.

So why did Paul address just these women?

Because the law says this is particularly improper because it also adds in a violation of the creation order.

When Paul mentions the law – most likely he is referring to the creation account in Genesis 2 where the order of creation established the principle of the headship of men and the loving submission of women.

All submission – men to Christ, people to rulers, children to parents, women to men – all submission points to the absolute authority of Christ.

A man interrupting the service was bad – but a woman interrupting a man prophesying – and perhaps interrupting her husband prophesying, questioning, disrupting the service – this violates the principle of the created order.

This is not something just for Corinth – this is a principle for every church.

Women are not to speak – which is not to interrupt, question, disrupt the message – challenge the men giving the prophecies.

Instead, they are to submit – *hupotasso* – same word as in verse 32.

This is not *just* a gender thing.

Disruptive prophets – men and women – were to submit in verse 32.

Disruptive women are to submit – verse 34.

Instead, verse 35:

If they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home, since it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church.

If they have questions and want to learn – great – but ask their husbands or fathers at home – don't disrupt the church – that is disgraceful – it goes against God's order.

And it is not just prophets and women that must order their lives by submission and restraint. This applies to us all.

Verses 36-39:

Or did the word of God originate from you, or did it come to you only? If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, he should recognize that what I write to you is the Lord's command. If anyone ignores this, he will be ignored. So then, my brothers and sisters, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues.

I believe verse 36 fits better here than addressed to the women of verses 34 and 35.

It seems the church as a whole didn't like this. They were challenging Paul's imposition of order and restraint – in particular those who deemed themselves prophets and the spiritual elite.

Paul says – no – this word – this principle – did not come from you – it did not even come from me – it is the command of the Lord.

You might not like it.

You might think all men and women should be able to speak and question when and where they want.

God says no – we are totally equal – but with different roles – to reflect the gospel and to show God's authority.

It's not about us – it's about Him.

Paul is clear, he doesn't mean ban all speaking gifts.

It means order the gifts to allow His voice to be heard.

In Corinth that was prophecy and tongues.

Today that is teaching.

So how do we apply this?

We ask the flock to exercise submission and restraint.

We don't allow everyone to speak. You might disagree with something presented in a message – fine – but that is a discussion for later – not in the service.

You might want to preach – well the elders make that determination.

We have opportunities for those who believe they have a gift to share the word.

We allow them to investigate this gift – and at times we say – you have a gift – please use it.

At times we have to find a diplomatic way to say – you have many gifts – we don't think teaching is one of them.

Submission. We are an elder run church.

We don't make every decision perfectly – but we do strive to shape our services so you hear the voice of God.

You may disagree with some of our choices – we welcome your input – but at the end of the day we ask you to accept our choices.

Now the big question, so how do we apply this passage to the roles of women today?

How do we apply the principle of male headship in the church?

Paul gives principles in chapter 11 – here in chapter 14 and also in 1 Timothy 2:12:

I do not allow a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; instead, she is to remain quiet.

The role of women in worship services is a hot, hot topic today.

Our understanding of Paul is that in gathered worship – with both men and women present – the issue is what role carries authority – what roles might violate the law established at creation?

We believe the roles are divided into those that are authoritative/teaching in public and non-authoritative/not teaching in public.



There is a degree of subjectivity here – and making these determinations is not easy.

**Authoritative/
Teaching in public**

**Non-authoritative
No teaching in public**

(Men)

Eldership
Teaching
Worship Leading
Communion Leading
Devotionals

(Men and women)

Reading Scripture
Singing
Distributing Elements
Testimonies

This is our imperfect best attempt to apply the principles Paul gives us.

Notice *prayer* – this is a particularly hard one.

My personal view is that the prayer Paul speak of in chapter 11 is praying in tongues. It is how he uses prayer everywhere else in this book and is reinforced because of the way he links it with prophecy. It would be more akin to reading Scripture than ordinary prayer.

So, what about ordinary corporate prayer – is it teaching – does it carry authority?

The way some people pray – it does venture into teaching. For that reason – we have erred on the safer side and chosen to limit public prayer in our worship services to men. But I freely admit that this is the one that gave us the most discussion.

We also want to stress that there are many crucial roles for women in the church. These include:

Roles For Women

Women's Ministry
Children's Ministry
Teaching Women
Worship Team
Discipleship
Counselling
Prayer
Evangelism
etc



Women's Ministry
Children's Ministry
Teaching Women
Worship Team
Discipleship

**Counselling
Prayer
Evangelism
etc**

Look, I know these verses – women should be silent – is where our eyes are drawn in this passage. The world we live in sensitises us to say – you can't limit anyone – especially women.

But – this discussion can make us miss what is crucial in this passage.

In our corporate worship:

Everything must be ordered to ensure His voice is heard 26

Order through limits and affirmation 27-31

Order through submission and restraint 32-39

Everything must be ordered to ensure His voice is heard 40



In our corporate worship:

Everything must be ordered to ensure His voice is heard 40

It is about Him – not any of us.

Verse 40:

But everything is to be done decently and in order.

Our worship service is not to be like the world.

It is meant to reflect the shalom – the peace – the order – that the gospel of Christ brings.

Believers and unbelievers should hear about the salvation possible in the blood of Christ. We are sinners – and the world only offers chaos and no hope. We offer hope – the hope of Christ crucified – the hope of a world to come where there is no death and disorder.

Our service has to have one voice – the voice of God. Any voice you hear is to speak His truth.

Our service has to be ordered – shepherds and sheep – men and women – to reflect the order of creation that points to the gospel, the supremacy of God and His voice in salvation.

Our service has to be ordered – such that in Christ we are one – ethnically many – but one in Christ – rich and poor – but one in Christ – male and female – but one in Christ.

What we sing, how we pray, what we teach – all must reflect these truths.

This has to be a house of peace – with an order and dignity befitting our God.

This has to be a house where the gospel of peace is not just proclaimed – but heard.

Christ is our King. He is our one hope. He must increase – we must decrease.

My fervent prayer is that in our services you encounter one predominant thought – how awesome is Christ our King. Amen.

One Voice, One King (1 Corinthians 14:26-40 March 28, 2021)

Main Point: Everything in our corporate worship must be done decently and in order to ensure His voice alone is heard.

General Questions:

1. Read verses 26-40. What is the situation Paul is addressing and trying to correct?
2. Read v. 26. Is Paul saying this is what should happen or condemning a practice that was happening? Why?
3. What are the potential issues if everyone is given an opportunity to share?
4. Why does it take work and effort to bring order to a worship service?
5. How did Paul command them to bring order to their public speaking?
6. Why were their limits on speakers? Why does what is spoken need to be affirmed?
7. How should we apply this today?

 Number of speakers?
 Who decides who speaks?
 How do you make sure what is spoken is biblical?
8. Biblically, what is peace? Why can you not have peace with disordered, disrupted relationships? How should a church service reflect the gospel of peace?
9. Why must there be submission and restraint in services?
10. In terms of women – why would Paul use the term submission? Do you struggle with that at all?
11. How do you understand vv. 33b-34?
12. In terms of the roles of women in the services – what roles are authoritative and what are not? Do you have issues with where we have drawn the line?
13. Why is it so crucial to know we hear the voice of God?

Application Questions:

1. Are our services decent and in order?

2. The Bible's teaching on delegated authority and roles is absolutely at odds with the prevailing spirit of the world. Do you struggle with this in any way?
3. Are you comfortable with who speaks in our services and what they speak? Do we allow enough opportunities or are we right to limit speakers the way we do?
4. Where would you draw the line in terms of women's involvement in the services? How strongly do you feel about this?
5. How are we doing balancing – valuing women and following gender roles in the church?
6. Are there ways we can make sure the voice of God is heard better and the gospel proclaimed better?