

Evotional

Date: 24th June 2007 (pm).

Speaker: Neil Durling.

Message title: “The church strengthened.”



Bible passage: 1 Corinthians 14:26-40:

What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church. If anyone speaks in a tongue, two—or at the most three—should speak, one at a time, and someone must interpret. If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and God. Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said. And if a revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, the first speaker should stop. For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged. The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets. For God is not a God of disorder but of peace. As in all the congregations of the saints, women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says. 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. Did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only people it has reached? If anybody thinks he is a prophet or spiritually gifted, let him acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord's command. If he ignores this, he himself will be ignored. Therefore, my brothers, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.

The message in brief:

We reach the conclusion of this sermon series on Paul's guidance for worship services. He gives them instruction which is for all the congregations:

1: Spontaneity & order strengthen the church (26-33): Paul says that everyone has something to share (v.26); a hymn, word of instruction, revelation (a specific matter revealed by God such as a prophecy), or a tongue and interpretation. Furthermore, this spontaneity strengthens the church.

However, Paul also says that we need order because God doesn't bring disorder but instead peace (v.33). He gives specific guidance about tongues and interpretation (v.27-28): Two or three and then interpretations. If there aren't any interpretations then just speak in tongues between you and God. He also gives guidance about prophecy (v.29-32): Two or three should speak but allow for someone to interrupt with a word of revelation. Also, the prophet has control over when they give the prophecy.

Spontaneity & order originate from God (36-40): At the end of this passage Paul challenges the “super spiritual” Corinthian Christians telling them that all this didn't originate with them and that they should prophesy and not discourage tongues, but do everything in a fitting and orderly manner.

No spontaneity for women in worship (33-35)? In the midst of this passage come the difficult verses about women being silent in church. Paul says this is guidance for “all the congregations of the saints”. It isn't just a cultural and timely thought. He says that women should *sigao* (keep silent, keep close/secret, hold peace) in the churches. And if they don't it is disgraceful (base, filthy).

Some Bible commentators say that these verses are a later insertion, which *could* be the case. More troubling is that Paul seems to be contradicting his encouragement for women to prophesy and pray (with their heads covered) in chapter 11. What is Paul on about?

It seems that Paul is saying that in a worship service women mustn't butt in to the message and keep asking their husband what it means. Please remember that in Paul's day women were less educated than men. Moreover, teaching women was seen as a sin by many Jews. Paul's teaching was progressive; in effect he was saying that women deserved to be equal to men when it came to education and this, I believe, will strengthen the church. Paul's solution to the inequality was that women should ask at home and men should educate at home.

What should we do?

We need spontaneous and orderly worship every Sunday because this strengthens the church.

Question:

Why not pause before church for one minute and ask God if he has anything for you to share in the service?

A prayer:

Lord Jesus Christ, Thank you that worship services can strengthen me. Amen.