

## 1 Corinthians, Chapter 14

St. Paul would prefer that worship (Divine Service) be in a language that all can understand. But because he recognizes speaking in tongues as a gift of the Holy Spirit, St. Paul does not forbid its use in the church. However, he does say that it is necessary to point out the limitations of such speaking and to outline the condition necessary for orderly worship. Peace and good order will prevail in public worship (Divine Service) when Christians make the love of God's Word and for one another their aim. **Read: 1 Corinthians 14:1-32.**



1. St. Paul refers to prophecy as a gift to “desire” (v. 1).
  - a. What reason does he cite for this (1 Cor. 14:1-4)?
  - b. What specific effects does the Word of God produce in those who hear it proclaimed (1 Cor. 14:3)?
  - c. When has God's Word, proclaimed by another person, had these effects in your life?
2. St. Paul contrasts prophecy and speaking in tongues and points out some limitations on speaking in tongues. What do verses 2, 4, and 11 tell you about his priority for what happens when Christians gather for worship?
3. In 1 Cor. 14:7-9, St. Paul refers to the use of flute, harp, and bugle. Why is it important that the sounds produced by these instruments be clear and distinct?
4. What are St. Paul's two main concerns regarding the gift of tongues?
5. St. Paul declares that in church worship he would rather speak five intelligible words that instruct than ten thousand words in an unintelligible tongue (1 Cor. 14:19).
  - a. What implications might his statement have for a preacher or a teacher in the Church today?
  - b. Do you ever hear or read words in the Divine Service that you do not understand? If so, what do you think ought to be done about that?

6. St. Paul tells the Corinthian Church to stop thinking like children, except when it comes to evil.
  - a. What do you think he means by saying that Christians are to be infants in regard to evil? (1 Cor. 14:20)
  - b. What is meant by the phrase “in your thinking be mature,” especially as we value and use our spiritual gifts?
  
7. In 1 Cor. 14:21, St. Paul quotes from the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 28:49 and Isaiah 28:11-12). God said that the disobedient and unbelieving Israelites would not obey the clear words of the Prophets, who spoke God’s Word to them. As punishment, the Lord would speak to them in foreign languages through conquering nations who would bring judgment upon them. In 1 Cor. 14:22-23, St. Paul refers to the impact of unintelligible tongues upon unbelievers who would visit the services held by the Corinthians. How would hearing unintelligible tongues affect these unbelievers (1 Cor. 14:23)?
  
8. Prophecy is for building up believers. In what specific ways do you benefit from God’s Word as you hear it preached or as you read and study it with others?
  
9. What purpose or benefit do believers derive from Divine Services? What about unbelievers?
  
10. In 1 Cor. 14:28, St. Paul does not permit speaking in tongues in public services without interpretation. What does this tell you about the place of the gift of tongues in the Divine Service?
  
11. What are the three specific instructions St. Paul gives for the use of prophecy in the worship service (1 Cor. 14:29-33a). Is orderliness still a concern in the conduct of the Divine Service?

**Read: 1 Cor. 14:33-40**

12. St. Paul has been giving instructions about the proper conduct of the Divine Service, especially as it involved speaking in tongues and prophesying. Now he returns to the issue of proper decorum in the Divine Service as that applies to the roles of men and women. He previously addressed this issue in 1 Cor. 11:3-16. What is fitting about a respectful reserve on the part of women in the Divine Service?
  
13. In 1 Cor. 11:3, St. Paul refers to the man as the head of the woman as Christ is the head of the man. Paul wants this relationship that God has built into the structure of creation (11:8-9) observed in the home (Ephesians 5:22) and in the church (1 Cor. 14:35). What would a respectful observance of this order on the part of both men and women communicate to unbelievers? (Consider: 1 Peter 3:1-7).
  
14. As women are called upon to respectfully yield to men in the home and in the Church, men are called upon to respectfully honor women (1 Peter 3:7; 1 Cor. 11:11-12; Ephesians 5:25, 33).

What does such respectful treatment of women by Christian men communicate to unbelievers?

15. While some specific ways in which men and women relate to one another may change as customs change, the fundamental order that God built into creation is to be upheld. How do you think Christian men and women today might convey a God-pleasing attitude toward each other in contrast to ungodly attitudes seen in the world around us?
  
16. Christians are not to go off on their own tangents, ignoring the effect their behavior has on others (1 Cor. 14:36). St. Paul maintains that what he has written about conducting worship in an orderly and fitting way is not his own personal opinion but was written by the Lord's command. What does this say to the idea that what Paul has written no longer applies to us today?
  
17. The way in which Christians worship today may be somewhat different from the way in which Christians worshiped in St. Paul's day. What are some of the principles Paul expressed that are as true today as then?

### **What about Women's Ordination?**

From: *Women in the Church: Scriptural Principles and Ecclesial Practice* (CTCR: September 1985)

Article XIV of the Augsburg Confession states: "It is taught among us that nobody should publicly teach or preach or administer the sacraments in the church without a regular call" (*nisi rite vocatus*). Such a call is denied to women by a "command of the Lord."

Although the Scriptures teach that women may not hold the pastoral office or perform its distinctive functions, the service of women to the Lord and His church in various other offices established to facilitate the proclamation of the Word has been longstanding in the history especially of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. The self-denying service, gladly given by the many faithful women who have served over the years in such offices as deaconess, Christian day schoolteacher, and parish worker, has been of immeasurable importance. Of these coworkers, too, it must be said that they "can never be sufficiently thanked and repaid."

*See other attachments:*

What About ... The Ordination of Women to the Pastoral Office (LCMS)  
History of Women's Ordination and LGBT Ordination

**Closing Prayer: (from LSB 795 – Voices Raised to You We Offer)**

1       Voices raised to You we offer;  
      Tune them, God for songs of praise.  
Hearts and hands we bring in tribute  
      For Your gifts through all our days.  
      Alleluia! Alleluia!  
      Triune God, to You we sing!

2       All creation joins to praise You;  
      Earth and sky Your works display.  
Art and music, gifts you lend us,  
      We return to You today.  
      Alleluia! Alleluia!  
      God, creator, source of life! Amen.

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**Sources:** God's Word for Today: 1 Corinthians (CPH: 1997), LifeLight: 1 Corinthians (CPH: 2007), Luther's Works (CPH, Fortress), Concordia Commentary: 1 Corinthians (CPH: 2000)