

37. Learning How to Develop the Ministry of Others

In our last topic, we saw that we are to help our physical and spiritual children become mature in their understanding of the Word of God so that they can build up other Christians. We also saw that God said through Isaiah that tongues (other languages) would be a sign to the unbelieving Jews when the Assyrians came and conquered the nation of Israel. Since that passage was quoted in 1 Corinthians 14, we saw that tongues were also a sign to the unbelieving Jews in the New Testament. In this topic and the next topic, we will study the only detailed description of a church worship service in the New Testament. In these topics, we will see what Paul told the Corinthian Christians about the proper way to use the church worship service to develop the ministry of one another.

I often ask the question when speaking to church leaders or churches, “When we gather together to worship, who is the audience and who are the participants?” Someone will finally say, “If we are gathering together to worship God, then He is the audience and we are the participants.” These verses show us that there is much more to worship than just singing. In fact, true worship is described in John 4:24 where we read, “God *is* Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” In order to worship in our human spirit, we must be yielding our human spirit to the Holy Spirit. In order to worship in truth, our worship must come from the Word of God and be in agreement with the Word of God. That is why this topic and the next topic are key topics on the subject of worship because we see that true worship will develop the ministry of each Christian.

1 Corinthians 14:23-25 we read, “Therefore if the whole church comes together in one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in *those who are* uninformed or unbelievers, will they not say that you are out of your mind? But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in, he is convinced by all, he is convicted by all. And thus the secrets of his heart are revealed; and so, falling down on *his* face, he will worship God and report that God is truly among you.” The first thing that we notice is that Paul is talking about a meeting of the whole church when they all came together in one place. This describes a Sunday gathering when the whole church comes together to worship the Lord.

Paul goes on to describe the different effects that various gifts will have if a person comes into the service that is not yet a Christian. The word that is translated “uninformed” speaks of a person that is uneducated or illiterate. It is used in Acts 4:13 where we read, “Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.” In comparison to the Jewish rulers, elders and scribes, Peter and John were considered uneducated and untrained men because they had only studied the Old Testament in the synagogue in Capernaum in Galilee and had not studied under a leading rabbi in the city of Jerusalem.

Paul was telling the Corinthian Christians that if someone came into a service of the whole church that had very limited knowledge of the Word of God or someone who was not even a believer that such a person would be greatly confused if everyone was speaking in other languages. In fact, such a person would say that the Christians were out of their mind. The word that is translated

“out of their mind” means *to rave or speak like people who are not in their right mind*. In contrast, Acts 2:3-11 concludes in verse 11, “Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.” The tongues in Acts 2 were in the languages of the various groups of people who were gathered in Jerusalem and they all heard about the wonderful works of God in their own languages. This produced great interest instead of great confusion. Paul was making it clear that other languages would only confuse an unbeliever.

In contrast, if people were prophesying by sharing the Word of God in the service, there would be a very different effect on a person that did not know the Scripture or an unbeliever. Paul said that such people would be convinced and convicted by all that they heard. The word that is translated “convinced” means *to convict, refute or confute* because the Word of God exposes sin. The word that is translated “convicted” means *to examine or judge a person*. Here, we see that when we share the Word of God that the Word of God causes people to examine their own hearts.

In fact, verse 25 says that the Word of God will reveal the secrets of the heart. In 1 Corinthians 4:5, Paul said that Christ will reveal the secrets of the heart. That verse says, “Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.” Then, 2 Corinthians 4:2 says, “But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.” In both verses, we see that God is able to reveal the hidden things of the heart. Here, we see that God reveals such secrets through His Word.

When an unbeliever has the secrets of his heart revealed through the Word of God, we see that the person will fall before the Lord in repentance that produces true worship. Such a person will also report that God is speaking through the Christians as they share the Word of God. This reminds us as Hebrews 4:12 says, “For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” God will work through His Word if Christians will share His Word.

Then, 1 Corinthians 14:26 gives several ways to share the Word of God. That verse says, “How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.” Here, we see that Paul goes on to give instructions about various ways to share the Word of God. In the Jewish synagogue services, seven to nine men would read various passages from the Old Testament. Here, we see that Paul said someone can share in the worship service of the church and share the Word of God by reading a Psalm.

The word that is translated “teaching” speaks of *the act of teaching or giving instruction*. 2 Timothy 4:2 says, “Preach the word! Be ready in season *and* out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.” Here, we see that we are to be ready at all times to share the Word of God to teach others. Acts 2:42 says, “And they continued steadfastly in the

apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.” Here, we see that the Christians continued in the apostles’ teaching. In fact, that was one of the four basic things that they did to help new Christians grow.

The way that we can share the Word with a tongue is explained more fully in 1 Corinthians 14:27-28 where we read, “If anyone speaks in a tongue, *let there be* two or at the most three, *each* in turn, and let one interpret. But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church, and let him speak to himself and to God.” Here, we see that teaching in another language should be allowed only when there is someone present who can interpret that language. It is to be limited to two or at the most three people. They are to speak one at a time. It must be interpreted into the language of the people present. If there is no one to interpret the language, the person is to keep silent.

The word that is translated “revelation” means *to reveal or make something known that was unknown*. After Simeon saw Christ, when Mary and Joseph brought Christ to the temple to dedicate him, Simeon said in Luke 2:30-32, “For my eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, a light to *bring* revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel.” Here, we see that Christ came to reveal God to the Gentiles. As a part of his prayer for the Ephesians, Paul said in Ephesians 1:17-18, “That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.” Here we see that God will give Christians both wisdom and revelation so that they will come to a greater understanding of Christ. As we explain what the Word has taught us about Christ, we are passing on to others what has been revealed to us about Christ from the Word of God.

The word that is translated “interpretation” speaks of interpreting something that was spoken in another language. This is explained in the only other place where this word is used in the New Testament. 1 Corinthians 12:10 says, “To another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another *different* kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.” Here, we see that the word is used to speak of interpreting something that had been spoken in another language.

However, regardless of how a person shares the Word of God in a worship service, there is one requirement that always applies. We see that all speaking is to be done for edification. In fact, edification is to be a continuous process or something that we carry out continually as we share the Word of God. Here, we see that the reason why several people can share the Word of God in various ways in the worship service is to continually build up the Christians that are gathered together to worship the Lord. We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that the reason why several people should share the Word of God in a worship service is to build up all Christians. Each one sharing the Word of God is also being built up in the Lord. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn how to develop the ministry of others.