

GOD IS AMONG US

Part 14 of Foundations 260. 1 Corinthians 14.
Peter Foxwell. Cornerstone Church. April 27, 2025.

WE SHOULD WORSHIP WELL

We are not free to worship in any old which way.

- Nadab and Abihu were killed by God for offering unauthorized worship.
- The lesson: There are liturgies that please God, produce faithful Christians, and build strong churches. And there are formats that do not.
- The Lord wants us to worship well together. The Bible tells us how.

CHAOS IN CORINTH

The church in Corinth was a dynamic, Spirit-filled community.

- But it was deeply divided, infested with pagan ideas, and manifesting spiritual gifts in unhealthy ways.
- When they gathered for worship, people were shouting over each other, speaking in unintelligible languages, and hogging attention.
- 1 Corinthians 14 is Paul's attempt to bring order out of the chaos.

1 CORINTHIANS 14

Chapter 14 does NOT teach a format for worship.

- It teaches us the role of spiritual gifts in the worship service.
- It teaches us how to fit gifts into the already established liturgy.
- And in so doing, it teaches us three principles to adopt when developing a liturgy for worship. How we worship matters to God.

THREE PRINCIPLES FOR WORSHIPPING WELL

Principle One: Worship must be participatory- verse 40.

40 But everything is to be done decently and in order.

- In the context of chapter 14, “decently and in order” means that no one should be allowed to hijack the service or exclude others.
- The Corinthians were speaking over each other, and using unintelligible languages, and this did not promote participation.
- We should carefully plan our worship meetings to encourage participation. So, at the Cornerstone:
 - We participate in interactive readings.
 - We use our own musicians - not outside professionals.
 - We sing together. We are the choir.
 - Our Bible readers are from the congregation, not the “clergy.”
 - We print a study guide so we can all learn together.
 - We pray together, recite creeds together, receive Holy Communion together, and eat together.

Principle Two: Worship must be prophetic - verses 4, 5, 12, 26.

26 Everything is to be done for building up.

- “Build up” appears four times. Paul is making a point.
- How do worship meetings “build up”? Through prophecy: *“the one who prophesies builds up the church”* (verse 4).
- Prophecy is Spirit-filled speaking of God’s Word. It has the power to *“strengthen, encourage, and console”* (verse 3) us.
- Our worship meetings are prophetic when they are saturated with God’s Word: read, sing, pray, teach, apply, bless with, the Word.

Principle Three: Worship must be transcendent - verse 25.

26 "...he will fall facedown and worship God, proclaiming, 'God is really among you.'"

- Transcendent means the presence and glory of God are felt among us.
- When God's presence manifests, *"the secrets of our hearts are revealed,"* we become aware of how not God we are, and how great and good God is.
- God's presence manifests in church when he, not personalities or performances are the main attraction. The spotlight is on him without distractions. Because *"God is not a God of disorder but of peace"* (v. 33).
- It's like we move past the gift box, filler, and wrapping paper to find the gift.

LET'S WORSHIP WELL TOGETHER

- We've learned how to worship well together.
- Worship is not about personal displays, individual experiences, or chaotic expressions, but about three necessary elements:
 - We all participate
 - We all interact with the Word of God
 - We all encounter God's presence because the focus is on him only
- Would you make it a point to pray this week? Please ask the Lord to make his presence known among us when we meet for worship.

"Lord, show us your glory as we worship you. Even now, as we receive Holy Communion, make yourself know in this room. Amen."

SMALL GROUP GUIDE

Review

- Review Peter's April 27th teaching and study guide.
- What were the highlights of Peter's teaching?
- What questions do you have about the passage or Peter's teaching?
- Use the S.P.E.C.K. method to reflect on and apply the teaching:
 - S: Sins to confess
 - P: Promises to claim
 - E: Examples to follow
 - C: Commands to obey or Christ to rest in
 - K: Knowledge or insights to consider

Discuss

- In what ways do you feel engaged and participating during our worship gatherings? Are there areas where you feel more like a spectator than a participant? Why might that be, and what can you do about it?
- Have you ever experienced the Word of God in our worship meetings—whether from a sermon, song, prayer, etc—that strengthened, encouraged or consoled you? Would you be willing to share that experience?
- When have you most strongly sensed God's presence during worship—what contributed to that experience? How can we keep the focus on God as the “main attraction” in our worship?

Prayer

- Pray the Cornerstone worship meetings would be participatory, saturated with the Word of God, and transcendent.