

BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

Giving First Place to Proclamation
1 Corinthians 14:1-25

Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.

Leaders' Responsibilities:

Important: Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a series of sessions needs to have access to the "Introduction" article found at the beginning of each series (Bible Teaching #....). The weekly session "Background" located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day's study.

1. **The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.

2. **The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)

3. **The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

Prior to this Coming Session:

Gathering Time Leader:

Bible Study Leader:

Worship Time Leader: Prepare copies of Psalm 86 which is given at the end of the worship time for three readers or copies for the entire congregation. Enlist readers ahead of time.

Music Sources:

Hosanna, *The Worship Hymnal* # 135; CCLI # 21545

We Bow Down, *The Worship Hymnal* # 31; CCLI # 20003

Worthy of Worship, *The Worship Hymnal* # 3; CCLI # 82869

We Will Glorify, *The Worship Hymnal* # 22: CCLI # 19038

1

Copy this section for the Gathering Time leader.

Gathering Time: (Suggested time: 15 minutes)

Giving First Place to Proclamation

Focal Text

1 Corinthians 14:1-25

Background

1 Corinthians 14:1-40

Main Idea

The gift of prophecy is considerably more important than the gift of tongues because it is understandable speech that can both build up Christians and evangelize unbelievers.

Question to Explore

To what extent do you desire and exercise the gift of proclaiming the gospel to others?

Teaching Aim

To guide the church to contrast the importance of prophecy and speaking in tongues.

Gathering together:

Sing one or both:

Hosanna, *The Worship Hymnal* # 135; CCLI # 21545

We Bow Down, *The Worship Hymnal* # 31; CCLI # 20003

First thoughts:

The title for lesson today is Giving First Place to Proclamation and a part of the study will emphasize the importance of the spiritual gift of prophecy and the importance of sharing the good news of Christ. Chapter 14 of 1 Corinthians also includes the admonition to orderly worship in which various people take part. In the worship time we will consider elements of worship in which and to which each member of the body participates. As we begin today let us prayerfully consider the contribution of prayer, encouragement, wisdom or service which we may make today.

Closing the Gathering Time:

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won't need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

2

Copy this section for the Bible Study leader.

Note to the Bible Study Leader: Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

Teacher Preparation

Giving First Place to Proclamation

Focal Text

1 Corinthians 14:1-25

Background

1 Corinthians 14:1-40

Main Idea

The gift of prophecy is considerably more important than the gift of tongues because it is understandable speech that can both build up Christians and evangelize unbelievers.

Question to Explore

To what extent do you desire and exercise the gift of proclaiming the gospel to others?

Teaching Aim

To guide the church to contrast the importance of prophecy and speaking in tongues.

Introduction to your personal study:

A study of spiritual gifts was done in 13-35-10 and some attention was given to speaking in tongues. This is sometimes a controversial area and your group may include those who have experienced speaking in tongues as well as those who believe that this spiritual gift ended with New Testament times. Your purpose for this lesson is to encourage understanding of what Paul was teaching the Corinthians. We desire spiritual gifts in order to build up the church and share the gospel.

Prayerfully prepare the lesson asking the Lord to guide your preparation and teaching.

Background:

Please ask for and read the information contained in the “**Introduction**” article found at the beginning of this series (Bible Teaching #....) of Bible Study and Worship sessions. Whoever downloaded this session for you should have that material for you, as well.

Focusing on the Meaning:

1 Corinthians 14:1-25

Gifts are for Edification (Verses 1-13)

Verses 1-4 Paul wished that the Corinthian church would understand and embrace the teachings on the importance of love. “**Follow the way of love**”, he says. “Follow has the idea of pursuit with persistence; it indicates a never-terminating action” (Morris, L. *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, 1 Corinthians*. Revised Edition. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1985, p. 186).

He knew, however, that doing so would be a life-long endeavor. In the meantime, they were dealing with issues related to spiritual gifts. Since Paul wished for them to seek the best of the spiritual gifts, he emphasizes in Chapter 14 the importance of choosing prophecy over tongues. The reason is simply that prophecy is superior because it is intelligible. The gift of prophecy may be described as a special ability to receive and convey a new revelation of truth from God. Prophecy built up, taught, and comforted the people of the church. Speaking in tongues was a blessing to the one who spoke in tongues, but only God could understand the words which were spoken. Speaking in tongues was directed upward; prophecy was outwardly directed.

“From the way the apostle writes it is not unreasonable to assume that there were some in Corinth who held that ‘tongues’ was the more important, perhaps even that those who spoke in ‘tongues’ were superior Christians. Paul is at pains to make it clear that the exercise of this gift is legitimate. It can be a mark of spiritual fervour, and in any case every gift of God is good and is to be used. But at the same time he curbs the exaggerated regard some of the Corinthians had for it. He steadily insists that the gift of prophecy is much to be preferred. Following on his demonstration of the importance of love, Paul insists that edification must be the prime consideration. Does one’s gift help other people? That is the important thing” (Morris, p. 186).

“The most acute problem arising out of the rivalry over spiritual gifts was the phenomenon of speaking in tongues, which was another expression of irresponsible freedom. It was not a problem that belonged merely to the fringe of practical interest and was therefore better ignored than publicized, but one that engaged the attention of Paul as seriously as any other problem in the letter. Those who spoke with tongues were eager for manifestations of the Spirit (chapter 14:12); they desired more explicit evidence of the power of God. Their motive undoubtedly arose from the conviction that the extraordinary – particularly the extraordinary as a subjective experience – was a sign of the Spirit. Having a subjective experience that was a sign of the Spirit would

enable them to appeal to their own religious and miraculous power as proof of superior piety.

Speaking in tongues was a form of prayer (verse 14) that probably began with intelligible speech and by means of an intensification of feeling culminated in a series of incoherent, emotional utterances (Glen, J. S. *Pastoral Problems in First Corinthians*, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1964, p. 178).

“Prophecy is something like our preaching, but it is not identical with it. It is not the delivery of a carefully prepared sermon, but the uttering of words directly inspired by God” (Morris, p. 187).

A prophetic word provides edification. This word means to “build up”. Speaking a clear word from God strengthens both individual believers and the church.

A prophetic word provides exhortation. This word is from the same root as the word Jesus used to describe the Holy Spirit in John 14: 16 **“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever .”** “The word describes a person who is called alongside of someone to help in times of discouragement. What the Holy Spirit does for us, we do for each other by speaking a clear word from God.” (Harbour, B., *Bible Book Study Commentary. 1 Corinthians*. October, November, December, 1991, Nashville, Tennessee: The Sunday School Board, p. 108).

A prophetic word provides comfort. Life for the Corinthians was filled with fear and sorrow. Danger was ever present. A prophetic word spoke of God’s care and provision.

Tongues, which were inwardly focused, had the potential of causing pride in the one who spoke in tongues.

Verse 5 Paul speaks to the value of tongues. He says **“I would like every one of you to speak in tongues, but I would rather have you prophesy.”** He emphasizes again the importance of edifying the church which can only be done if tongues are interpreted.

Verses 6-12 Paul continues to insist that tongues lose their value if they are not understood. It would seem that speaking in tongues without an interpreter must have become an issue for Paul speaks here of the strident sound various instruments played at once would make.

This must have described the sound of various people speaking in tongues with no interpretation and no intent to benefit others. The whole point of language is to have meaning.

“(The word “foreigner”) is perhaps not the best translation of barbaros, ‘barbarian’. The word ... means someone whose language sounds like ‘bar bar’, i.e., whose language makes no sense. The word is often used in a derogatory fashion, of those beyond the

pale of civilization (just as is the case with the English equivalent). It is this that the English word “foreigner” misses. Paul’s primary thought is that the person’s speech is unintelligible, but the derogatory associations of ‘barbarian’ are in mind also. The speaking in ‘tongues’ that seemed to the Corinthians a matter for such pride turns out to be the means of making them nothing more than barbarians. This would be even worse for a Greek of their day than (for any of us in today’s world).” (Morris, p. 189, interpreted).

Verse 12 returns to the theme so important to Paul, ***“Since you are eager to have spiritual gifts, try to excel in gifts that build up the church”***.

This indicates that although spiritual gifts are a gift of the Holy Spirit, there is some element of our choice involved. If we never try to preach, teach, evangelize, serve, or give, we may never know how that spiritual gift might be revealed in our life. If we only long for a certain spiritual gift, we may keep the Spirit from manifesting others to us.

Tongues Demand Interpretation (Verses 13-22)

Verses 13-17 Paul continues to emphasize the necessity of interpreting tongues if one is to speak in tongues. ***“For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind.”*** Both mind and spirit must be involved in the worship experience. An experience which only involves our intellect would be interesting, but not inspirational. We might have no inclination to put into practice the teachings we had studied. An experience which only involves our emotion would leave us less well prepared to understand and live out Scriptural imperatives. One would be dry; the other would be dependent upon additional excitement to continue. A healthy worship experience must include both. There is excitement and pleasure in the understanding of deeper Biblical truth – a task for the mind. There is excitement in congregational singing, prayer, giving, and fellowshiping—tasks which can involve emotions and mind. Both mind and emotion or spirit are essential for a healthy, long-lasting spiritual experience.

Sad events have happened where people became so involved in the ecstatic, emotional aspect of worship that they followed unscrupulous leaders even to their death. A slower spiritual death may have come to others who week after week engaged only the intellectual part of themselves in worship.

Verse 18-19 Paul makes his strongest statement ***“I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. But in the church I would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue.”*** The contrast is extreme – 5 words that can be understood by someone else are better than 10,000 words in a tongue which is not understood and not interpreted. ***“In the church”*** here means in the assembly of Christians, not in a building, There were no Christian buildings in this period.

Verse 20 Paul is struggling to make others understand. ***“Brothers, stop thinking like children.”*** It is clear to Paul that it is best to speak so that others will come to know Christ. Yet, there must have been those who, like children, insisted on continuing the pattern of expression in the group which brought them satisfaction, praise, or spiritual enlightenment. Paul once more softens his words by addressing his “brothers”. Nonetheless, the words that follow are strong.

Eugene Peterson expresses it this way in The Message. ***“To be perfectly frank, I’m getting exasperated with your infantile thinking. How long before you grow up and use your head – your adult head? It’s all right to have a childlike unfamiliarity with evil; a simple no is all that’s needed there. But there’s far more to saying yes to something. Only mature and well-exercised intelligence can save you from falling into gullibility: it’s written in Scripture that God said,***

***In strange tongues
and from the mouths of strangers
I will preach to this people
but they’ll neither listen nor believe.”***

Isaiah 28: 11-12 talks about God speaking and people not listening. ***“Very well, then, with foreign lips and strange tongues God will speak to this people, to whom he said, ‘This is the resting place, let the weary rest’ and ‘This is the place of repose’ – but they would not listen.”***

The reference is to the failure of the Israelites to heed the prophet. Their judgment will be to be delivered over to men of strange speech, the Assyrian invaders. The connection with the present argument is not obvious. Perhaps Paul means that, as those who had refused to heed the prophet were punished by hearing speech that was not intelligible to them, so would it be in his day. Those who would not believe would hear unintelligible ‘tongues’, but be quite unable to understand the wonderful meaning” (Morris, p. 192). This is a frightening concept and should have caused the Corinthians to heed Paul. How sad to think that we would preach a message about Christ which no one could understand.

We can, of course, carry this idea forward. What about our church language, order of service, even closeness to one another makes it difficult for the outsider to understand or feel a part of us?

Verse 22 This verse is difficult to understand. “But perhaps the best suggestion is that of B.C. Johanson who argues that verse 22 should be seen as a rhetorical question (like that in Galatians 4:16, where the construction is similar). The Corinthians may well have argued that a man speaking in ‘tongues’ would be a sign to outsiders that God was at work, whereas prophecy did no more than convey a message to the believer. Paul asks, ***‘Are tongues, then, a sign, not for believers but for unbelievers, and prophecy for believers, not for unbelievers?’*** He proceeds to refute this view in the examples that follow” (Morris, p. 193).

Speaking So That Others Come to Faith. (Verses 23-25)

Verses 23-25 Paul summarizes his teaching. When the church comes together and non-believers are present, those non-believers will not understand speaking in tongues. They may, in fact, think that the members are out of their mind. Clear preaching, however, leads to a person examining themselves and being led to declare ***“God is really among you.”***

Practical aspects of worship (14:26-33)

Verse 26 Paul describes a worship service. Everyone has (or could have) a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue, or a word of interpretation. Paul was describing a church which met in a home or under a tree or by the river. The structure is much like the house church of which you are a part. There is a plan for the service, but each one can participate and should someone have an insight or understanding which is of God, that can and should be shared.

Note that Paul includes tongues and interpretation in his description. His admonition is ***“All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church.”***

This admonition applies to a home church. No one has the right to use the worship service as a forum for arguing a particular agenda. No one has the right to “take over” from the one designated to lead for that day although all have the right to make contributions. The leader guides the discussion, but does not insist on being the only one to teach or speak. Barclay states “The really notable thing about an early Church service must have been that almost everyone came feeling that he had both the privilege and the obligation of contributing something to it” (Barclay, Wm. *The Daily Study Bible, Letters to the Corinthians*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1954, p. 150).

Verse 28 In the context of the worship service, two or three may speak in tongues, but only one at a time. Someone must interpret or the speaker must keep quiet. There was no place, in Paul’s mind, for a mass speaking in tongues.

Verse 29

Prophecy here is not the formal preaching service to which churches have become accustomed. However, prophecy is a spiritual gift so we should not assume that anyone can speak about any issue of interest. A prophetic utterance should be a special understanding of God’s message. It should edify, exhort, and comfort.

Further, there is consideration of the words being said. The mind is engaged. “It is not certain who are the others who are to weigh carefully what is said. This may refer to all the other prophets, but as there is a special gift of distinguishing between spirits (12:10) it is more likely to refer to people who have this gift. It is also possible that the whole church is meant (cf. 1 John 4:1), as Grudem holds (p. 62; so Barrett). The utterance of

one who claims to be a prophet is thus not to be accepted uncritically, but is to be tested in the appropriate way” (Morris, p. 195).

All is done in order for ***“God is not a God of disorder but of peace.”***

Verses 34-35 Paul here prohibits women from speaking in church. They are to inquire of their husbands at home if they have questions.

This verse is one of various verses which have led to the current emphasis in evangelical circles on the distinct roles of women and the submission of women to the authority of men.

It certainly seems out of context. It is as if Paul remembered that the issue of women taking leadership could also cause disruption and he stopped to address it once more. Or perhaps Paul is thus indicating that women would not have the gift of prophecy since they could not exercise it in the church.

Please remember that, in the same general timeframe in which Paul was writing this church, other churches were having divisive issues of doctrine and practice. Some evidence indicates that persons in other churches were writing to Paul in order to gain his support for their particular point-of-view. So it may be that Paul was in some way trying to help those Christians to quit bringing up such petty questions. It is as if he was saying: “What is all this about what you should eat, or what women should wear, or how to organize, or if women can speak in church, or” “Get on with the important things!”

Yet, the role of women in church life is a large and divisive issue in the church today. For many Christians today, Paul was speaking to the reality that nothing should be done to associate the Christian church with the many forms of worship which featured goddesses and temple prostitutes. Paul wanted nothing to be done which could discredit the new Christian church and its message. There are significant indications that Paul accepted the assistance of women and appreciated their contributions in other situations.

Was Paul addressing a situation in the Corinthian church where some women were taking leadership roles in such a way as to draw attention to themselves? Were they participating in worship in a way reminiscent of temple worship? Were the excesses of speaking in tongues more often experienced by women? These are questions Paul does not answer for us.

Paul undoubtedly felt that “Christian women ought not to be ‘forward’, they should not needlessly flout the accepted ideas of the day.” (Morris, 196).

Certainly Paul was a man of his age. He was a Jew and women had no place in the teaching/learning of the synagogue. Their place of influence was in the home and they were certainly essential in preparing and participating in the Sabbath meal.

Although there is an emphasis in many churches today on the role of women being a less public role, many others view that differently. “His (Paul’s) instruction is generally considered as applying to a localized area and time, the churches of Paul’s own ministry. Women have been permitted to take active part in kingdom service through the centuries. What an immeasurable contributions they have made! They have constituted the bulk of our teaching, training, and missionary forces at home and abroad. Where would we be today in our churches if we had not, for the most part, considered these admonitions of Paul concerning women as temporary and localized?” (Berquist, M. J. *Studies in First Corinthians*. Nashville, Tennessee: Convention Press, 1960, pp. 112-113).

We are thus left with the question of whether Paul was declaring a reality for women of all ages and cultures or if he was addressing a specific issue of the Corinthian church.

In the group you lead, however large or small, you will most likely have those who hold both these views. It is an opportunity for grace to abound. Arguing will not change any minds.

Verses 36-39 Paul seems weary with the argument about spiritual gifts. He has said what needed to be said and it is necessary for the people to accept what he has said as coming from the Lord.

Be eager to share a revelation from God; do not forbid speaking in tongues. But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.

Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:

To guide the church to contrast the relative importance of prophecy and speaking in tongues.

To encourage the church to ask “To what extent do we desire and exercise the gift of proclaiming the gospel to others?”

For Personal Reflection:

What have I learned from this study?

What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?

What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?

Bible Study Plan (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

Giving First Place to Proclamation

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc.

Begin by helping the group locate the Focal Text in their Bibles. Also, share with them the Main Idea to be learned from the Scriptures, and the Questions to be Explored by the group.

Focal Text

1 Corinthians 14:1-25

Background

1 Corinthians 14:1-40

Main Idea

The gift of prophecy is considerably more important than the gift of tongues because it is understandable speech that can both build up Christians and evangelize unbelievers.

Question to Explore

To what extent do you desire and exercise the gift of proclaiming the gospel to others?

Teaching Aim

To guide the church to contrast the importance of prophecy and speaking in tongues.

Connect with Life:

Attract the attention of the group to the lesson by asking them to share the following if it is not hurtful to anyone in or outside of the group: What is the very worst gift that you ever received?

Follow that with: Were you gracious and kind in receiving it?

Add: Did you use it in some way?

Again: Have any of you ever received a gift that puzzled you?, that you could not figure out how to use it or what you could do with it?

Tell the group: God gives us all types of gifts, all the time. But one thing is certain. All of God's gifts are good, all are useful, and God intends for us to make the best possible use of his gifts. None of God's gifts to us are bad gifts. Today, we are going to study two gifts from God that are among a group of gifts known as spiritual gifts.

Guide the Study:

Place the following outline on a white board or large piece of paper.

1 Corinthians 14:1-40

Gifts are for Edification (Verses 1-13)

Tongues Demand Interpretation (Verses 13-22)

Speaking So That Others Come to Faith (Verses 23-25)

Practical Aspects of Worship (Verses 28-35)

Summary (Verses 36-40)

Have someone read 1 Corinthians 14: 1-13

Ask: How does Paul relate this chapter to chapter 13. (He says we are to follow the way of love).

Instruct the group to look back through verses 1-13.

Ask: What spiritual gift does Paul indicate is the more important one?

From the **Teacher Preparation** material, explain why speaking in tongues may have become a negative issue.

Define prophecy (see below) and allow for discussion.

Quote this description for the group: "Prophecy is something like our preaching, but it is not identical with it. It is not the delivery of a carefully prepared sermon, but the uttering of words directly inspired by God" (Morris, p. 187).

Have someone reread verse 3.

Ask: What is the purpose of prophecy.

From the **Teacher Preparation** material discuss how prophecy edifies, exhorts, and comforts. Discuss other words which clarify the meaning - (builds up, teaches, encourages, gives counsel).

Consider: If prophecy were the same as modern day preaching, would these elements be present? (Yes, they should be).

Continue: Is the pastor or preacher the only person in the church who has the spiritual gift of prophecy?

Ask the question another way. Is the pastor or preacher the only person in the church who speaks a word from God which edifies, exhorts, and comforts others?

Have someone read verse 4.

Ask: What happens when someone speaks in tongues? (They edify themselves).

Have someone read verse 5.

Follow with this thought: What must happen when someone speaks in tongues if the church is to be edified? (There must be an interpreter).

Have someone read verses 6-12.

Ask: What is the word picture which Paul paints?

Have someone read verse 13-17.

Use the Teacher Preparation material to guide a discussion about the involvement of both mind/intelligence and spirit/emotional in worship.

Ask another person to read verses 18-19.

Present these questions:

Did Paul speak in tongues? (Yes).

But what does he say he would rather do?

How strongly does he feel about this?

Have someone read verses 20-25.

Seek opinions on this: What might happen if unbelievers came into a service where people were speaking in tongues? (They might think people were out of their minds).

What should be the result of prophesying or proclaiming the word of God?

- It convicts a person of his or her own sin
- It brings one under judgment
- It shows a person the secrets of his own heart.
- It brings one to one's knees before God.

State that these considerations will be discussed more during the worship time.

Have someone read verses 26-33.

Encourage discussion: How does this model of church life appear similar to the home church model?

Choose to study verses 34-35 as is appropriate for your group. You may already be out of time for the Bible study. Or, you may prefer to not undertake such a big and, perhaps, inflammatory subject in your group. Or, you may decide to suggest that each teen and adult research this topic and have a special study at another time than the regular church Bible study.

Have someone read verse 40.

Encourage Application:

If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the **Youth!!! Take Ten** page and allow them to move away from the adults and apply the lesson by and for themselves.

Ask: How can we summarize Paul's teaching in Chapter 14?

After an opinion or two are given, request someone to close in prayer.

Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time. Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

Youth!!! Take Ten

Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

Giving First Place to Proclamation **1 Corinthians 14:1-25**

A youth will lead the following activity and comments. No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

Tongues and Talking and Noises in the Church

The spiritual gift of tongues is experienced in some churches today. These are often referred to as Pentecostal churches because of their emphasis on the Holy Spirit. In Acts 2:1-41 the apostles experienced the coming of the Holy Spirit in a marvelous way. People from various cultures and linguistic backgrounds heard the apostles speaking and understood what was being said. Peter preached an amazing sermon and verse 41 of Acts 2 says that about 3,000 people accepted Christ and were baptized. This event is called the Day of Pentecost.

The issue of speaking of tongues can cause dissension if introduced into a church body which has not been accustomed to speaking in tongues. Paul's admonition in 1 Corinthians 14 serves to remind us that we are to speak so that the message of salvation can be clearly heard and understood by others. In Chapter 12, Paul admonished believers to do everything they do to build up the church. In Chapter 13, he talks about love being the motivating factor in all we do. This are important to remember as you consider the issue of speaking in tongues as it relates to others and to yourself.

Worship Time (Suggested time: 30 minutes)***Giving First Place to Proclamation***
1 Corinthians 14:1-25**Beginning the Service:**

Sing **Worthy of Worship**, *The Worship Hymnal* # 3; CCLI # 82869

Offering:**Praying for the World:**

Historically, ethnic Serbians identify themselves as Serbian Orthodox and protectors of Christianity due to the many years they defied the Islamic Turkish invaders of the Ottoman Empire. Despite this fact, many do not understand what it means to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ or the need to be a part of a local body of believers. Out of the approximately 10 million people who inhabit the country, only one in 5,000 is born again and many of these encounter ridicule on a daily basis. A definite need for the love of Christ rips through this war-torn country. Only the Healer can bring hope to the divisions separating this land and its people.

Sharing Guide:

This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God's call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.

Giving First Place to Proclamation
1 Corinthians 14: 26

The theme for study today has been Giving First Place to Proclamation. The overall message of Chapter 14 of 1 Corinthians was the importance of seeking spiritual gifts, mainly prophecy, which clearly shared the good news of Christ.

In verse 26, Paul gives an example of how a New Testament worship service might have been. ***What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church.***

For those of us familiar with home church worship, this verse seems descriptive of what we do on a regular basis. We come together. We may sing using the talents of the group assembled. Songs appropriate for children; hymns for older people and recently introduced praise music may be included. These may be selected by someone or suggested by the group.

The word of instruction may take place in the structured Bible study time. It may be facilitated by a leader, but each person is encouraged to participate. Further, the instruction time is shared by the group. A different person may lead the teaching/learning portion of the time together each week. Most importantly, each person is encouraged to share what God has taught or is teaching them in relationship to the Scripture. Thoughtful discussion helps integrate the teaching into everyday life. Everyone's contribution has validity from the highly trained theologian to the new Christian or the nine year old.

A revelation may be expressed as a prayer request as someone shares a burden which the Lord has given them that week. It may be a praise prayer as another person expresses how God has blessed during the week.

Undoubtedly, some home churches share by speaking in tongues with interpretation.

All of these activities must take place under certain conditions.

1. Worship must never be selfish. Everyone must do what they do to bless the whole group. No one can monopolize teaching time, worship or prayer time.
2. Worship must be intelligible. When God is intelligibly proclaimed it convicts a person of his or her own sin. When Jesus spoke to the Samaritan woman in John 4, she left to tell others ***“Come see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?”*** (John 4:29) Authentic worship convicts of sin. This is true for unbelievers, but it is true for all believers as well.

Worship brings one under God's judgment revealed by His Spirit. An authentic worship experience should help the worshiper to understand the selfish attitudes and actions committed or planned. These may be recent or in the distant past.

It shows a person the secrets of his own heart. Seeing the secrets of our hearts leads us to judgment. Authentic worship is not a feel good experience although feeling good may be a part of it. It helps us to know ourselves as we really are.

It brings one to one's knees before God. Authentic worship results in an attitude, if not an actual action, of submission. A prayer of contrition, a prayer of commitment and a prayer of thanksgiving should follow an encounter in which God reveals the selfishness of our heart and indicates his will for our next few days.

The test of any act of worship is "Does it make us feel the presence of God?"

Paul concludes Chapter 14 with these words. "But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way." The God of peace must be worshipped in peace.

Our worship services should give first place to proclamation. Prophecy or speaking a word directly inspired by God will hopefully be a part of it. It is quite likely that the person who does this may not even be aware of it. They may not announce "Wait, I have a prophetic word". The prophetic word may be couched in quiet terms of teaching, encouragement or counsel and come from study, life experience, and a very close walk with God. The receiver understands it as a word from God because it speaks to the need of the heart.

Proclamation may also occur as we sing praises to God rejoicing in His goodness to us. It occurs as we express thanksgiving to God for large and small blessings of the days just past. It occurs as we give testimony to his saving grace, to his healing mercy, to his faithful provision.

Proclamation is the very heart of a church for it is simply telling the good news about Jesus. Giving first place to proclamation is not a difficult task; it is the very purpose and passion of the church.

Call to Commitment:

Use the worship Psalm 86 as a closing commitment. Make copies from the following page.

Concluding the Service:

Close by singing **We Will Glorify**, *The Worship Hymnal* # 22: CCLI # 19038

Copy for the three participating readers or make copies for everyone if the congregation is going to participate in the reading.

Psalm 86: 1-7; 11-13

First reader:

Hear, O Lord, and answer me,
 for I am poor and needy.
Guard my life, for I am devoted to you.
 You are my God: save your servant
 Who trusts in you.
Have mercy on me, O Lord.
 for I call to you all day long.
Bring joy to your servant,
 for to you, O Lord,
 I lift up my soul.

Second reader:

You are forgiving and good, O Lord,
 abounding in love to all who call to you.
Hear my prayer, O Lord;
 Listen to my cry for mercy.
In the day of my trouble I will call to you
 for you will answer me.

Third reader or congregation:

Teach me your way, O Lord,
 and I will walk in your truth;
Give me an undivided heart,
 that I may fear your name.
I will praise you, O Lord my God, with all my heart;
 I will glorify your name forever.
For great is your love toward me;
 you have delivered me from the depths of the grave.