

Bible Study Group Notes

1 Corinthians 14

THE BIG PICTURE

Paul's concern in this chapter is simple: *will what we do build other people up?* Spiritual gifts are not given so that Christians can impress one another or draw attention to themselves. They are given for the good of the church. So Paul stresses three things: build others up, help others understand, and let everything be done in good order. Christian maturity is not simply knowing more or doing more. It is using what God has given us so that other people are strengthened, outsiders can hear the truth clearly, and Christ is honoured.

INVESTIGATE

Read 1 Corinthians 14.

1. In verses 1-5, why does Paul prefer prophecy to uninterpreted tongues in the gathered church?
2. Look at verses 3, 5 and 12. What words does Paul use to describe the effect our gifts should have on other Christians?
3. In verses 7-11, what do the examples of musical instruments and different languages teach about clear communication?
4. What is Paul's point in verse 19: *"five words with my mind"* rather than *"ten thousand words in a tongue"*?
5. In verses 23-25, what difference does understandable truth make to the outsider who comes into the church?
6. According to verses 26-33, why does Paul put limits and order around people's contributions?
7. What do verses 37-40 show about the relationship between spiritual gifts, God's Word and good order?

REFLECT & APPLY

8. When you come to church, which question comes more naturally: "What will I get from this?" or "How might I strengthen someone else?"
9. What has God given you – time, experience, relationships, abilities, money, opportunities – that could be used more deliberately for someone else's good?
10. Where can church language or habits be confusing to someone new? What could we do at St Peter's to make it easier for people to understand and take part?
11. Paul values clarity because truth matters. Where are we tempted either to use unnecessary jargon or, at the other extreme, to make Christian truth vague?
12. How can good order in church actually serve love, rather than simply make things neat and organised?
13. Are there ways in which you tend to be a spectator rather than a participant in the life of the church? What might one small step towards serving look like?
14. Paul ends by saying, "Let all things be done for building up." What would it look like for that sentence to shape the way you come to church next Sunday?

PRAY

- Thank God that Jesus did not stay at a distance, but came to serve us and gave himself for us.
- Ask God to show us what he has given us, and how we can use it for the good of others.
- Pray that St Peter's would be a church where newcomers understand what is happening, people are warmly helped, and the gospel is made clear.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to make us eager to serve, willing to learn, and ready to do everything for the building up of Christ's people.

NB The Church Prayer Pointers for October are available in church or on the WhatsApp group.