

# 1 Cor 14:26

## A Rebuttal of a Novel Exegesis

Paul Fahy

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. (NKJV)

It is difficult for many good reformed men to feel comfortable with the principles, of what is often called 'body ministry', laid down by Paul in this chapter. The constraints of historic tradition are hard to avoid; particularly as they believe that the establishment of a non-functioning laity with a strong preacher is a safeguard from error and aberrational contributions, or even from meetings lacking content.

But the problem is that both scripture and early church history show that the local church is informal, organic, unstructured, participatory, not dominated by one man, and open to many individual gifts. There is no model in the early church for the typical reformed meeting, where one man does everything and members sit doing nothing.

Now since there is such a clear instruction in 1 Cor 14:26 for every member to be able to participate, some reformed teachers have resorted to an unusual exegesis. Their interpretation turns what Paul says upon its head. This interpretation says that as Paul was correcting errors in the Corinthian assembly, he lists these in condemnation in verse 26. So verse 26, thus, sums up what is wrong with the Corinthian meeting. They teach that every member participation is bad, and the offerings of various people with songs, tongues, and revelations were the cause of the assembly's ills.

This is a most unusual exegesis of this passage, although I admit that some historic commentators have adopted this view (e.g. Albert Barnes, Charles Hodge, Bishop Lightfoot). This is because their long tradition of sitting under one man's ministry could not cope with the suggestion that the meeting should be open to the contributions of non-ordained people. It was beyond their expectations to consider membership participation, and thus their comments were one-sided.

However, man's tradition is not a good basis for establishing church principles; as the great Puritan John Owen said,

*For the most part, the churches that are in the world at present know not how they came so to be, continuing only in that state which they have received by tradition from their fathers.*<sup>1</sup>

Or the Church Father Tertullian,

*Custom without truth is error grown old.*<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'The True nature of a Gospel Church and its government', *Works of John Owen*, Ed. W.H. Goold, Banner of Truth, London (1968), Vol 16, p25

<sup>2</sup> Tertullian; *NT Order*, p285.

## Is there clear apostolic teaching that meetings are open to various contributions?

Repeatedly, the NT uses the phrase ‘one another’ in the context of edifying. Over 60 times this is mentioned, whereas the word ‘elder’ appears very infrequently.<sup>3</sup> Apostolic instruction was that the main source of edification in church life is in fellowship (*koinonia*), through mutual edification or ‘one-anothering’. This includes:

### Teaching one another

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another. (Col 3:16)

### Admonishing one another

Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another. (Rm 15:14; note that this task is not restricted to the elders)

### Exhorting one another

Exhort one another daily. (Heb 3:13)

Exhorting *one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching. (Heb 10:25)

### Edifying one another

Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing. (1 Thess 5:11)

Therefore let us pursue the things ... by which one may edify another. (Rm 14:19)

Let each of us please *his* neighbour for *his* good, leading to edification. (Rm 15:2)

*Let it be* for the edification of the church *that* you seek to excel. (1 Cor 14:12)

### Ephesians and the ascension gifts

Paul explains this fellowship principle in Ephesians when he talks about the purpose of gifted men. Leaders are given by God in order to equip others for ministry, to disciple new gifted people; they are not an end in themselves to stand at the front of the church like a schoolteacher. Their job is to create new ministry through disciplined, equipped men.

When this is happening, then the body grows and develops with a natural energy given by God. When gifted people are united, knit together, they are like joints in the body, each doing its job. This activity of interdependent functions causes the body as a whole to move forward and mature. It is the functioning of every member in unison that creates growth - not the submission to one gifted man, or even to a team of gifted men. The elders equip others to serve, and the service of all, using God’s gifts, leads to growth.

... from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love. (Eph 4:16)

### Every member ministry

To make it crystal clear, Paul spends an extended time in 1 Cor 12 expounding the point that every church member is vital in ministry. He labours his point with illustrations and exhortations to make us understand that no one person has all the responsibility for ministry in the local church. It is so obvious that it is amazing that so many churches do exactly the opposite. This needs to be quoted in full.

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<sup>3</sup> Regarding the word in NT church context in the KJV: ‘Elder’ appears 4 times, ‘elders’ 15 times (5 in Acts 15).

4 There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

5 There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord.

6 And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all.

7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit *of all*:

8 for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit,

9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit,

10 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.

11 But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

12 For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also *is* Christ.

13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body -- whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free -- and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.

14 For in fact the body is not one member but many.

15 If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body?

16 And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body?

17 If the whole body *were* an eye, where *would be* the hearing? If the whole *were* hearing, where *would be* the smelling?

18 But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased.

19 And if they *were* all one member, where *would* the body *be*?

20 But now indeed *there are* many members, yet one body.

21 And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you."

22 No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary.

23 And those *members* of the body which we think to be less honourable, on these we bestow greater honour; and our unpresentable *parts* have greater modesty,

24 but our presentable *parts* have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honour to that *part* which lacks it,

25 that there should be no schism in the body, but *that* the members should have the same care for one another.

26 And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with *it*; or if one member is honoured, all the members rejoice with *it*.

27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.

28 And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues.

29 *Are* all apostles? *Are* all prophets? *Are* all teachers? *Are* all workers of miracles?

30 Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?

31 But earnestly desire the best gifts.

Note:

- There are diversities of gifts, activities, and different types of ministries from God's sovereign provision. All are necessary (v4-6).
- Each ministry is a manifestation of the Holy Spirit to give benefit to all in the church (v7).
- Paul then lists certain spiritual gifts. It matters not what your position is on supernatural gifts, the point is that the Spirit gives a variety of gifts to edify believers in the assembly. Four may be outside the church meeting (faith, healings, miracles, discerning of spirits) but five, most likely, appear in the meeting (word of wisdom, word of knowledge, prophecy, tongues, interpretation; v8-10).
- The distribution of gifts and ministry is under the sovereignty of the Spirit alone (v11).

- The body is a unit, it is the body of Christ, but it has many members, just like a human body. Paul emphasises that the body is not one member (v12-14).
- Using the illustration of the human body, he shows that each organ (member) is vital in its own way. No organ can say that another is dispensable, they are all vital and must work together. There is no overriding organ, no organ dominates the others, but all are interdependent (v15-21).
- Those organs that seem weak are not only necessary, but are given greater honour (v22-24).
- Then Paul again stresses the importance of interdependency (v25-26).
- Then Paul applies the illustration to the local church; together we are Christ's body and individually we are members of his body (v27). The point is that one member is not enough to signify Christ or represent him. It takes the body together to manifest the Lord himself. It is the interdependent working of all the members together that expresses God locally.
- Then Paul lists certain offices that are members of the body and which need to function in a Biblical church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues (v28). He may have in mind the formation of a new church where apostles lay a foundation for the work, along with prophets, then teachers build the people up and so on. Again one's views on cessationism are not the point here; the point is the distribution of various gifts.
- Then he explains that people do not express all the gifts in one person (v29-30). God distributes the gifts so that it takes many people together to work interdependently and express God in this way and that. He then encourages people to seek the best gifts (v31), after which he talks about all these things working out through love.

This chapter completely demolishes the humanistic notion that the church is focused upon one man who does virtually everything in a meeting, and most of what happens outside the meeting in strategy and planning. The idea of one man standing at the front, dominating the proceedings and doing almost everything (except the notices) is on a different planet to what Paul is describing as normal, Biblical church life.

Paul's statement in 1 Cor 14:26 lies on a foundation of many scriptures emphasising the same point - every member ministry.

### Are there early church examples of open meetings?

Indeed there are:

**And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. (Acts 2:42)**

Elders have not even been identified at this time (and don't appear until chapter 11). Here four key things are identified as comprising meetings: doctrine (so there is teaching going on of some sort), fellowship, or *koinonia*, which means everyone is sharing together (i.e. using their various gifts to edify); breaking of bread or the Lord's Supper (a communal activity) and prayers (another communal activity). So apart from the teaching (and we don't know how this occurred here, it may have involved several people) all the constituents are corporate, not individual.

**Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, 'Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' (Acts 13:1-2)**

Here we have a meeting in which at least five men are identified as being sovereignly gifted as prophets or teachers. Two went on to be apostles and evangelists as well. None are called elders. In this meeting they were all contributing in certain ways that ‘ministered to the Lord’. No one man directed this, it was spontaneous, interdependent and corporate.

Now on the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight. (Acts 20:7)

The word ‘spoke’ is translated as ‘preached in the KJV, however the word here means ‘discussed’ or ‘debated’. It is the word *dialegomai* and it does not mean that Paul spoke a sermon.<sup>4</sup> This was a house church meeting where Paul taught, was questioned and gave answers and probably debated. The contributions by other men in questions and counter positions, was as important as the initial speech in providing the whole picture that God wanted covered.

Does the NT teach that only elders minister in meetings, that only elders minister God’s word and God’s direction, that only elders can carry any sort of authority?

It is interesting that Paul’s church letters are always addressed to the church membership as a whole. He writes to:

- To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called *to be* saints. (Rm 1:7)
- To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called *to be* saints. (1 Cor 1:2)
- To the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints who are in all Achaia. (2 Cor 1:1)
- To the churches of Galatia. (Gal 1:2)
- To the saints who are in Ephesus. (Eph 1:1)
- To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons. (Phil 1:1)
- To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ *who are* in Colosse. (Col 1:2)
- To the church of the Thessalonians. (1 Thess 1:1 and 2 Thess 1:1)

The nearest he comes to addressing leaders is in Phil 1:1, where they are tacked on after the membership. Paul often goes out of his way to avoid focusing upon leaders at all. Even as an apostle, he said that he often behaved as a nursing mother or a father (1 Thess 2:7, 11), and persuaded people of the truth, despite having the authority to command (which he sometimes did). Paul did not major upon leadership authority unless it was absolutely necessary, even to the Corinthians in the mess they had made.

#### ANANIAS, STEPHEN AND PHILIP

Another interesting matter is the use of Ananias in witnessing to Paul. God is about to convert the most important apostle the world ever knew, but in doing so he uses an unknown brother who is not said to have any leadership authority. Then, when the Lord opens up new areas to the Gospel he again uses men who are not in authoritative leadership. To the Samaritans and the Ethiopian he uses Philip. Now Philip was appointed to deal with practical matters, but God used him to be a missionary (Acts 8:5). Then, the church’s first martyr, who gave probably the best and most enlightening speech of all, is Stephen, another non-authoritative leader. Both these men were appointed to serve tables

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<sup>4</sup> **diale, gomai** Strong’s 1256, meaning: to think different things with one’s self, mingle thought with thought; to ponder, revolve in mind; to converse, discourse with one, argue, discuss

(Acts 6:1-5)<sup>5</sup>, with the task of the ministry of the word being retained by the apostles (Acts 6:4), yet God overrules this and does not use an apostle for these important tasks.

#### AGABUS

Yet another example is Agabus. He was used by God at least twice in giving urgent information to the Lord's people as a prophet. This enabled churches to take certain directions, even warning Paul about his future suffering (Acts 11:27-30; 21:10ff). Now he is never called an elder, and it is not necessary that he had to be an elder in order to be a prophet. If this was the case, then Philip's four daughters (who prophesied Acts 21:9) would have also been elders. Indeed, Agabus came to Jerusalem from Antioch and would have had no authority in Jerusalem even if he had been an elder in Antioch. Agabus was a key man who brought God's direction and truth but is not identified as an elder in the church. God could have spoken through the Jerusalem eldership but chose not to.

#### THE JERUSALEM SYNOD

When the early church had to decide upon an important matter, all the apostles, elders and people met and heard the various arguments. The decision was made by consensus, and the letter of counsel included the membership:

Then it pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, *namely*, Judas who was also named Barsabas, and Silas, leading men among the brethren. They wrote this *letter* by them: The apostles, the elders, and the brethren. To the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia: ... (Acts 15:22-23)

We fall into the trap of the Roman error when we state that only elders can minister the word or speak in church services.

These are all the relevant references to elders in this context in the whole NT:

- The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly. (1 Pt 5:1-2)
- Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially those who labour in the word and doctrine. (1 Tim 5:17)
- ... able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict. (1 Tim 5:9)
- A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behaviour, hospitable, able to teach. (1 Tim 3:2)

From this we learn that the key task of an elder is to shepherd, to pastor, to disciple and nurture, just as an Eastern shepherd leads flocks of sheep into good pasture and fattens them up. This will include instruction, but this is not necessarily in sermonic form.

Then the elder is an overseer, someone out front who leads in example and direction (1 Pt 5:1-2).

We see that some elders may not teach at all, though they should be able to. They may be just called to lead well (1 Tim 5:17, 'rule' is not the meaning of the word *proistemi*).

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<sup>5</sup> Though they were not formally called 'deacons' the same root word is used here for 'serve'. Deacon means, 'a servant' and thus a deacon assists elders in the organisation of church matters but a deacon has no spiritual authority in preaching or discipline. A deacon is a sort of administrator of finance and necessary matters.

The task of teaching and doctrine does not imply that an elder simply preaches every week and does little else. The use of doctrine is often combative, confronting error and persuading people of the truth in argument (1 Tim 5:9).

However, there are also references to commit the Gospel to faithful men who are themselves to teach; these are not delineated as elders:

**And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. (2 Tim 2:2)**

While these faithful men may become elders, it is clear that do not start that way. Paul is concerned with the men and the message, not the formal position.

### What about submission to elders?

**Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to *your* elders. Yes, all of *you* be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for 'God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.' (1 Pt 5:5)**

First one has to notice that just as we should submit to elders, we should all submit to one another; there is no overruling authority given to elders above what there is in the body; the same word is used of each case.<sup>6</sup> The word 'submit' can also simply mean, 'to be persuaded'. There may be a time when an elder has to submit to the sound counsel of a godly church member, especially if there has been wrongdoing. Elders are not above reproof (1 Tim 5:19).

**Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you. (Heb 13:17)**

The word 'obey' here really means to 'be persuaded'.<sup>7</sup> It does not mean that elders tell you how to run everything in your life, as some shepherding movements have practised. It means that as elders teach the word, one should be convinced of Biblical doctrine. Also the word 'submit' here is not the usual word that means to place oneself under another's authority, but rather means yielding after a battle, after discussion, i.e. being persuaded of the truth.<sup>8</sup>

**And we urge you, brethren, to recognise those who labour among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you. (1 Thess 5:12)**

'Over you' means literally, those who stand in front of you; i.e. the presiding minister at the time, the one ministering.<sup>9</sup> It does not mean 'rule', in the sense of formal, organised structural, despotic authority. It can even mean, 'to care for'. We should recognise those who care for us and labour in the word. This does not necessarily mean only elders, but anyone who labours, seeking to care and protect the membership. We have seen that anyone can admonish, anyone can teach - as long as there is a genuine gift. These gifts should be recognised and accepted.

<sup>6</sup> **u`pota,ssw** *hupotasso*, Strong's 5293, meaning: to arrange under, to subordinate, to subject, put in subjection, to subject one's self, obey, to yield to one's admonition or advice.

<sup>7</sup> **pei,qw** *peitho*, Strong's 3982 meaning: persuade, to induce one by words to believe, to win one's favour, gain one's good will, or to seek to win one; be persuaded.

<sup>8</sup> **u`pei,kw** *hupeiko*: Strong's 5226, meaning: to resist no longer, but to give way, yield.

<sup>9</sup> **proi<sthmi** *proistemi*, Strong's 4291; meaning: to set or place before, to set over, to superintend, preside over, to be a protector or guardian, to give aid, to care for.

### The function of elders

The key function of an elder is to shepherd the flock, to protect and lead into pasture. This doesn't always mean that the elder is the one doing the teaching. Others can serve in various ways, carrying whatever authority their gift has, and they serve the body under the direction of the eldership. The eldership carries the weight of the body's protection, so ministry is under their direction. In this way elders train and generate new ministry as they allow gifted men to teach.

Elders also carry the responsibility for discipline. It is they who ensure that things are done decently and in order in the meeting. Also they are the ones who apply discipline to anyone in sin, if necessary even by expelling the unrepentant offender. They act as under-shepherds to the Great Shepherd of the sheep, always bearing in mind that it is the Lord's church and not theirs.

### Authority

Authority in the NT is not positional, as it is in institutional denominations, it is always based upon gifting. Those whom God has given to the church to serve in various ministries carry their own authority from the giver. Today, many church members submit to a leader who clearly has no gift to teach, while good men in the congregation are forced into silence when it is clear that they do have gifts. This is wrong, but it arises from the positional structure of formal leadership.

This does not mean that there is a free for all in meetings. The elders carry the responsibility for good order, but other men can minister.

Jesus' concept of authority is anti-secular, it is the opposite of the way the world treats authority.

And He said to them, 'The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called "benefactors." But not so *among* you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves. For who *is* greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? *Is* it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves.' (Lk 22:25-27)

Jesus picks on those who had no authority in those times (the youngest / slaves) as the model for leadership. Leadership is service. The Lord shows us that he is completely set against the prospect of a man standing at the front in some kind of structural, formal authority lauding it over people sat submissively underneath. For this reason he forbade the use of academic or religious titles, saying that we are all brethren; there is no clergy/laity distinction (Matt 23:8).

Then note that Paul rarely talks about leaders in the church letters (his purpose is obviously different in the pastoral letters) and only formally mentions them in Phil 1:1. However, he emphasises again and again the importance of every member ministry, participation and one-anothering.

There are two aspects to authority: power (*dunamis*) and delegation. Men do not have inherent power. Those with power in the NT are: The Trinity, angels and demons. Men are empowered by these who have power. The ministry of believers has power as it is energised by God.

Authority (*exousia*) in the NT extends to the former list plus those delegated by God, such as kings to rule a country under God, Jesus' disciples to have authority over disease and demons; believers over various facets of their lives - but not over other Christians. Children

are to obey parents, wives should submit to husbands and servants to obey masters but nowhere are believers told directly to obey leaders. Believers are to let themselves be persuaded by the teaching of elders but don't obey them as a soldier obeys a sergeant.

The church listens to and respects elders, their authority is carried in their gift and grace, not their explicit, formal authority. It is their *character* that enables us to trust them and follow them. We see the work of God done in their lives and accept that they are God's gift to shepherd the flock. This is why they are *elders*, they are experienced men, worn by struggles, service and suffering, who have learned the meekness of God, and can thus be trusted.

The emphasis of apostolic teaching in the NT is that believers obey the truth, not a man. We follow Christ, who is the truth, and elders are trustworthy inasmuch as they lead believers into truth. Persuasion implies: dialogue, discussion, debate, and this is why Paul teaches that participation and dialogue are so important in meetings, why words translated 'preach' really mean 'dialogue'.

Authority in the church is not positional, formal or structural, but is based upon the truth, gifting and character.

### What does 1 Cor 14:26 mean in context?

We all agree that Paul is correcting error in the Corinthian assembly. But what were these errors?

The first is selfishness. People rushed into speaking in tongues in order to blurt out something they felt was important without any consideration of the whole meeting or edifying others by what they said. They spoke even if there was no interpretation. They were edifying themselves and not the body.

They did not focus upon prophecy, which was more likely to edify others, they didn't seek it, but just babbled.

They did not understand that edification was the purpose of the meeting, not self-expression of the Spirit. It was more important to teach or prophesy than to speak in tongues, even though this gift seemed more supernatural.

They ignored the importance of clarity. People had to understand what was being said in order to be edified, so a tongue must be interpreted.

Then there was the question of good order and control. A multitude of tongues was poor edification and gave the appearance of chaos. The meeting must be conducted decently and in order. If there is no interpreter, there should be no tongues; two or three prophets can speak, but not a multitude one after another.

In this context Paul says, in v26, what is the whole point of his exhortation, 'How is it then'. His answer is, '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.'

He is saying that, firstly, edification is the focus of the gathering. The word appears several times in this chapter alone. We meet to edify one another. Secondly, that we don't overuse

any gift, even if it is a genuine or even if it is supernatural. There should not be a chaotic multitude of tongues or prophecies. What there should be is a balance of singing, teaching, tongues, revelations and interpretations. In other words, a balance of various items from gifted people so that all are edified. This is likely to include prepared ministry (teaching, revelation) under the direction of elders, but many other contributions are likely also. One man should not dominate, and neither should there be a cacophony of mindless babbling with no content.

Under no circumstances can this verse be interpreted as a condemnation of various gifts in the church meeting. Such a statement would contradict very many other apostolic verses teaching mutual edification, and the interdependency in the body. It encourages every-member participation; but clearly this does not mean every member every time. It means that under eldership direction, gifted folk can share their gifts in order and decency. The elders are there to identify the work of the Spirit in sovereignly gifting people and encouraging people to share in an appropriate manner.

## A few comments from esteemed writers

### Leon Morris

(It) is very important as giving us the most intimate glimpse we have of the early church at worship ... it is our earliest account of a service and it enables us to see something of what the first Christians actually did when they assembled to worship God. Clearly their services were more spontaneous and less structured ...

We need not press *everyone* (or 'each', *hekastos*), as though it meant that every member of the congregation always had something to contribute. But it does mean that any of them might be expected to take part in the service.<sup>10</sup>

### Thomas Goodwin

[In the] communion of the saints, which the members of a church ought to have with one another [mutual care] is a constant duty, and that we ought to seek all occasions of acting it.<sup>11</sup>

### F W Grosheide

A service is held which is attended by people with special gifts. One possesses the charisma of uttering a psalm in a special manner (he may have composed a psalm or have sung a Christian hymn) ... Teaching: instruction in what had been preached earlier. Revelation: the setting forth of a new truth ... In the service all things shall tend to edification, as has been Paul's sustained emphasis.<sup>12</sup>

### D A Carson

The introductory question of verse 26 anticipates what Paul thinks can be learned from the discussion so far. His position, in a word, is that whatever the charisma, all that is done when the believers 'come together' (i.e. meet as the gathered church) must be done for the edification of the church.<sup>13</sup>

### David Prior

He envisages every member of the church bringing a distinctive contribution to its worshipping life: a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. The controlling factor is not personal enjoyment but general edification.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> *1 Corinthians*, Tyndale NT Comm. IVP, (1985) p194. Emphasis original.

<sup>11</sup> Works; Vol 11, p355.

<sup>12</sup> *Commentary of the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT, (1953) p335-336.

<sup>13</sup> *Showing the Spirit*, Baker, (1987) p118.

<sup>14</sup> *The Message of 1 Corinthians*, IVP (1985), p250.