

inspired!

Building Up: Learning to Speak for God in the Church

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June 25th 2017

As we continue the *Inspired!* series, Allan reminded us that God has sent His Spirit as a gift to the church to help us live out our mission in the world. Reading from 1 Corinthians 14: 1-25, Allan helped us explore two of these gifts – the gift of Tongues, and the gift of Prophecy.

- **When you think of these gifts, what thoughts or experiences do they bring to mind? Perhaps you might like to share these briefly with the group.**

When used appropriately, these gifts can help the church in two ways. They can help us; 1) Love God with abandon, and 2) to grow each other with authority. When Paul writes 1 Corinthians, he is well aware of the power of these gifts, as well as the potential for them to be misused.

- Read Paul's teachings in 1 Corinthians 14:1-25

Loving God with abandon – the gift of tongues.

The gift of tongues helps us deepen our communion with God and bring us closer in connection to Him as we pray and worship. We need to remember however that it is not something that denotes some members of the church as more 'special' than others.

We should recognise that the gift of tongues is one of many that the spirit provides.

- **What gifts of the spirit do you see in other believers regularly?**
 - **What gifts do you see rarely?**
 - **Where do the gifts of tongues or prophecy fit into your experience of God?**
- Write down three key pieces of wisdom that Paul gives about the gift of tongues. It might help to re-read the passage again.**

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If your group has time, read the story of Peter and Cornelius in Acts chapter 10.

In this instance, the believers are amazed that “even gentiles” receive the gift of the spirit (v45). Peter then instructs that they be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ (meaning water baptism).

- **What does this passage teach us about being baptised in the spirit?**

In thinking about the gift of tongues, Paul notes that while he himself uses this gift, it can be of limited amongst a gathering of people (v18 & 19). Paul places more emphasis on the gift of prophecy as a gift that edifies and encourages the whole church.

Grow each other with authority - prophecy

The gift of prophecy is one that we as a church should “eagerly desire” (1 Cor 14 v1).

- **As you think about the Old Testament prophets – what role did they play in God’s relationship with his people?**
- **What is different about the role of prophecy in the New Testament?**
- **Thinking specifically about prophecy, what role should it play in today’s modern church?**

Allan noted that in much of the Old Testament, prophets of God held a specific leadership role amongst the people. Yet in the New Testament, God pours out the gift of propesy on all people – not just the leadership of the growing church.

Allan gave us some key principles in using the gift of prophecy.

- **Prophecy is a gift that requires accountability** – it is a gift that is held ‘in check’ through fellow believers who can help discern its significance.
- **Prophecy brings words that are consistent with God’s character** – words of God’s Kingdom and shalom.
- **Prophecy is God’s truth, but only revealed in part** – Prophecy is a gift that doesn’t reveal the whole picture to us.
- **Prophecy is to build up the church** - We should eagerly desire words of God that encourage other believers and help us grow together.

As you think about Paul’s teachings in 1 Corinthians 14, what are the most

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important pieces of advice he gives on the gift of prophecy:

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Spend some time in prayer for one another. Pray that God's gifts might be increasingly present in your life this week, and beyond.



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