

Body Function

by Stephen Kaung

The sermon emphasizes the importance of full participation and edification in church meetings, where members minister to one another and build up the body of Christ.

Duration: 1:13:04

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 14:26

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Corporate Worship"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of being open and receptive to the Holy Spirit. They explain that sometimes people can hinder the work of the Spirit by not being open to His leading. The speaker also discusses the principle of twos or threes, which suggests that when speaking in tongues or prophesying, it is best to do so in an orderly manner, allowing others to discern and understand. They emphasize the need for common sense in our gatherings and the importance of being sensitive to the direction of the Holy Spirit. The overall message is that when God's people come together, they should be prepared, open, and ready to move with the Spirit.

Transcript

May we turn to 1 Corinthians, 1 Corinthians chapter 14. 1 Corinthians chapter 14. We'll read from verse 26 through verse 33.

What is it then, brethren? Whenever ye 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 to edification. If anyone speak with a tongue, let it be two, or at the most three, and separately, and let one interpret.

But if there be no interpreter, let him be silent in the assembly, and let him speak to himself and to God. And let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge. But if there be a revelation to another sitting there, let the first be silent.

For ye can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all be encouraged. And spirits of prophets are subject to prophets. For God is not a God of disorder, but of peace, as in all the assemblies of the saints.

Lately we have been sharing together on 1 Corinthians chapter 12 and chapter 13. And this morning we would like to continue on with chapter 14. In 1 Corinthians chapter 12 we see the body of Christ.

This tremendous statement says, ye are Christ's body, and members in particular. We are, not we shall be, but we are the body of Christ. Today there is the unity, the oneness of the body.

But we are also members in particular. One body, many members. Many members, yet one body.

It is unity in diversity. We are all different. We are all different members of the body.

We are all given different gifts, and yet we are one. One body, many members. Then we find in 1 Corinthians chapter 13, the law of the body.

The law of the body is love. And love is the more excellent way for the different members to exercise the gift which God has given to each. And then in chapter 14 you will find it is the body assembled.

The body come together. Now of course, brothers and sisters, we know that the body of Christ is a living reality. Whether God's people are assembled together, or when they are in their various places, the body of Christ is a reality.

In other words, when we come together, we are the body of Christ. But even when we are not physically together, some may be in their homes, cooking, others may be in the offices, working, or some may be in the school, teaching or studying. And yet you find these do not affect the reality of the body of Christ.

The body of Christ is more than just assembling together. And yet, the assembling together of the saints is of vital importance. We find in Hebrews chapter 10 verse 25, not forsaking the assembling together of the saints.

How we need to encourage one another, especially when we see the day drawing near. The assembling together of the body of Christ is for the up-building of that body. It is for the exercising, the functioning of the various members of the body of Christ.

Even though the body of Christ transcends time and space, it is far greater than assembling together. And yet, assembling together, the body assembled, is a vital part of the life of the body. Therefore, brothers and sisters, we will not limit the body of Christ just to the time when we come together.

Nor will we limit the functioning of the members of the body just to the place where we are together. We need to function as members of the body of Christ, even though we may not be assembled together. Because the body of Christ is much bigger than the assembling together.

But on the other hand, we will say again, how important it is that we assemble together. Because this is the best time when we can build up one another. We can exercise our gifts for the up-building of the body in love.

But you know, brothers and sisters, it is very interesting. In the whole New Testament, there is only one place where the meeting of the saints is described, or prescribed. And that is in 1 Corinthians chapter 14.

It is so essential for God's people to meet together. And yet, 1 Corinthians 14 is the only place where a meeting of the saints is described, or prescribed. Of course, there is another place in Acts chapter 15.

And chapter 15 of the book of Acts is the only place where we are told how the business of the church is conducted. The church has its business. Things need to be decided.

Now how is it to be decided? It is given in Acts chapter 15. Now God's people must meet together, and assemble together, and exercise their gifts. But how? How should they be assembled? This is only given in 1 Corinthians chapter 14.

I think it is also important to notice. Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half. He met with them all these days.

And it seemed that he never told them how to meet. They met together for a year and a half with Paul in their midst. And even after Paul left them, up to the time he wrote 1 Corinthians, he never told them how to meet.

Isn't that strange? They met, but they were never told how to meet. It wasn't until he wrote 1 Corinthians to correct some problems in their midst that we find how the church should meet. I think it is very important to notice this.

Why? Because if Paul should lay down rules and regulations for the saints in Corinth as how they should meet, maybe ten rules, maybe a hundred regulations, you will find that life will be hindered from the very beginning. God just asks his people to assemble together. God just wants his people to exercise their gifts.

God just wants his people to encourage one another. But how? He did not say. He just let these lives, lives in these people, just be freely expressed.

Let life grow without any rule or regulation. Let life grow freely without any limitation. And it wasn't until life has grown to a certain degree, then some instructions are given to regulate life, that life may grow more beautifully and healthier.

No, no, you know, it is just like a tree, the vine. The husband will prune the vine, will prune the branches that bear fruit. So these branches may bear more fruit.

Where there is no life, what's the sense of laying down rules and regulations? If there is life, then let life grow. And after it has grown to a certain degree, then you need to regulate it, channel it, help it, that life may grow more beautifully and may bear more fruit. And this is the reason why you find the scripture has been silent about how the saints shall meet until they have met for a certain time.

And then you'll find Paul came in to give them a few guidelines to regulate the growth of life and to govern the exercise of these gifts, the functioning of the members of the body of Christ. So I hope these things we should bear in mind. Now, 1 Corinthians 14, as I said, is the only place where instructions concerning how the saints should meet are given.

Now, of course, it is given to a certain type of meeting. We will call it a fellowship meeting. You know, basically there are two different kinds of meetings.

One kind we will call ministry meeting. That is, God gives to the church some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers for the perfecting of the saints. God gave these ministers of the word to the church to perfect, to mature the saints.

And the way they exercise their ministry is they will speak the word of God to the body. In other words, they minister to the body of Christ. And when they minister to the body of Christ, it is a ministry meeting.

It is the one who ministers to the body and the body receives the ministry. It is almost like a one-way street, even though it is not because there must be the response from the body of Christ. Then you'll find another kind of meeting which we call church meeting.

Now, what is a church meeting? A church meeting is when the saints are being perfected. That is to say, when the saints are growing up. Then they minister to one another.

They fulfill the ministry of the body. It is not from one or one's minister to the body, but it is the saints, the members of the body, each doing his or her part for the upbuilding of the body in love. This is called the body ministry.

The body ministry is not someone ministering to the body. The body ministry comes out of the body. It is the members of the body minister to one another.

So we call this church meeting. The principle is mutuality. It is not a one-way street.

It is mutuality. So, brothers and sisters, what is described here in 1 Corinthians 14 is concerned with church meeting. Now, of course, when the church meets, there are, again, different types of meetings as we find in the Bible.

Sometimes the church come together to worship the Lord, to break the bread, to remember the Lord. It is the time when the church does not ask for anything, but the church tries to give to the Lord the love, the adoration, the appreciation, the remembrance that is his due. Now, sometimes the church comes together to pray, to take up the burden of the Lord, God's burden, not just our individual burdens, but the burden of the Lord.

And the church comes together to take up the burden of the Lord, and to pray, and to intercede that the will of God may be done on earth as it is in heaven. So you know that there are various types of meetings, and there is one kind of meeting that is given in 1 Corinthians 14. We call it fellowship meeting.

It is the time when the saints come together to exercise their gifts for the upbuilding of the body of Christ. Now, even though this is concerned with the fellowship type of meeting, and yet you'll find the guidelines or the principles are applicable to all the church meetings. Now, this morning we would just like to mention a few of the guidelines or principles as given in 1 Corinthians 14 concerning how we shall meet.

First of all, you'll find in verse 26, what 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. The first principle of meeting is full participation. Each of you, that is to say all.

When God's people come together, when the church assembles, it is the time that each and all participate. It is not a time that only one or a few participate. It is the time that all the members of the body of Christ, everyone, each one of the body, each, all, everyone, we all come together to participate.

No one comes with a passive attitude. You know, sometimes when we come together, we come with a kind of passive or even negative attitude. We come expecting to be edified.

We come waiting to be helped, but we do not come with a positive attitude. That is to say, we come to contribute. We come to add something to the body of Christ.

We come to help in the up-building of the body of Christ. Everyone, young and old, those who are advanced in Christ or those who are young in Christ, even babies in Christ, when we come together, we are like a family. We all have a part to play.

And we are all coming with a positive attitude, active attitude, that we come to participate. Each has. Now, of course, when we come together, we do not all have the same thing, because we are different members of the body of Christ.

During the week, what the Lord has taught us, what the Lord has impressed upon us, what the Lord has shown us in His Word, or what the Lord has let us throw in our life experience, we are all different. Therefore, you'll find when we come together, we do not all have the same thing. We are not supposed all to do the same thing.

And yet, each has. Each has. I believe the word has there means that before you come to assemble with your brothers and sisters, you have already had something.

Brothers and sisters, I feel there is a misconception today. We all like to be spiritual genius. By that it means when we come together, nobody prepares.

Nobody comes having anything. Nobody comes bringing anything. We just come together, sit there, and wait for the Holy Spirit to stir the water.

And at the moment of the stirring, we jump. We are all genius. We don't need to labor before God.

We don't need to plant. We don't need to kill. We are all geniuses.

We just come here, and the Holy Spirit touch, and we jump. That's it. Brothers and sisters, this is a wrong concept.

It is true that the Holy Spirit does move in a mysterious way. It is true sometimes when we sit here, the Holy Spirit gives someone a revelation at the moment. Because 1 Corinthians 14 tells us that when a prophet is speaking, and the Holy Spirit give a revelation to one sitting there, then the prophet shall sit down and let the one with revelation speak.

It does happen. But this is not the rule. This is the exception that proves the rule.

The rule is before we come together, how we need to have something to contribute. You know, when the children of Israel came to worship the Lord in the temple, they were bidden to bring something to God. No one will come with an empty basket.

Everyone will come with something in their basket. And where did they get the things in the basket? Of course, they sow, they till, and they reap. So brothers and sisters, during the week, when we are not assembling together, this is the time that we shall labor before the Lord.

This is the time that we shall go to the Lord to get something. When we have our morning time with the Lord, or during the day when the Lord is dealing with us, or when we have problems and we come to the Lord and pray, or when sometimes when we read the Word and the Lord begins to show His Word to us, or sometimes the Lord may give us a song to sing, a revelation. Whatever it may be, brothers and sisters, it is during the week, during the time when we are not assembled together.

Oh, brothers and sisters, do not think that the body of Christ is only real when we assemble together. The body of Christ is real when we are not assembling together. It is a reality.

It transcends time and space. Therefore, we cannot be the body of Christ only when we meet together. We have to be the body of Christ even when we are not meeting together.

This is the time that we gather the fruit. This is the time that we learn to have something. Each has.

One may have a song. The other may have a teaching. The other may have a tongue.

The other may have a revelation. The other may have an interpretation. But it shows here that before we assemble, we already have something.

We do not gather empty-handed. Now, I think this is a real problem with the assembling of God's people today, because most people will come without bringing anything. And that is the reason why you find our fellowship is so poor.

If everybody has something, you know, our fellowship will be so full and so rich. We have to have more fellowship coming. Each has.

And you'll find that everyone who has, has differently. There is variety there. And variety brings in fullness.

So first of all, let us see that when the church assembles, it expects full participation. Do not ever come sitting there passively and negatively. Do not say, what do I have to contribute? Now, if you have a life with the Lord through the week, can you say the Lord has not given himself to you even a little bit? Now, if through the week, you haven't got anything from the Lord, I think it is time that you really need to repent.

Something is drastically wrong. How can you spend, say, a week and get nothing from the Lord? The Lord has not spoken a word to you. The Lord does not deal with you.

He lets you go. He doesn't care. Now, what kind of spiritual condition you are in, if this is true? Oh, brothers and sisters, will not the very thought that we will come together, stir you up to seek the Lord and to seek his face, that he may give you something, that you may bring something when you come to the house of God? Full participation.

Opportunities must be given to all the brothers and sisters to contribute whatever the Lord has given. It may be a song. It may be a teaching.

It may be a time. It may be a revelation. It may be an interpretation.

And yet you'll find opportunities are given, that all these gifts may be exercised. So, first of all, let us remember the first guideline for a church meeting is full participation. Now, probably you will say, if that is true, now our meetings must be a whole day meeting.

How can you have full participation if we have only an hour or two hours? We'll talk about that later. Number two, in the same verse, verse 26, we are told, let all things be done to edification. Now, first of all, there must be full participation.

But it doesn't mean that you just participate. In other words, you really haven't got anything from the Lord, but you want to participate. So what? So you just bring in something of your own.

Now, it says, let all things be done for edification. Now, I always remember what brother Spock says. Brother Spock says, it is edification, not edification.

You know, if we try to exercise our gifts without love, it will be edification, not edification. If we just come to exercise our gifts without the substance, the life of Christ, that we can impart to our brothers and sisters through these gifts, then all you can do is edification. And probably the one that is edified is yourself, more than anybody else.

What is edification? The word edification actually is not a good translation. It is a beautiful translation, but it is too beautiful. The word should be build up.

Let everything, let all things be done to a building, to build up. We come together to build up each other, not to destroy each other. Now, sometimes you'll find when God's people come together, they try to destroy each other.

Oh, how often in a meeting you'll hear, even in prayer, they pray against each other. You know, they try to destroy each other. But this is not the purpose.

When God's people come together, they should do all things to build up each other. Now, you have a little faith, so somebody comes in to build up your faith a little bit more. You have a little love, so somebody comes in, and whether it is in a song, or whether it is in a teaching, or whether it is in a revelation, you'll find that your love is built up a little bit more.

So, to build up the body. This is the purpose of our coming together. Of course, there is only one way to build up one another, and that is to impart Christ to one another.

You know, if it is a song, it is not something that is beautiful and yet empty. It is not a beautiful thought, but there is no substance there. If it is a teaching, it is not just a good teaching, or even a sound teaching, and yet there is no life in it.

Whatever we do, whether it is a song, whether it is a prayer, whether it is a word, whatever it may be, you'll find that through the song, through the prayer, through the praise, through the word, Christ is being imparted. It is the sharing, the impartation of Christ. And when Christ is contributed to the meeting, you'll find the body is built up.

So we are not imparting ourselves. We are imparting Christ. We are not even imparting our gifts.

We are imparting Christ. Look at the church in Corinth, how they are rich in gifts, especially tongues. And everybody seems to want to speak in tongues.

And what a confusion it caused in the church in Corinth. Why? Because they were all displaying their gifts instead of building up the body. Now, of course, it doesn't mean that you cannot speak in tongues.

Certainly you can, if Christ is imparted. So the second guideline is, all things be done for the upbuilding of the body. Here in 1 Corinthians we are told, verse 20, Brethren, be not children in your mind, but in malice be bathed, but in your minds be grown up.

Be not children in your mind. Now, what does it mean? It means that when we come together, we need to have a certain kind of mentality, not the mentality of children. Now, what is the mentality of children? Now, of course, unless we be converted and be like little children, we cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Now, that is true. We have to be humble like children. We have to be childlike.

But there is a childishness. There is a child mentality. And the child mentality is self-centered.

A child can only think of himself. What do I get? What is good for me? Everything is for me. That is a child mentality.

But the mentality of a grown-up is what can I do for others? You're not thinking of what you get, but you're thinking of what you can help others with. So, here you'll find, do not have the mentality of a child. Now, in malice, yes, be bathed.

Now, do not be too clever in evil things. Rather, be foolish, ignorant, innocent of these things. But when we come together, we need to have the mentality of grown-up.

And the mentality of grown-up is to build up other people. So, brothers and sisters, the second guideline as we come together to meet is, let us not always just think of ourselves. So, my spiritual status.

So, in order that nobody will know how deep or how shallow you are, you close your mouth. Now, this is child mentality, because you're just thinking of yourself. Forget yourself.

Think of what the body needs. Think of what the body will receive. And if we really love the Lord, and if we really love the body of Christ, then we will not think of ourselves, we will not hold back anything that the Lord has given to us.

Whatever small it may be, we will like to put it in to the body of Christ that the body may be built up. So, the second guideline is for a building. Now, number three.

In verse 15. What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, but I will pray also with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, but I will sing also with the understanding.

Since otherwise if thou blessest with the spirit, how shall he who feels the place of the sinful say amen? At thy giving of thanks, since he does not know what thou sayest. For thou indeed giveth thanks well, but the other is not edified. The third principle or guideline for assembling together is with the spirit and with the understanding.

When we come together, we have to come with the spirit. Now, of course, this is so basic. Now, if we do not come with the spirit, in other words, we just come physically.

We come without our spirit really ready, without our spirit really open, without our real spirit really in tune with the Lord. Now, if we come with a closed spirit, what kind of gathering together would it be? All we can do probably will be going through the motions. It will be just a routine.

Everything will be just in form. It will be dead. So, as we come together, everything has to be done with the spirit.

Not just something out of your mind. It has to be something in your spirit. In other words, the spirit of God touches your spirit.

Your spirit is in tune with the spirit of God. And as the spirit of God moves upon your spirit, then out of your spirit you sing. Out of your spirit you pray.

Out of the spirit you contribute. In other words, it has to come from your spirit. You need to exercise your spirit.

Otherwise, everything is just academic. Everything is just dead. Without a spirit, then you have to program anything.

Everything. Without a spirit, then everything has to be according to routine. Otherwise, you cannot do it.

So, brothers and sisters, when God's people come together, everything has to be done with the spirit. Whether it is in singing with the spirit. Not just singing according to the hymn book.

Yeah, of course, we have to sing according to the hymn book and according to the tune. But when you sing it, your heart must be in it. Otherwise, you just sing with your lips.

And if your heart is not in it, oh, it is vanity. It is nothing. With the spirit.

But it is also said here, with the understanding. It is not just with the spirit. It has to be also with the understanding.

Now, if you are all by yourself, suppose you are all by yourself, you can sing with the spirit without understanding. Because in the spirit, you can sing even with tongues. And you edify yourself.

You may be speaking of the mysteries of God. It doesn't matter because there is nobody else there. But when the brethren assemble together, you have to sing with the spirit and with the understanding.

Why? Because if you sing with the spirit without understanding, you may be edify yourself in your spirit. But the brothers and sisters around you, they do not know what you are singing. They cannot enter into the spirit with you.

And to them, you are a stranger. And they will be strangers to you. They will not be build up.

Therefore, in the assembly, you have to sing with the spirit and sing with the understanding. You have to pray with the spirit and pray with the understanding. The understanding is important here.

Now, of course, the understanding is the noose. The noose. The understanding.

We understand. Now, what do you understand? You understand what you are doing. First of all, you understand what you are doing.

Therefore, it is said, if you are speaking in tongues, which you do not understand, nor the rest understand, you need an interpreter. If there is no interpreter that you may understand and the other brothers and sisters may understand, then you just keep quiet. It is just speaking between you and the Lord.

But, because we are in an assembly, oh brothers and sisters, what a difference it is. You know, sometimes we do not know the difference between private time and public time. We do not know the difference between the time when you are alone with the Lord and you are with the brothers and sisters together with the Lord.

You know, sometimes we pray our private prayer in a church prayer meeting. You know, we forget that there are other brothers and sisters. You know, sometimes we do things that we can do privately and it is legitimate to do that privately, but for us to do it in public, that is without understanding.

With spirit, but without understanding. What will be the result? The result will be confusion. Confusion.

Just like Paul mentions in 1 Corinthians 14. He said, if everybody speaks in tongues in a meeting and some simple people come in, those who are not familiar with tongues, now when they come in and they cannot understand anything and they will say, you are all mad. Where is the edification? There is no understanding there.

So brothers and sisters, how important it is. When we come together, there need to be a balance. A balance between the spirit and the understanding.

Now often here people said, it is the spirit that is important. In other words, when we come together, don't prepare anything. When we come together, just wait upon the spirit and when the spirit moves, just free for all.

That is how we should meet. Dear brothers and sisters, what a confusion it will be. God is not a spirit, is not a God of disorder.

He is a God of peace. When the spirit moves, he moves in a certain way. Is it not in John chapter 3 the Lord said, when the wind blows, you do not know where it comes from and where it will go, but you know it has come.

Now when the wind blows, how does it blow? When the wind blows, it blows with a certain direction. Now it is true sometimes it changes its course and sometimes it may be a whirlwind. That is true.

But still you'll find there is always a direction there. When the spirit moves in a meeting, dear brothers and sisters, I don't know if you have ever experienced that. I hope you have.

When God's people meet together with spirit and with understanding, and when the spirit moves among them, you know there is a direction that the whole meeting is heading. There is no confusion. All the prayers, all the words, and all the scenes, everything will be added on, added on, added on, and it will come to a climax and this is the time that we break the bread.

No confusion. It is not that free for all. Now whatever you feel your spirit moves, you say your prayer.

Whatever you feel your spirit stirs, you say a word. Or wherever you feel your spirit says, you sing a song. In other words, free for all.

Everybody does what he or she feels at the moment. Brothers and sisters, do you watch where the wind blows? Do you try to touch the spirit of the meeting? You know when God's people meet together, there is a spirit of the meeting. Why? The Holy Spirit is in the meeting.

And when he is in the meeting, he moves in a certain way. And we need to detect his direction. Oh, there's much to learn when God's people come together.

You know how we need to wait upon the Lord? How we need to come prepared? That when we come together, the spirit is ready to move. And when the spirit moves, we understand. We understand his direction.

And we go in with him. You know, that is the way that you need not meet for a whole day. You know, we all come with something.

You come with something. I come with something. We all will come with something of the Lord.

And the Lord is so rich. Therefore, you'll find we bring all kinds of things in the basket. Some bring bananas, and some bring cherries, and some bring peaches, and some bring vegetables, and corn, and meat, and all kinds of things.

We all bring together. Well, it is up to the Holy Spirit to decide which will be. So there is no confusion.

It doesn't mean because you have something, therefore you have to put it in now. Oh, we have eternity. But it means that you have to have something, so that the Holy Spirit may have the liberty to touch this one, to touch that one, and to bring this and bring that out.

And when the Holy Spirit is touching people and bring things out, you'll find everything just dovetail. Come together. There is no jarring notes.

There is no conflict. It is such a harmony. You know, sometimes when God's people come together, and the Spirit of the Lord in the meeting is, oh, the sufferings of Christ.

And you know, when the Spirit is moving in that direction, the sufferings of Christ, then of course our feeling goes with Him. Oh, how we feel His affliction, His suffering. But while we are feeling that, suddenly a brother or a sister come out with something entirely different.

Oh, something that is to love it. Will that interfere with the movement of the Holy Spirit? You know, when you go to a house of mourning, you do not go there laughing and joking around. But when you come go to a house of gladness, suppose there is a wedding there.

Now you do not go there with a long face and with... No, you do not do that. You know, you enter into the spirit of the time. And dear brothers and sisters, when God's people come together and really allow the Holy Spirit to move among His people, everyone is open, everyone is ready, and the Holy Spirit can just feel free to move among His people.

And take this and take that and take this and take that, and you will find everything just add and add and add and add, until you find there is a Christiano and there is such a beauty there. That is the way the Holy Spirit moves, with understanding. Now of course, it does not mean that you only need to understand but you have no spirit.

Oh, you try to, you try to, you find out where the spirit moves, and because you are using your mind and trying to figure it out, so your spirit is gone. Now if that is the case, it is just too bad. Just too bad.

It simply means that we need to be alert of it. Now brothers and sisters, let us remember, don't go to one or the other extreme. Don't go to the other extreme with understanding but without the spirit.

Now if you do that, probably it will be all artificial, mechanical. It may be very correct, and if that's the case, well, it's better to have everything programmed. Of course not.

We need to meet with the spirit. This is most important, but also with the understanding. We need to keep a balance of it.

Now some brothers and sisters say, well, suppose we come to a meeting and it seems as if it is like free for all. Now what should we do? Is it because of this that we do not worship? That our spirit is really

overwhelmed and depressed? Oh, not at all. Not at all.

If this is the case, take it as a whirlwind. You know, it goes all directions, but let's go up. You know, just look to the Lord and forget about it.

Forget about everything, and just worship the Lord as your spirit feels. It's a whirlwind. So here you'll find we need to meet with the spirit and with the understanding.

Again I say, every heart must be open. You know, sometimes the spirit is moving and he touched this and touched that, but some people just quench the spirit. And if you quench the spirit, then you'll find the Holy Spirit is now free to do what he wants to do.

So there is a basic thing that everyone has to remember, that is we need to be open. Everyone has to be open and ready. And if that is the case, you will find he will move in such a way there will be beauty in it.

Now number four. Number four is the principle of twos or threes. It says that if there is time, let two or three end separately.

You know, evidently in the church in Corinth, when they spoke in tongues, you may find that 20, 30 people all stood up and spoke in tongues at the same time. Of course, when they spoke at the same time, nobody could hear anything. Not only they couldn't understand, but they couldn't hear anything.

It would be such a confusion. Let two or three speak and separately by turns. And if there is prophecy, let two or three speak and let the other discern.

Now it is the principle of twos and threes. What is it? Well, it is just common sense. You know, sometimes we feel we Christians shouldn't have common sense.

Sometimes we feel that when we come together to meet, there should be no common sense exercise. Not at all. We are still in this mortal body.

And being in this mortal body, we need common sense. In other words, we cannot go on for days and nights meeting. Now unless the Spirit of God should do something special, of course, He is free to do that.

But ordinarily, you will find that our concentration, our absorption is limited. Our physical strength is limited. Therefore, if you prolong things too long, say if there are tongues, 20, 30 tongues, if there are prophets, 20, 30 prophecies, prophets, if it extends to six hours, eight hours, how much people can really take in? It's a waste.

Our concentration is limited to twos and threes. After twos and threes, you need a variation. You know, maybe twos and threes and then a song.

Or maybe two and three songs and then two and three prophecies. In other words, you need variations. That is common sense.

Brothers and sisters, sanctify common sense. That's what we need. Sometimes we hear people say we live in eternity, not in time.

Well, not yet. One day we will live in eternity. And at that time, our concentration is unlimited.

But today, we are still in this mortal body. We still live in time. And it is that sanctified common sense that we do not overdo anything.

We need to exercise our common sense and see how much people can take, how much we should do. Twos and threes. And maybe you say, well, the Lord has given us 20 tongues.

The Lord has given us 20 prophecies. And I must give it. I must give it.

Because if it's not, why should the Lord give it to me? Oh, it says the spirits of prophets are subject to the prophets. You know, back in China, of course, at that time, there was only Pentecostal movement. There was no charismatic movement yet.

Now, back in China, at the Pentecostal movement, we were told that when the spirit comes, then you have no control whatsoever. You are controlled by the spirit. And you have no control.

If he wants you to laugh, you just laugh and you cannot stop. If he wants you to weep, you just weep and you cannot stop. If he wants you to speak in tongues, you just speak and speak and you cannot stop.

In other words, there is no control. That's what we were told. Oh, how wrong it is.

The spirits of the prophets obey the prophets. In other words, you do have the spirit of the prophet. The spirit of the prophet is upon you.

And yet, that spirit is subject to you. Why? It is not the Holy Spirit in person. It is his power.

The Holy Spirit in person dwells in you. And you have to obey him. But the spirit of the prophet or the manifestation of the Holy Spirit is his power, not his person.

Therefore, it is subject to the prophet. You have to exercise control. You can control it.

If you want to stop, you can stop it. And if you cannot stop, something's wrong. Something's wrong.

You should be in full control of the spirits of prophets or the spirit of tongues. Therefore, use your common sense. If there are already two and three, then you keep quiet because you can control yourself.

Now, I often tell people that I cannot help it. I cannot help it. I must say it.

Brothers and sisters, it is true when one is really constrained by the Holy Spirit, he should do it. But sometimes it can be out of order. When the meeting is already closed, and he says, I have to say it.

I have to say it. I cannot. No, you can wait.

There is the eternity yet to come. So brothers and sisters, here you'll find the beauty of it. You know, the beauty of it.

On the one hand, you'll find it is the Holy Spirit. And yet on the other hand, you'll find the Holy Spirit never, never set aside our personality. Two and three.

And then, number five. Verse 33. For God is not a God of disorder, but of peace, as in all the assemblies of the saints.

God is God of order and of peace. Now, how shall we describe order? I think the best way to describe order is a symphony. A symphony.

It is just like the orchestra is playing. And when an orchestra is playing, you'll find there are all kinds of instruments. Some pipe instruments, some string instruments.

You'll find all kinds of instruments. And every instrument is giving a special tone, a special sound. And yet, when they play together under the direction of the conductor, you'll find it is just harmonious.

That's order. That's order. Now, God is the God of order, not of disorder.

In other words, it doesn't mean that everyone plays his own instrument, whether it is string or whether it is pipe, and everyone just play according to what he or she likes. No. You'll find that everyone plays under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

Then you'll find harmony. All these sounds will blend together into a beautiful symphony. There is no jarring notes, no conflicting notes, nothing interfering, but everything just add and add up together.

Oh, brothers and sisters, that's order. Now, order doesn't mean that we have the order of the meeting, the program, order of the meeting, first and last, doxology and addiction. No, not that kind of order.

That is man-made order. This order is under the ordering of the Holy Spirit and peace. There is no striving, no conflict.

You know, sometimes we strive for one another, strive against one another. There's no striving. Everything is peaceful.

Why? Because it is the Holy Spirit who is in charge. Therefore, when the church meets, there should be order. Not man-made order, but order that comes out of our submitting ourselves to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

And then finally, you'll find in verse 40, let all things be done calmly and with order. Calmly, beautifully. You know, when God's people come together, it is a beautiful thing, beautiful.

You know, because when everything is done according to the leading of the Holy Spirit, and if we really are open to the Lord, and let the Spirit of God move in His direction, and we move along with Him, the result will be, it will come out so beautifully. When the meeting is over, you'll feel as if you have been to a beautiful concert, or as if you have seen a beautiful scenery, a beautiful picture. There is certain satisfaction.

There is such, such, such feeling, such taste, sweetness within you. This is what it should be. Not that after we, the meeting is over, everybody feels, what a meeting, you know.

And we begin to blame this one and that one. Brothers and sisters, never do that. If the meeting is spoiled, well, go on your knees.

Confess your sins. Not your brother, sister. Confess your sins.

That's what we should do. So, suppose we have a bad meeting. Now, do not brood over it.

Do not murmur. Do not try to, to blame one another. We will have bad meetings, because we are not always with Spirit and with understanding.

But when we have a bad meeting, go on our knees. Look to the Lord. Learn the lesson.

Ask the Lord to show us how we may meet together for the up-building of the Body of Christ. So, may the Lord help us. Shall we pray? Our Heavenly Father, how we praise and thank Thee, that Thou hast called us to be the Body of Christ.

What a privilege, what an honor, what a glory it is. We do praise and thank Thee that Thou should gather us together for the up-bringing, up-building of the Body. Lord, what a responsibility it is.

Oh, we do desire that by Thy grace, all of us may be concerned with the building up of the Body of Christ. Deliver us from being self-centered, selfish, just think of what I get. The Lord, we ask that Thou will give us a grown-up mentality, that we may be concerned with how can I contribute to the growth of the Body.

Lord, we do pray that even in our daily lives, when we are not together, Lord, do not allow us to forget that we are the Body of Christ. We ask that Thou will allow us to use that time to accumulate together, to gather fruits from Thee, that we may have something to bring to the assembly. Oh, that we each may have something to add to the growth of the Body of Christ.

And now Lord, as we come together, do teach us how to really put ourselves under Thy Lordship, Thy Headship, under the authority of the Holy Spirit, that we may really learn to do everything with the Spirit and with understanding. Oh, we pray that there may be peace, there may be order, there may be beauty, that Thy Name may be glorified, and Thy Church may be edified. We ask Thee to bring all these things, not only to our memory, but Lord, may Thy Holy Spirit lead us into all truth.

We ask in Thy precious Name. Amen.

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