

# Corinthians: Principles Governing Body Functioning

by Stephen Kaung

---

*The sermon emphasizes the importance of edification, love, and the presence of the Lord in the body of Christ, and provides guiding principles for the functioning of the body.*

**Duration:** 1:19:04

**Scripture:** Exodus 23:15, Matthew 6:33, 1 Corinthians 14:1-24, Revelation 1:6

**Topics:** "Church Unity", "Body Of Christ"

---

## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of being diligent in our daily lives as believers. He encourages the congregation to come prepared and ready to contribute when they gather together. He uses the example of the children of Israel bringing their offerings to the temple as a way to illustrate the need for diligence and preparation. The speaker also highlights the need to recognize Jesus as the head of the church and to see ourselves as members of the body of Christ, regardless of our background or differences.

---

## Transcript

This is Monday evening, November the 5th, 1973, in Richmond, Virginia. Ministry is being given through Brother Stephen Kahn. Lord, as we gather together in thy presence, our hearts doth bow before thee, in worship, in love, in adoration.

Lord, thou art the Lamb that was, thou art the one who redeemed us, out of every nation, tribe, country. Thou hast made us both kings and... O Lord, how can we not offer our worship to thee? Thou art so worthy, so worthy. Lord, how can we refrain from praising thee? Thou art so praiseworthy.

O, may praise, honor, glory be all unto thyself forever and forever. Lord, there is no ending to praise in thee. Thou art the God, thou art our Lord, thou art our Master.

O, our heart, Lord, if thou hast anything to say to us tonight, open our ears, open our understanding, deliver us from ourselves, from all the limitations, the restrictions of ourselves. Thou hast to set us free, that we may enter into thyself, thy way, because thy ways are higher than our ways, and thy thoughts are higher. Do not allow us to drag thee down, to draw thee to our level, but lift us out of us to thy level, to thy self, to thy way.

O, this is the prayer of our own Lord. Be satisfied, may thy glory be manifested. This is the only reason why we are here tonight.

We are called to breathe upon, make a living and operate it in our lives. We trust thee, Lord, in thy precious name. Amen.

May we read from 1 Corinthians chapter 14. 1 Corinthians chapter 14, verse 1. Follow after love, and be amulous of spiritual manifestation. But rather than ye, they prophesy.

For he that speaks with a tongue does not speak to man, but to God. For no one hears, but in spirit he speaks mystery. But he that prophesies speaks to man, in edification and encouragement and consolation.

He that speaks with a tongue edifies himself, but he that prophesies edifies the church. Now I desire that ye should all speak with tongues, but rather that ye should prophesy. But greater is he that prophesies than he that speaks with tongues, unless he interprets.

That the church may receive edification. Verse 24. But if all prophesy, and some unbeliever or sinful person come in, he is convicted of all, he is judged of all.

The secrets of his past are manifested. And thus falling upon his face, he will do homage to God, reporting that God is indeed among you. What is it then, brethren? Whenever ye come together, if one of you has a song, 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 church, 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 churches of the saints. Let your women be silent in the churches, for it is not permitted to them to speak, but to be in subjection, as the law also says. But if they wish to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home, for it is a shame for a woman to speak in church.

Did the word of God come out from you, or did it come to you only? If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize the things that are right to you, that it is the Lord's commandment. But if any be ignorant, let him be ignorant. So that brethren desire to prophesy, and do not forbid the speaking with tongues, but let all things be done calmly and with order.

We mentioned during the past two sessions that in these chapters the Apostle Paul is dealing with this matter of the spiritual, the matter of spirituality. As by the grace of God we enter into the spiritual realm, there are certain things, basic, that we need to know. Number one, we need to know the Lordship of Christ.

We need to see that Jesus is Lord. We need to see the head. We need to be subjected to the authority of Christ in our lives.

We need to hold fast the head. And this is the first essential in the spiritual realm. Then secondly, we need to see the body.

No one is the body. We are just members of the one body of Christ. In one spirit we have been baptized into one body.

Whether Jews or Gentiles, common or free. You know, in this world, there is nothing that will separate people, or there is no distance that is further than the distance between the Jews and the Gentiles. Because this is not only a racial distinction, not only a national difference, it is even religion.

The span between the Jews and the Gentiles could never be bridged, humanly speaking. And yet, in one spirit, we have been baptized into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles. And you know, during the time of Paul, he was under the Roman Empire.

There were more barmen than freemen. Only Roman citizens, they were free. They enjoyed all the privilege and the right of citizenship.

But the majority of the world were slaves. They had no right, they had no privilege, before the law. And the distance between a freeman and a barman was insurmountable.

And yet, in one spirit, we have been all baptized into one body whether freemen or barmen. As a matter of fact, when we were baptized in one spirit into one body, there was no longer Jew nor Gentile, no more freeman nor barman, but it is Christ all in. And we have all been given to drink of one.

In other words, we are not only being baptized into one body, but we are made to drink of one. The Spirit of God Himself within us is to be the law of the body. And because we are a living body under a living head.

Because we are a living body joined to a living head. Therefore, the Holy Spirit manifests Himself being the members of the body by giving each member a gift of gifts. Now, brothers and sisters, never look at spiritual gifts as a thing by itself.

As if the Holy Spirit gives a person a gift and now it is up to you to use that gift. And with that gift it is to manifest yourself. All the spiritual gifts that are given to the members of the body of Christ are the manifestations of the Holy Spirit.

They are His manifestations, not your manifestations, not my manifestations. And by the manifestations of the Holy Spirit, the body of Christ is to be healed of. That is 1 Corinthians chapter 12.

But before this living body enters into functioning, there is a more excellent way that has to follow. And this is chapter 13 of 1 Corinthians followed as the law. The life of the body is love.

Because the life in the body is none other but Christ Himself. God is love. Unless there is love in the body, this body will disintegrate.

Unless there is love in the body, the functioning of the spiritual gifts will result in confusion rather than in uplift. Love is the way. We often talk of American way of life.

When I first came to this country, I just couldn't understand. Oftentimes I met a wall. Whenever I was at odds with some brothers and sisters concerning certain things, I got the answer, this is our American way

of life.

I was so frustrated. It is so intangible. What is the American way of life? They cannot explain it to me.

And yet they know it. And I hit the wall with it. Well, after being in this country for so many years, I began to know without knowing the American way of life.

But brothers and sisters, in this body of Christ, it is not the American way of life that matters. It is God's way of life. And God's way of life for the body is love.

Oh, that we may be filled with the love of Christ. Not only love the Lord, our head, but love one another with that love. Then that body will really grow and develop.

And after that way is known. Then in chapter 14, Paul goes into the functioning of the body. You have the body here.

And the life of the body is love. Now the members of the body begin to function, to operate, so that the body may be filled up. And that is 1 Corinthians.

For tonight, we would just like to point out a few points, a few principles, a few guidelines for the operation of the body. You know, the body of Christ is living. You cannot try to confine its operation to a fixed formula.

So what the Bible really gives us are a few guidelines or principles. And these principles or guidelines are to be used, not legalistically, but to be used spiritually. Spiritual laws have to be applied spiritually.

When you're trying to apply spiritual laws, technically it becomes dead. So I do hope that when we enter into this chapter, we must remember that what the Spirit of God is showing us is some of the principles of the body in action. And these principles have to be applied spiritually, not mechanically, not legalistically.

I think these are the few things we have to measure. When you open this chapter, you find as if the first 25 verses seem to be devoted to a contrast of tongues and prophecies. But of course we know this contrast of tongues and prophecies is just used to illustrate some points.

Surely in the body of Christ, surely with the members of the body of Christ, there are more gifts than just tongues and prophecies. As a matter of fact, even when in chapter 12, Paul lists a few of the gifts of the members of the body of Christ. This is not a complete list.

In Romans 12, you'll find a list. In 1 Corinthians 12, you'll find another list. In Ephesians 4, you'll find another list.

But none of these lists are complete. In a sense, they are just some examples. The body of Christ is composed of many members.

Therefore, the gifts that the Spirit of God gives to the members of the body are many. Not just 9. Not just 12. The problem today is, if we do not see these 9 gifts, we say there is no gift.

Because brothers and sisters, all that you'll find in the Bible is just to illustrate a point. That's all. And in order to illustrate certain points, Paul takes hold of two gifts.

The gift of speaking in tongues, and the gift of prophesying. And he uses these two gifts to make some points. One who is speaking in tongues, he edifies himself.

He is speaking with a spirit. But his understanding is not there. Maybe in his heart, in his spirit, he is speaking of mysteries.

But nobody hears. In other words, there in his spirit, he may be speaking of mysteries, but nobody understands. Even himself does not understand, though his spirit is a blessing.

Now that is speaking in tongues. But prophesying is not only speaking with spirit, but it is also speaking with understanding. And because it is speaking with spirit and with understanding, he himself understands, and those who hear him understand.

In other words, it edifies. I wonder, can you say this gift given by the Holy Spirit is greater than that gift given by the same spirit? Can you say this gift given by the Holy Spirit is smaller than that gift given by the same spirit? All the gifts come from the one and same spirit. All the gifts are his manifestation.

How can we say that this gift is bigger than the other and the other is smaller than this one? How can we say that? So far as the gifts themselves are concerned, it seems to me that they are equally good, they are equally big, or they are equally small. Notice it. So the Bible does say the gift of prophecy is greater than the gift of speaking in tongues.

Why? This is not because of the gift itself. This is because of the effect of the gift upon the body. Now that makes all the difference.

One who is speaking in tongues, in his spirit he is speaking of mystery. And he himself is edified. But nobody else is edified.

So far as himself is concerned, that is good. But so far as the body is concerned, it doesn't build up. The manifestations that build up the body are greater gifts.

The greatness and the small are to be measured by the body. Therefore, you'll come to the first point. The first point that Paul wants to make is this.

When the body operates, it must be guided by this principle, and that is edifying. This is the principle that governs the exercising of spiritual gifts. And because of that, Paul said, since you are earnestly seeking for spiritual gifts, seek the greater gifts, that is to say, those gifts that will edify the church.

The word edify is not a good translation. I remember Brother Fox used to change it and say edify. The word edify there should be literally translated build up.

When spiritual gifts are exercised, they are for the purpose of building up the body. This is the objective. Therefore, if one speaks in tongues, he is edifying building up himself.

And if there is no interpretation, he should just speak to himself. But if there is interpretation, then it is as great as prophesying, because it builds up. Brothers and sisters, why is it that Paul should make such a point concerning the function of the members of the body of Christ, these manifestations, is because of this.

In the church in Corinth, they are very rich in gifts, particularly in the speaking of tongues, as if there is not too much prophesying there, but lots of speaking in tongues. And the result is they tend to display their gifts to make a show of themselves instead of really building up the body of Christ. And it is for this purpose you find Paul says It is better to speak five words with understanding that will build up a mentality has to be developed.

The mentality of a child is very self-centered. On the one hand, when you see a child, I think everybody loves a child, so innocent, so open, no surprise. And yet on the other hand, the mentality of a child is self-centered.

A child can only think of himself. A child does not care about anybody else. In the midnight, if a child is hungry, he cries.

He will get the mother up. He is the most important person in this world. And you watch a child.

When they are all company, how that child will act to be the center of attention. A child wants everybody to be focused upon him. And then he is satisfied.

Brothers and sisters, in the body of Christ, our mentality needs to be developed. How many of God's children never outgrow their desire. And even in the exercise of spiritual gifts, here in the church at Corinth, all they do want, they want to draw attention to themselves.

They want to display their gifts. Self-centered. They do not care whether it will build up other brothers and sisters.

They only care that everybody will look to them and say how wonderful. That's a childish mentality. That can think only of himself.

And not in terms of building up. Therefore, Paul says, your mentality, instead of the mentality of a child, you should have the mentality of a grown-up. Instead of seeking the gift that will display yourself, seek the gift that will build up.

When you are exercising your gift, don't try to draw people to you. When you are exercising the gift, let people be built up in Christ. And that is the kind of mentality that has to be developed.

If all God's people, when they come together, they all have that childish mentality, you know what will happen. But if all God's people could come together with the mentality of the grown-up, oh, how the church would be richly. This is the first guiding principle of the body in opulence.

The problem with the church in Corinth is not gifts, gifts. The problem with the church in Corinth is the childish mentality. That's the problem.

Nothing wrong with the gifts given by God, manifestations of the Holy Spirit, given for the purpose of the building up of the body, but with a childish mentality. So may we grow in the Lord. May we seek to build up other people.

May we be delivered from self-sentiment, from drawing people upon us, but may we build people. Now that is, as God's people come together, there is one objective, and that is that the glory of the Lord may be seen. What is the temple for? The temple is to be filled with the glory.

And I remember Brother Scott once said, what is glory? And the definition he gives is, when God is satisfied, there is glory. Not you are satisfied, not I'm satisfied, but God is satisfied. In Matthew chapter 18, first sentence, the Lord says, Where two or three are gathered together unto my name, there am I in the midst.

What is the temple? What is the house of God? It is the place where God puts His people. And because God's name is there, the glory of the Lord. Wherever there are two or three gathered together unto my name, there am I in the midst of them.

Now this is the principle, that when God's people come together, when the body, the one thing that will measure it, is whether, if all speak in tongues, Paul says, the unlearning, the sinful person, the unbelieving, they come in and they couldn't understand a thing. And they say, you're mad. But Paul says, if all prophesy, then the sinful person, the unbelievers are coming in, and they are convicted.

And they have to bow down and say, the Lord is indeed in your midst. Brothers and sisters, what matters is the present. You know oftentimes, when we come together, what are you looking for, brothers and sisters? Lots of people have talked to me.

Oh, they will talk to me and say, now brother, this meeting is no good. That meeting, what are you looking for? When God's people assemble together, there is only one measurement. And that is the presence of the Lord.

If the presence of the Lord is there, and is real, and is manifested, that is to say, when God's people come together, they meet the Lord. They will bow down and say, the Lord is indeed here. But if the Lord's people come together and go away without seeing the Lord, the reality of the body, this is the one thing that you should look to.

It is not how much gift is manifested, what kind of gift is manifested. It is not the liveliness. It is not the knowledge.

It is not this. It is not that. But when God's people come together, you should look for only one thing.

And that is if the presence of the Lord is here, the reality of the body is here. If the presence of the Lord is not here, it really matters. Nothing really matters.

I believe this is a very important principle, governing the body in action. When the Lord's people come together, this is the time that through the manifestation of the Holy Spirit, the head is exalted. The Lord is indeed in your head.

That is the guiding principle. Principle number three. Paul says, when the church assembles, each one of you has a psalm, has a tongue, has a revelation, has a teaching, has interpretation.

Let all things be done through the edification of the church. Each of you has. Here is the body of Christ.

And there are many, many mentions. And the Holy Spirit, according to His pleasure, He gives gifts to each one. And all the gifts are different.

So when the church assembles, when it comes into action, here you'll find each one of you, each of you, probably it needs a little explanation here. You know, there are two different kinds of meetings. Shall we say one is what we call ministry meetings, the other is what we call church meetings.

In other words, there is one kind of meeting which is actually work. One who is called by God, who is given certain gifts by God to minister to the church. That is His work.

Like God gives to the church some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some teachers and pastors for the perfecting of the saints. In other words, God sends these men as gifts to the church and they work upon the body. He ministers to them.

Let us call this ministry meetings. And such kind of meeting is, by outward appearance, is a one-way passage. Just like tonight.

Now, of course, the one who ministers needs those who are being ministered to minister to him if he is to fulfill his ministry. The sad part is when you come to this kind of meeting, everybody in the audience tends to become passive. And let all the responsibility rest on the feet of God.

No wonder very little is done. If the Spirit of God is really working and if the ministry is effective, you will find one thing. The one who ministers is being richly ministered by those people he is ministering to.

In other words, they draw out. But by all outward form it is a one-way passage. One-way passage.

That is one kind of meeting. But there is another kind of meeting. We call it church meeting.

Why call it church meeting? Because the principle of that meeting is not one-way passage, but it is both-way passage. In other words, there is a mutuality there. Not one person ministers, exercising his gift to minister to the whole church, but every member of the body ministers one to another.

And this is body ministry. I think sometimes people are a little bit confused. They think body ministry is to minister to the body by one person.

If you are not just minister to one group, but you minister to many groups, then you have body ministry. Not so. Body ministry is the members of the body minister to one another.

That is body ministry. And body ministry is based on the principle of mutuality. There is no one in the body that is just on the receiving part.

There is no one that will be always on the giving part. You'll find it is mutuality. As the Spirit leads, each one of you has you minister to me and I minister to you.

You give and you receive. Now this is the principle of a church meeting. This is body in operation.

In the history of Christianity, we know lots of the so-called ministry meetings, but we know very little of the so-called church meetings. So if I remember correctly, Campbell Morgan once said, and he was a pastor in a big church in London. I think it was Westminster Church or something like that.

And once he said, in the New Testament, there is only one place that tells us how to meet. And yet we do not have such meetings. So he tried to initiate that kind of meeting in his congregation, but it doesn't work.

It didn't work. We are so used to one type of meeting, which is ministry meeting. We have someone there on the platform minister to us, and we are just sitting there and enjoying it, not even cooperating with it.

How terrible for the one to minister to a congregation and find these people sitting there as his judges. And we are used to that kind of meeting. There is a place for such kind of meeting.

In the New Testament, you'll find that. But, brothers and sisters, there is a far greater place, for the building up of the body. The body, the members of the body, must minister to one another.

If it is only the ministry type of meeting, without the church type, the body, cannot be healed quickly and healthily. Thank God. It seems as if God is moving His people in that direction today.

More and more people begin to realize when we come together, we need to minister to one another. Each of us. Remember this.

Underline this. Each of us. Every member.

Not just a few big members. Not just a few with greater gifts. Probably people with greater gifts, bigger members, they should minister more because they have more to give.

But that does not take away the smaller members with smaller gifts. You may have a song. What is a song? You may not be a musician.

You may not be a poet. But you may have a song. What is a song? If you read a psalm, you will find psalms all over.

You will have an experience with God. And out of your experience with God, or the experience of Christ, there is music. There is poetry, coming from, not in rhymes and rhythms, but it touches us.

Can any believer say he never has a song? He never has an experience of Christ in his life if anyone has a song. Or you may have a time. Or you may have a teaching.

Or you may have a revelation. Or you may have a prophecy. In other words, it is unlimited.

Unlimited. It is all various. Do not say that I must be like that brother or that sister.

Then I have something to contribute. Not at all. Each of you has.

Not according to what you do not have, but according to what you do have. Brothers and sisters, some people, may I say, have a kind of genius mentality. You never prepare yourself.

You never study before the Lord. You never seek the Lord's face. But when you come to a meeting, you are waiting to be so moved by the Spirit of God at the spur of the moment that you may do something, contribute something.

The Bible says, each of you has. When the children of Israel come to Jerusalem to worship the Lord, they do not come empty-handed. Through the years they have been laboring on their fields.

And out of the labor of their hands, they bring the basket. They bring the produce. They bring what the Lord has tossed for them.

And they bring them to the temple. If you come empty-handed and suddenly you find a basket fall into your hands, I do not think it will not happen, but it rarely happens. That's a problem.

God's people are not diligent in their daily life. God's people are careless in their daily life. Therefore, when they come together, nobody brings anything.

They all come empty-handed. And if you come empty-handed, you are expecting to be saved because you haven't got anything. No wonder you'll find a poverty there.

Only by the mercy of God, after a long time of struggling through, then it seems as if a little bit is squeezed out. That is not the way. The way is, every brother, every sister, in their daily life, they are diligent before the Lord.

They are learning the Lord. They are learning His words. They are learning His ways.

And because everyone is diligent, therefore you'll find some may have a song, some may have a teaching, some may have this, some may have that. And brothers and sisters, when each of you has and comes together and contributes, minister, with that which you are prospered by the Lord, that's how the body is amended, is made up. Not genius type, but diligent.

Even a genius is 95% perspiration and only 5% inspiration. It is true. As we come together, we need to be led of the Lord.

But still, the Lord must have something to lead. If everyone has something to bring, well, it creates another problem. And it is a problem so different from our problem.

Our problem is, very little has been brought. But you know, if we really are diligent before the Lord, and each of you has, each of you has, suppose there are 50 people there, and everyone has something. Now there is a problem.

What? Because we are still living in time. One day, that problem will be solved. But today, there is a problem.

Is it because the Lord has given you something during the week? Therefore, you have to squeeze that into the meeting. Otherwise, you think, what a waste. Not that.

Oh, the beauty of it. Each one of you has. And everyone comes together, with an open heart, to give as well as to receive.

And here is the leading of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit may touch upon one person and say, Give. He may jump over another person to the third one and say, Give.

Even if you have. It is not lost. This is the guidance of the Holy Spirit in you.

We often misunderstand guidance in you. Everybody sits there passively waiting for guidance. Just like those people in that porch, of the pharaoh, the pharaoh's staff, waiting for the water to meet, and you jump.

The Holy Spirit does not guide that way. Does not guide that way. If you are sitting there passively, if you do not bring anything with you, the Spirit of God has nothing to move with.

No. That is not guidance in the meeting. Guidance in the meeting is, everyone comes prepared, as it were, prepared before God's presence.

Everyone comes bringing something there. Oh, how thrilled it is to see the Spirit of God beginning to meet. And you know, when the Spirit of God meets, sometimes it brings awe to you.

You find that even though it may be a song, it may be a teaching, it may be a tongue, it may be a revelation, and yet you find there is a unity, there is a harmony, there is a direction. It is not disorderly. It is harmony.

That is the leading of the Holy Spirit. And some brothers and sisters, they do not care how the Holy Spirit leads in the meeting. He has to put it to an end.

Oh, how much we need understanding. We need the Spirit. We need understanding.

If it is just yourself, the Spirit is enough. But if it is the body, we need the Spirit. How we need to be open, alert before the Lord, that the Holy Spirit may contact us.

How we need to see the direction that the Spirit is moving in the meeting. Oh, brothers and sisters, when this happens, it is more than beautiful, it is glorious. You see the Lord.

You see the Lord. This is how God's people meet. Or even if the Holy Spirit does not take you this moment, do not be discouraged.

It doesn't mean that you do not have anything. It doesn't mean that you are more, you are inferior. It doesn't mean that.

It is just the sovereignty of the Spirit of God. And nothing is lost. And another thing, it is deposited there.

The Holy Spirit touches it and brings it into life at the right moment for the right purpose. Nothing is lost. This is the way God's people should meet.

It is not of this order, but there is an order. It is the order of the Spirit of God in the body. It is not an order arranged by man, programmed by man.

No. It is an order of the Spirit in the body. As the Spirit moves, He manifests Himself in certain ways.

And you will find it in all things. In perfect peace, perfect peace, perfect harmony. There is no jarring note.

There is no distraction. But it is building up, building up. This is the way to meet.

Now, of course, in 1 Corinthians 14, this is a church meeting in the sense of all the members exercising, functioning as the Spirit directs. The principle is there. But it doesn't mean that there is only one kind of meeting.

There can be variations. It can be a prayer meeting. It can be a meeting studying the Bible together.

It can be an open fellowship meeting. But the principle is there. Now, that is the principle.

Now, we will come to the most difficult part. Here you'll find Paul says, let the woman be silent. I think I cannot give that.

But I'm not trying to avoid it. Brothers and sisters, I have to go back a little. You know, Paul was in Corinth for a year and a half.

And during that a year and a half, he said he knew nothing among them but Jesus Christ and Him crucified. And I believe that. Because he did not tell these believers how to meet.

He really knew nothing else but Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Many people got saved. And of course, those people who were saved, they assembled together as an expression of the body of Christ.

Sure. But strange to say that Paul never instructed them how to meet. Was it a negligence on the part of Paul? Suppose I go to a certain place.

And suppose by the grace of God, a number of people got saved. I will gather them together and say now we are to build a New Testament church. Now you're going to meet in this way.

And I will lay down ten or a hundred rules and regulations. Now this is what you should do. This is what you shouldn't do.

Suppose I do that. You know what will happen. These rules, these regulations will kill the life in the believers.

Instead of let the life flow as the Spirit leads, they will look into these rules and regulations. You'll go back to the Old Testament. You don't have a New Testament church.

You have an Old Testament congregation. That's what you have. So Paul was very wise.

After a number of people got saved, he said, meet together. Minister to one another. And he met.

Ah. So these people came together. And they were rich in gifts.

Therefore you'll find all these gifts are being displayed and all the members are functioning very lively. Too lively. Because they began to fight against each other.

Disorderly. Uncomely. Not very beautiful.

God allows them to grow without trying to circumscribe it. Let the life grow. Let the life grow.

And then when life grows to a certain degree, then some direction, some instruction to channel, brothers and sisters, I believe that is what Paul wanted. First Corinthians, the letter to the first, the first letter to the Corinthians is of corrective nature, not of selective nature. In other words, the first letter to the Corinthians, there are very little selective things, but more of corrective things.

Because something is already done, but it's not quite right, therefore it needs to be corrected. So here you'll find when Paul said, let the woman be silent, remember, he didn't tell the woman to be silent from the very beginning. If he did, they would be silent already.

You see my point? Very often, out of our good intention to keep the Word, from the very beginning we lay down the law. And you know what happens? Usually when an assembly or first begins, usually there are more women than men. And usually women are more spiritual than men.

And if you start with such legality, you say this is the Bible. I believe in the Bible. But the letter to the Corinthians, you'll find more than half of the body is paralyzed.

And the other half, smaller half, can hardly keep it going. Brothers and sisters, this is the law. This is the law.

Thank God, as life begins to grow to a certain degree, the Spirit of God will step in and say now there needs to be regulation. And this is what Paul means. I do not know if you'll go along with me, but this is how I read it.

We should not neglect the Word of God. And yet the Word of God is not to be taken in that kind of way. It has to be applied in life.

In life. And if life could grow to a certain degree, then there is certain regulation which is most natural and spontaneous. You know it.

You know it. The Church always begins as a family. And in a family, the father, the mother, the brother, the sister, the younger ones, the older ones, they can all speak.

They can all put in their contribution. It's a family. But when the Church begins to grow and the Lord begins to raise us with the Word, then a divine order is to be applied.

Brothers and sisters, it is not that Paul is the woman hater. Not at all. It is the divine order.

The divine order. There is an order. And in that divine order, the man, the brother, the woman, the sister, they in the Church represent.

Because the men represent Christ, therefore they should take a more leading role. The women represent the body, therefore they should take a supporting role. If the brothers lead and the sisters do not support, you go nowhere.

There is a cooperation, according to order. And with that order, it will be most effective. Order is with effectiveness, just like a family.

The father, the husband is the head. The wife is the body. With the head leading, the body supporting, you find the function of the family is correct.

It is just for that purpose. Not in equality. It is for the effectiveness of function.

And for the effectiveness of the functioning of the body of Christ. Here you'll find life has grown to a certain degree. It needs to be corrected.

It needs to be regulated. So at that point, Paul says, because the women in the Church of Corinth took such a leading, prominent part, as if there was no man. Let the women be spiteful.

Does it mean that the women could not even pray? Could not even sing? In some people, in some places, people take it that way. They say, because the Bible says, let the women be silent, therefore they cannot speak, and they cannot pray. But I wonder why they allow them to sing.

If you read the context, you will find immediately it is following. Does the word of God come out of you? Does it come to you only? It doesn't mean that the word of God does not come to the women. The word of God does.

It doesn't mean that sisters never have the word of God. Not at all. Not at all.

But not because you have it, you have to give it. If God gives to the man, you see the point? And because the word of God has come to the man as well as the women in the day. So, let this order.

It has nothing to do with praise, because praise is towards God, not towards man. It is only concerned with the word. With the word.

It has nothing to do for a sister to relate it to. To give a testimony. It is only in the matter of order.

So, brothers and sisters, this is mainly a matter of order. Again, I say, it is not something technical, mechanical, just letters. It is something that is brought into being when life has grown.

Then you find an order. And brothers and sisters, when that order comes forth, you find the body is, just like in a family, a family. If anyone wants to argue, Paul said, we do not have this kind.

If you consider yourself as spiritual, this is the commandment of the Lord. If you want to be ignorant, let you be ignorant. This is not something to argue.

If you take it as from the Lord, in the Spirit, thank God. If you cannot take it, all right, we don't argue. Let all things be done decently and beautifully with order.

So, brothers and sisters, this is, these are the few guidelines. These are the few principles that the Scripture did concerning the body in operation. And I hope that these may help us somewhat so that the body may function beautifully and even gloriously.

And the whole purpose is that the body may be built up and the glory of the Lord may be manifest. Dear Lord, Thou art the head, Thy people are Thy body, Thou hast given Thy Spirit to the body that the body may be led, that the body may be built up. Oh, we do pray that there may be an expression of such a body in function that people may bow down and say, The Lord is indeed among us.

Oh, Lord, deliver us from a childishness, grant that we may grow in our understanding. Oh, that we may seek to build up our brotherhood. Make us diligent in seeking.

Give us something that we may contribute to the body. Enable us to be led by Thine, not pushing ourselves, but led by Thine. Oh, Lord, establish Thy order in the church.

We want to see Thy body built and the head exalted. We ask Thee to bless these, use these words, if Thou shouldst do so. We just commit everything to Thine and to Thee be all the praise and the glory and the honor forever and forever.

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/0/SID0972.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/stephen-kaung/corinthians-principles-governing-body-functioning/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**