



Building Up The Body

May 3, 2026

1 Corinthians 14



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Introduction:

What do you think the primary purpose for the Christian gathering is?

Let's take a look at what 1 Corinthians 14 says!

1 Corinthians 14:1-5

Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. 2For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit. 3On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation. 4The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church. 5Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be built up.

- 7 times in 1 Cor. 14 we see the greek word *oikodomeo* which means to “edify” or “build up”.
- Paul encourages the church (the body of people) of Corinth to pursuing loving one another through the exercise of spiritual gifts for the purpose of building up the body (church).
- A spiritual gift is a “grace” gift - a demonstration of God’s grace through a Spirit filled believer given in order to build up the body. (1 Cor. 12:7)

The purpose of all of our *gathering activities and speech* is to build up and strengthen one another.

Other uses of “Building Up”

1 Cor. 14:12 - “So with yourselves, since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church.”

1 Cor. 14:17 - “For you may be giving thanks well enough, but the other person is not being built up.”

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1 Corinthians 14:26:

“What then, brothers? When you come together each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up”

- Paul, and others, describe the **Christian gathering as a relational, interactive, participatory gathering that builds up.** (See also **Hebrews 10:19-25, Ephesians 2:20-22, 4:11-16 and 1 Cor. 12:4**)
- Surveying the NT, we see a variety of different speakers and a variety of types of speech.
 - Speakers - Apostles, Elders, ministers, prophets, teachers etc
 - Types of speaking - Most common is to “Exhort/Encourage”
 - Other types of speaking includes pray, prophesy, singing, report, rebuke, read, dialogue, converse, tongues, revelation, knowledge, instruct etc.

What about worship?

The Greek words for “worship” are never used to speak of the Christian gathering or what happens in it.

For example:

Romans 12:1 “I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.” (See also John 4:19-26, Heb. 13:15)

NT describes “worship” as the entirety of our lives. When we go from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant worship moves from the temple to the posture of our hearts before God.

Discussion Questions:

1. Do you agree with the idea presented that the primary purpose for the Christian gathering is for building up the body? Why or why not?
2. How might our gatherings change in order to better facilitate the building up of the body?
3. How can you, as an individual, participate in the building up of the body? What are you offering up to body for it’s strengthening?

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