

Assisting To Contribute



Foundations (Day 231)
by Derek Prince

Yesterday we read 1 Corinthians 14:29: "Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others [the other members] judge". In this verse Paul also says clearly that the exercise of the gift of prophecy must be judged or tested. He says, "Let the others judge." The "others" would include the rest of the Spirit-baptised believers present who are capable of recognising the genuine manifestation of the gift of prophecy. Even in this we see that Paul brings in all the members. He does not specify merely one professional minister who is to judge, but he makes the believers as a whole responsible to do this.

> "Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies. Test all things; hold fast what is good." (1 Thess. 5:19-21)

These three verses are addressed to Christian believers generally, and they must be taken closely together. It is wrong for believers to quench the Spirit – to reject the moving and manifestation of the Holy Spirit in their midst. It is also wrong for believers to despise prophesying – to adopt an attitude of criticism, contempt or unbelief toward the manifestation of the gift of prophecy.

On the other hand, when this gift is manifested, believers are responsible to test it by the standards of Scripture – and then to hold fast, to accept, to retain only that which is good, only that which accords with the standards of Scripture.

We see, then, that Paul is careful to guard against anything that might be spurious or disorderly in the exercise or manifestation of spiritual gifts. However, with this one qualification, he repeatedly and emphatically states that all believers in the church can and should exercise the open manifestation of spiritual gifts. He particularly specifies the three gifts of tongues, interpretation and prophecy.

What is the result in a church when all its members freely and publicly exercise supernatural spiritual gifts in this way?

Paul describes the kind of services which result from this.

> "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." (1 Cor. 14:26)

That phrase "each of you has" sets a pattern. It implies active participation by all the members.

Generally speaking, when Christians come together today, they do so with the primary purpose of receiving, not of contributing. They come to get a blessing, to receive healing, to hear a preacher.

But this was not the way of the New Testament Church. There the members came not primarily to receive but to contribute. Every one of them had something committed to him individually by the Holy Spirit which he was in turn able to contribute to the total worship and service of the church.

Devotional

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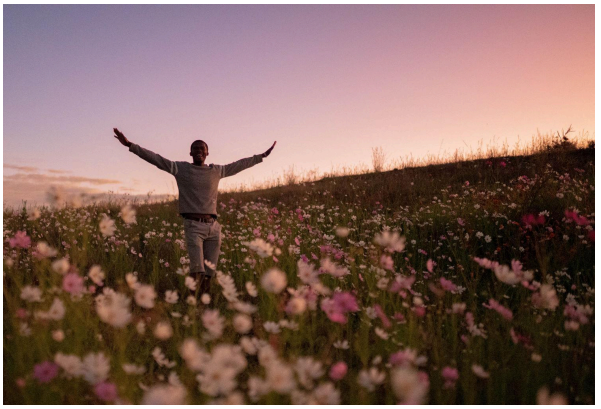

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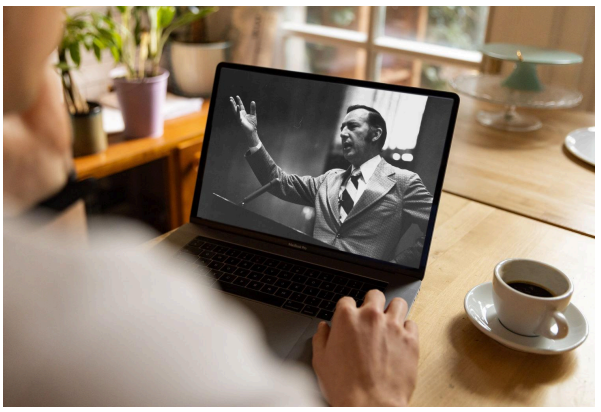

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