

The Gathering

1 Corinthians 14

Week of January 7, 2024

BELONG

Ask this Ice Breaker Question: What is your favorite worship song of all time? A hymn? A special song? A contemporary praise song?

BELIEVE

Have someone in your group read aloud: 1 Corinthians 14

Ask these questions to prompt group discussion:

1. Paul is talking about our gathering for corporate worship. This typically includes prayer, praise, and preaching. As a participant, are you most consistently energized by the praying, preaching, or praising?

Leader Context:

- *Answers may vary.*

2. Paul puts a dual emphasis on being led by the Spirit (more extemporaneous) while also ensuring that there is order to the gathering. Have you experienced church gatherings that manage this tension well? Have you seen it not managed or managed poorly?

Leader Context:

- *Some churches are too ordered and stifle the expression of genuine worship - requiring us to function as quiet robots.*
- *Some churches are too chaotic with wild gesticulations and out-of-the-blue utterances stirring up confusion.*
- *Some churches are a balance of the two.*
- *Some churches balance, but lean to one side or the other.*

3. Part of the context of a worship gathering involves maintaining respect for everyone in the gathering. In the worship services you have attended would you say that they are more or less respectful of the people present?

Leader Context:

- *Do those who speak prophetically take turns?*
- *Are disagreements charitable?*
- *Do wives respect husbands in public and in private? Do husbands respect wives?*
- *Is there even an atmosphere of freedom to ask such questions?*

4. At the core of Paul's thinking is the idea that all worship gatherings should invite people to move closer to Jesus. Are the worship services that you gather focused on Jesus? Are they focused on other topics? In the preaching? Singing? Praying?

BECOME:

5. Rather than focusing on how the worship leaders and church leaders should change...what do you need to adjust to ensure that your participation in worship is more respectful, ordered, and Christ-centered?

Leader Context:

- *Sunday morning is a Saturday night decision.*
- *Kids don't set the tone for church participation. Parents do.*
- *Church is about Jesus, not cultural values or programs. Jesus may influence the latter, but HE is the focus.*
- *Church is about Jesus, not my preferences. My preferences are important to consider. But Jesus' preferences are the most important.*