**LET’S ASSESS IT!**

**1 Corinthians 14**

Lesson 13 - Supplementary

Premise: Ministry is a movement. To fulfill God’s plan and purpose for our lives and for the life of our church, we cannot become complacent or stagnant. We must get *On the Move*! To accomplish this, we must honestly examine who we are, where we are, and what we are as a ministry, and with boldness, begin making the necessary changes to fulfill God call (Ephesians 2:10).

**DISCUSSION**

**Assess, Evaluate, Examine**

**DISCUSSION/DISCOVERY**

What are we assessing, evaluating, and/or examining?

* Our Statements – [1 Corinthians 1:10]
* Our Systems – 1 Corinthians 14:40
* Our Structure – [Exodus 18]
* Our Strategies – [ ]

Our Statements

SLBC Purpose Statement

* “To win people to Christ (evangelism), develop them to Christ-like maturity (discipleship), while cultivating relationships with one another (fellowship), in order to magnify God’s name (worship).”

SLBC Mission Statement:

We exist to Disciple people for God while Demonstrating the love of God; therefore, Christ’s last command is our first concern.

SLBC Vision Statement

St. Luke Baptist Church envisions…

* People placing their faith in Jesus Christ through biblical evangelism;
* People experiencing order and freedom in and through wholehearted corporate worship;
* People growing spiritually through inspired biblical preaching/teaching;
* People finding community and family through biblical fellowship;
* People living out their faith through service.

Our Systems – 1 Corinthians 14:40

1 Corinthians 14 addresses two (2) major themes:

* The use of the gift of tongues (vv.1-26)
* Orderin the worship experience (vv.26-40)

In these opening verses, Paul talks about two forms of speaking:

* Prophecy – speaks to people.
* Tongues – speaks to God.

Paul says in verses 4-5 that the exercise of spiritual gifts is to **build up** **the body**, not just the individual using the gift.

It is better to be a blessing to the church than to experience some kind of personal “spiritual excitement” alone and selfishly.

Psalm 22:22, 26:12, 35:18, 52:9, 107:32; 109:30, 111:1, 134:2

To clearly proclaim the Word of God in the worship experience is to offer to outsiders (visitors) an opportunity to clearly hear the message of Christ.

At verse 26, Paul addresses orderliness in the worship experience.

Orderliness in worship demands following a coherent process.

And note that Paul again emphasizes that everything is to be done for building up.

Verses 27-32 lay out the process for speaking in tongues.

* Only two or three people at the most – with an interpreter. (27)
* If there is no interpreter, then they should remain silent and speak only to God. (28)
* Two or three prophets should speak, and others evaluate. (29)
* If there is a special revelation given, then one must be quiet.

He says there is room for everyone to learn and be encouraged.

**DISCOVERY**

**OUR SYSTEMS** – Who Placed This Order?

1 Corinthians 14:40

The Scripture in Context

[Everyone repeat this with me… “Context is EVERYTHING”]

Verse 34-35 are a source of much contention within the church today.

\*What do you know about or have heard related to these verses?

Paul has already made it clear that woman can and should participate in the public worship experience.

ch. 11:1-16

Though these men and women are Christ followers, their primary worship expression comes from a Jewish context. They still held to much of the worship practices of the synagogue.

**Acts 1:15, 2:5, 2:41, 3:1, 4:4, 5:14, 6:7**

One of those practices (in Jewish orthodoxy) is the separation of the men and women in the worship experience.

\*Why do you believe this separation of the sexes was in place?

From Rabbi Aron Moses, on Chabad.org:

“One obvious benefit of separate seating in a synagogue is that it helps ensure that the main **focus** is on the prayers and not on the opposite gender. There is no question that we don't act the same in a mixed crowd as we do in a same-gender one. There is nothing wrong with that. It is good and healthy that we are attracted to each other, but during prayers we shouldn't be trying to impress anyone other than G‑d.

In addition to that, a synagogue should be a **welcoming and inclusive place**. No one should feel left out. Many single people feel extremely uncomfortable at a function or event at which everyone seems to be with a partner except them. No one should ever feel this way at a synagogue. When men and women sit separately, there is no discrimination between singles and couples. (There will always be a chance for singles to mingle afterwards at the Kiddush!)

But it goes deeper than that. Women and men are very different beings. Not only are we physically different; our thought processes, emotional states and psychology are all different. This is because our souls are different - they come from complementary but opposite sources. The prayer experience is supposed to be an opportunity to be with your true self, to communicate with your soul. Men and women need space from each other to help them become in tuned to their higher selves.

Ironically, it is by sitting separately in prayer that we are able to truly come together in the other areas of our lives; because it is only when both male and female spiritual energies are allowed to flourish that we are complete as individuals, families and a community.”

So, we can take from Rabbi Aron Moses, they sat/sit separately for these reasons:

* Focus
* Feelings
* Formation
* Flourishing

So, what is meant in verse 34-35?

The women should not be disruptive during the worship experience. They should learn from their husbands at home. This places a grave responsibility upon husbands in the Corinthian fellowship.

Finally, Paul says be eager to prophesy and do not forbid speaking in tongues…

…but EVERYTHING (related to tongues/prophecy) is to be done decently and in order.

**DIRECTION**

Assess – Evaluate - Examine

Spend some time this week repeating/memorizing our Mission, Purpose, and Vision Statements

For your consideration:

How do you view the spiritual gift that you have received from the Holy Spirit? Is it a tool for winning attention, admiration, and praise from others?

Do you consider your gift to be an opportunity to glorify God and lovingly build up your brothers and sisters in Christ?