

Women Pastors, Speaking and Silence

Though St Paul's chief concern in Corinthians 14 is the superiority of prophecy over speaking in tongues, and though his concern is always related to the criterion, "Which edifies?" it has to be conceded that the context broadens towards the end of the chapter. Each one may bring "a psalm, a teaching, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation." This is wider than prophecy and speaking in tongues. Teaching was also a charismatic gift according to Romans 12. The word "speak" has its meaning fixed by the context as "speak as an individual while the rest listen", and is not restricted to prophecy or speaking in tongues.

It is wrong to assume that "speaking" included joint saying of the Lord's Prayer, for example. It is wrong to assume that "silence" in 1 Cor 14 prohibits even a sneeze! The prior context in 1 Corinthians 14:26-33 indicates a kind of speaking in which one speaks and the rest listen.