

Sam Low

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Preacher: Sam Low

- [0 : 0 0] Let me say good afternoon as well, and let me try again and say I need to practice as much as possible. For those who don't know, that's me welcoming everyone in Cantonese.
- I'd also like to say to Anthony's group, which is thank you for all the work they put in to give us a delicious lunch. And I'd also like to say which is asking you how your food was, and John is letting me know it was good.
- For everyone else, how was your lunch? Good, good to hear. So if you wanted to thank Anthony and his leaders later, you could say m'goy for what they did. Or you could ask them if I'm saying it incorrectly and say the correct thing. Either way.
- It is really great to be gathered today and to have a mix across congregations. But I do have a sense as we look at this passage that going on holidays was a mistake.
- I feel like going on holidays means that they have given me the controversial passage. So lesson learned. But I do want to warn us as we approach this passage to be careful of going in with preconceived ideas.
- [1 : 0 9] We might have things that we believe to be true or that we want to be true. And it's really important that we don't read a passage like this with those things being our starting point. We want to come to the passage open to what God has to say.
- And we want to listen to what the passage is saying rather than trying to make it say what we want it to say. Rather than making it answer what we want it to answer, which was Steve's warning for us yesterday.
- This is a really specific passage. It's part of a letter written to a specific church. And so we need to hear what Paul was saying to them so that we can understand what God is saying to us.
- But let's pray and ask that God will give us hearts that are willing to do that. That have the humility to be taught things that may not be exactly what we want to hear. And ultimately that God will be glorified as we sit under his word.
- So let's pray. Father God, we thank you for your word, the scriptures that you have given to us that we might know you. We acknowledge that there are parts of your word that are more difficult to read or understand than others.
- [2 : 1 3] And we want to ask that this afternoon that you would protect us from our own agendas, protect us from our own prejudice, and give us hearts that are thirsty to have you speak.
- By your spirit, shape us through your word this afternoon so that we are more like Jesus. And so that we are better equipped to give you glory. Amen. Verse 1, chapter 14.
- Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy. That's pretty much what this chapter is going to be about.
- Three things. Follow the way of love. And I'm not going to talk too much about that because James is going to tell us about that later on this afternoon. Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts.

Especially the gift of prophecy. You could read it something like follow the way of love by desiring spiritual gifts. The and desire spiritual gifts, it's really a method of following the way of love.

[3 : 16] The desire for spiritual gifts has been something that Paul is challenging the Corinthians on, but he's not saying stop desiring the spiritual gifts. The desire for spiritual gifts is a loving act.

Because really what you're saying is I want to be beneficial for the church. I want to be skilled to be a blessing to the church around me. And the desire for gifts is good and right because God has made it clear to us that all in his church have the spirit.

And therefore all are empowered by the spirit for the church. Steve showed us in chapter 12 of 1 Corinthians verse 7, It's talking about the future day when the spirit will come, which is what we have now.

And it says, Jesus has died and Jesus is risen and God has poured out his spirit on men and women.

On all those who call themselves Christians, followers of Jesus. And so the call to desire spiritual gifts is a call to recognize the fact that God has given his spirit to you, not just so that you have it, but so that you might be used for the sake of the church.

[5 : 09] First thing, the third thing in the passage, in verse 1 there is, especially the gift of prophecy. This is where it starts to get a little bit curly for us to understand.

Is Paul saying that even though we all have the gift of the spirit, some people are more important than others? Is Paul saying that some gifts are more exciting than others?

Is Paul saying we should appreciate some people with their gifts more than other people with their gifts? And if so, which people should we appreciate and which people should we not worry about because their gifts aren't as impressive?

What does he mean when he says, especially the gift of prophecy? Why that one? Well, let's have a look and begin to unpack this chapter.

Verse 2. Anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God. Indeed, no one understands him. He utters mysteries with his spirit, but everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort.

[6 : 12] He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church. I would like every one of you to speak in tongues, but I would rather have you prophesy.

He who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets so that the church may be edified.

So there's some distinction going on here. Prophecy is in some way more prominent for Paul than tongues. But what does he mean? He's not saying that we need one and not the other.

He's not saying as long as you've got prophecy, forget about tongues, because he's made it clear in chapter 12 that we're a body, that we need all the parts doing their bit. So what is he saying?

Not that one is more essential, but that one is more beneficial. Let me show you what I mean. Have a look really closely at the second half of verse 5.

[7 : 08] He who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues. It's a reasonably absolute statement, unless he interprets so the church may be edified.

The benefit of prophecy is that it is plain. It is obvious. Its whole function is speaking of simple and understandable words so that the church may be edified. And tongues aren't bad.

Paul's desire is that everyone would speak in tongues. But they're not beneficial for you if you don't understand them. It might be positive for the person praying them.

They might be having a fantastic time of intimacy with God. But the point is, gifts exist. Gifts are correctly used when they achieve the maximum possible edification for the rest of the body.

That is how we measure what gift is greater, what gift is more beneficial. I don't know how many of you have been bothering to get up early to watch the World Cup at the moment. I haven't.

[8 : 12] But I'm told Australia has been less than embarrassing, so that's good. But can you imagine if a team turned up to the World Cup and put 11 forwards on the field? 11 fantastic strikers who were brilliant at scoring goals.

Chances are they would lose. They may be the 11 best players in their country, but that team still needs the different gifts. They still need someone to stand in the goal and block when the other team has shots.

Otherwise, with all 11 of them waiting for the ball to be passed to them, they're going to get beaten pretty embarrassingly. The point is to maximise edification. The point is not so much what gift you have, whether that's prophecy or tongues.

The point is that it's used in a way that will be beneficial. So the reason Paul would say something like, he who prophesies is greater, is because there is no barrier between the one who prophesies and us as we listen.

We can listen to the words they say, we can weigh them in our heart, and we can hear what God is trying to teach us. But the one who speaks in tongues speaks as one slightly removed from us, speaks in a language we don't understand.

[9 : 19] We need another gift for that to be beneficial. We need someone to tell us what he's saying so that we can say, amen, we agree. So that we can be encouraged by the richness of their relationship as they pray to God.

Again, tongues are not a bad thing. Paul says, I would rather you all have the gift of tongues. But the issue here is not what gift you have.

It's that you use it to the maximum potential so that the whole body gets edified. The question is, which will be more beneficial? Not which one is better.

There's a couple of things that we can pick up really quickly there. Paul says, I wish that all of you could speak in tongues, which means not everyone speaks in tongues. This passage is one of the passages that is often taken to say that there are certain gifts you have to have to mark your maturity.

And Steve challenges that that's not the case. And Paul is really clear here. Corinthians is the tongues church. They had probably more tongue speakers than we can even begin to comprehend in terms of percentage.

[10 : 23] And Paul says, I wish that every one of you could speak in tongues. Not every one of them could. But also tongues isn't bad. Just because there are certain gifts or things that people may do in church that are not familiar for us, or a little bit outside of our normal realm of experience as a body of Christ, doesn't mean it's wrong.

We need to be really open to the fact that God has gifted people in ways that we're not aware yet. That God has equipped people to serve within the body that might be completely different to anything we have ever seen before within our relationships and even within our gatherings.

God gifts us with the things that we need. But again, the agenda, regardless of what the gift is, is will this be beneficial?

And which will be most beneficial? The nature of the church, Paul goes on to explain, is that the church is a community. It's not an organization.

It's not a principle. It's a group of people. Have a look at verse 6. Brothers, if I come to you and speak in tongues, what good will I be to you unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or word of instruction?

[11 : 36] Even in the case of lifeless things that make sounds, such as the flute or harp, how will anyone know what tune is being played unless there is a distinction in the notes? Again, if the trumpet does not sound a clear call, who will get ready for battle?

So it is with you. Unless you speak intelligible words with your tongue, how will anyone know what you are saying? You'll just be speaking into the air. Undoubtedly, there are all sorts of languages in the world, yet none of them is without meaning.

If then I do not grasp the meaning of what someone is saying, I am a foreigner to the speaker and he is a foreigner to me. The church is a community.

It's a group of people. It's a web of relationships. And so anytime we talk about the church, we shouldn't think about a structure or a program. We need to think about the impact that this has through those relationships.

So when you talk about gifts, it's not what place you might have on a roster, but it's how will me doing this thing or exercising this gift or ability impact on the people that I gather with in God's name?

[12 : 42] The agenda here, Paul says, brothers, he talks to them with a level of intimacy and closeness. And he says, what matters is that what I do and what you do is beneficial to one another.

It doesn't matter how well you do it. If it doesn't help me, then it doesn't help the church. The church is not you being a good Christian.

The church is us relating to one another as people who have together been forgiven by the grace of God in Jesus. Church is necessarily a communal activity.

And so we need to be really careful about thinking through it as my gifts or my platform for serving or the place where I get what I need. This is how relationships work.

We come to this community with our energy and focus on those to whom we're relating, not on what I want or what I need or what I think is best.

[13 : 43] We come with that selfless servant heart. And this is exactly God's agenda as well. This is the way God works. We did a series in the Trinity, I think, at the start of last year. And we're reminded that the way God works as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is not for the Father to say, I'm the most important or for the Son to say, I'm the King because I went to the cross and now I'm on the throne.

But they love and serve one another. The way they interact is driven by loving service and honouring of one another. And as his community, that is what God has designed for us, both for our benefit and so that we are an accurate reflection of the God that we represent in the world.

There's this amazing picture there. We're going to come back to it in a sec in verse 22 to 25, where Paul says, if unbelievers come in and everyone's prophesying, which we know is more beneficial, then those unbelievers, have a look at it in verse 24, if he comes in while everybody's prophesying, he'll be convinced by all that he is a sinner and will be judged by all and the secrets of his heart will be laid bare so he will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, God is really among you.

Surely that is an exciting and glorious picture of what church and church community should be, of what your community group can be as it gathers, of what we can be as we gather informally as the people of God for lunch or to watch a movie.

A community where people see God's love, see humble service, hear God's word proclaimed through the way that we interact and the way that we speak to the point where they fall down and exclaim, God is here.

[15 : 27] God is among this community. These are his people. Church is a community. And that means that gifts are only exercised well when they're exercised with regard to the community, when they're exercised with regard to the people that they're around.

Have a look at verse 11. If then I do not grasp the meaning of what someone is saying, I am a foreigner to the speaker and he is a foreigner to me. If we come to our church gatherings, if we come to our community groups, if we come to the times where we're gathered as God's people, it doesn't matter how well you pray, if I don't know what you're doing, what you're doing is actually pushing me out.

You're making me an alien in that community. You're making me feel like I don't belong. If I come and exercise my gift in a way that you can't follow, that you don't understand, Paul says I'm doing the exact opposite of what the gift exists for.

I'm making you feel uncomfortable. I'm making you feel like you don't belong here. I'm making you feel like this isn't your community. And that's what verses 22 to 25 are talking about as well.

We can alienate outsiders just by doing things for ourselves, by being driven by an agenda of this is my ability, this is my skill set and I need to use it.

[16 : 51] Now we do need to be a little bit careful because the instruction then isn't to make our Christian community so like everything else that's around the world that anyone can walk in and think everything's totally fine.

Christians are weird. We do weird things. If somebody who's never been to church was to come in here today, they would think it's weird that we're all singing along to some words on a screen.

That's okay. It's okay to be weird but there's a difference between being weird and intentionally doing something that will isolate you from others. There's a difference between doing things which are distinctively Christian and doing things that separate you out from the community.

I mean singing is a great example. One of the reasons we sing is because we get to do it together in unison and we get to do it using the same words. But if instead you decide that you just want to do your own song that no one else knows and just kind of wander off to the side and sing it over the top of us like my son does sometimes, that could actually be something that's unloving.

That could be a way of you alienating people who are in this community who are actually your brothers and sisters in Christ, who have also been loved and adopted by the blood that he shed on the cross and simply because you feel gifted to pick that song or to sing that song does not mean that you should do it when we gather with no regard for the people around you.

[18 : 24] Building up is the agenda that God has for his people. Whenever we are together, whenever we think of the people that we are in church with here, that we are in relationship with, the agenda is how can I be beneficial?

How can I build up? He makes it explicit with gifts in verse 12. Since you are eager to have spiritual gifts, try to excel in gifts that build up the church.

There are some gifts that are going to be more beneficial. He's already explained that tongues is still a gift and a good gift and a valid gift. But prophecy is more beneficial for the church because prophecy is the chance to speak the truth of God and to live the truth of God and to be Christ-like in our relationships with one another.

And so there's got to be something that shifts for us. We don't look at the Bible and look for the set of gifts and pick the ones that we like or we think we'd like to have and then put our hand up and say, that's what I can do, that's how I'm going to serve.

We don't come to church and say, this is what I've done before and therefore that's what I'm going to do now. It may be that you end up doing the same thing and it may be that that's your gifts, but the encouragement here is to desire the gifts that we'll build.

[19 : 38] So change your heart to want what is needed for the church rather than what might be exciting for you or impressive. Or public or visible.

When we're called to desire spiritual gifts, there's a sense that God may give us different manifestations of the spirit at different times for different purposes. I pray that right now God by his spirit is giving me a manifestation so that I can teach God's word well.

But it might be that in another season of my life, I need a completely different manifestation of the spirit for the sake of the body that I'm in. And that needs to be my heart's desire.

Not what do I want to do. Not what have I done before. Not what makes me comfortable. But what does this body need? God give me that. That needs to be the thing that marks our prayer.

What is needed. Not what is impressive or wanted. I've had the chance to spend a bit of time in Singapore over the last few years doing some ministry. And I've got some guys over there who I consider friends now and brothers and partners in ministry.

[20 : 50] And one in particular, his name is Roger. He studied for Bible College here. He's Singaporean nationality but came over here to study and is now back there serving in a church as a youth pastor.

And I've been over there doing some youth ministry training with him and a few other bits and pieces and preaching and spending time with his family. And I was chatting to him about youth ministry. And it's clear that youth ministry is not his first preference.

He doesn't love spending time with teenagers. He doesn't love running around and playing soccer. He doesn't love the things that might normally strike you as a youth minister type of gifts. And I was asking him if he's frustrated because he's been put in that role because he's the youngest member of the ministry team.

And he was really quick to say to me, I firmly believe that God will equip me to do whatever he puts in front of me to do. And this is what my senior pastor has asked me to do.

So this is what is needed. He wasn't being unnecessarily firm or ungracious. He was just deeply convicted that the gifts God gives are what the body needs, not what we want.

[21 : 56] And I was really challenged and rebuked and encouraged. And I emailed him a few weeks after when I got home to say, you've really humbled me to reflect on why I do what I do and what I'm willing to do, even in our church family here.

Do you approach our Sunday gathering? Do you approach your community group? Do you approach the life of our church asking the question, what is needed?

Or do you approach it asking, what do I want to do? And maybe to push even further, do you approach it asking, what am I capable of?

Or are you willing to be stretched and empowered by God's Holy Spirit to do something that you can't do by yourself? One of the curses of growing up in a family of five kids is that I was forced to become loud and arrogant fairly quickly.

If you can't argue and defend your position, you are going to get eaten alive in a family of five kids. And that means I can stand in front of people and talk without it being a big issue of anxiety for me.

[23 : 04] That doesn't mean that I can preach the Bible well. The only thing that will enable God's word to take root in your heart and transform you so that you are better equipped to love and serve Jesus is the Holy Spirit.

It's not a matter of me putting up my hand to preach because I can stand in front of people and talk. It's a matter of me begging God anytime I get the opportunity to please use someone as inadequate as me.

And there is a challenge for us here, even in just that simple verse, may you desire the gifts that will build the church, even if it makes you uncomfortable, even if you think it's going to be difficult, even if you think it's beyond you.

Try to excel in gifts that build up the church. Now we do need to remember as we jump into this next bit that this section is particularly a correction and a rebuke for the Corinthians.

Their specific issue was they were obsessed with the exciting spiritual gifts. They thought that if you had tongues, you were more spiritual. They thought that if you had tongues, you should get up and do it at any opportunity.

[24 : 09] They thought that if you had gifts, everyone get out of my way and I'm going to use it when I want and how I want. And Paul challenges them in this next section to say what really matters is intelligibility.

What really matters is understanding. When you begin to realise that your gift is for other people, it doesn't matter how much fun you're having doing it. What matters is that other people understand.

And so there is a challenge for them to rein in their tongues usage because church isn't a circus. Church isn't a place for us to give you a platform and you come up and do whatever you want and we'll clap.

Church is not the place for the staff to create a platform for your gifts. It's actually not how it works. Church is a body.

And church is a whole body that all works and all serves so that we are all built up and all edified. Church is a whole body that all works and all works and all works and all works and all works.

[25 : 34] Church is Christ is a ■ to 210 X■ years, 20. Church is a whole body that all works and all works and all works and all works. It doesn't matter how much you have to connect with church. Church is a part of the church. There are many talks and all works and all works as well and all works and all works. And until then, they never have to get up as good for you. And then, they thought that all works.

They're talking about Board. Because that is God's word lived out. That is the gospel lived out.

There is no room in the gospel for being proud of something we're capable of doing. The gospel reminds us that we bring nothing, that we have nothing, and that it is only God's generosity and goodness that adopts us and forgives us and welcomes us and then empowers us to be a blessing to those around us.

We all have the Spirit, therefore we are all gifted by the Spirit and have a role to play. This church needs every person in this room, and those who aren't here right now who call this church family home to recognise and use their gifts for the sake of the body.

Until we do that, we function like a disabled body. So long as there are people here not using their gifts, there are things that this body needs that this body is not getting.

[26 : 51] Not all gifts are the same, not all gifts have the same requirements or the same visibility, but the question we all need to keep asking is, what is needed for this body to grow?

Paul goes on to spell out the dangers of what church looks like when you're more interested in your gifts. It begins in verse 26 when he begins to describe people talking over the top of each other, setting their own show, and it just means they're more interested in themselves than they are in the body.

Now, it's worth recognising that church services in Corinth probably weren't a lot like church services now. That's not to say one is better or worse, but we can't just go, he says this, therefore we need to stop doing this.

Even that description there of everyone bringing a hymn or different people jumping up with words of instruction might sound a little bit outside the box for us in the way we work. And again, it doesn't mean it's wrong, but we do need to read this, understanding that a bit of work needs to be done for us to apply it in our context.

The heading, I assume in your Bible, at verse 26 says this, orderly worship. I can't think of a less exciting adjective for what we're aiming to do when we gather.

[28 : 07] Now, it's a valid adjective. I'm not saying it's not good, but I can think of exciting worship, engaging worship, life-changing worship, world-impacting worship.

But the adjective that we are given here is orderly. And I want to show you three things particularly that Paul wants to push us on as we approach our gatherings as a church family.

First one is structure. Verse 26. What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation.

All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church. The same theme over and over and over. Verse 27. If anyone speaks in a tongue, two or at the most three should speak one at a time and someone must interpret.

If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and God. Two or three prophets should speak and the others should weigh carefully what is said.

[29 : 05] And if a revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, the first speaker should stop. For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged. If we're shouting over the top of one another, it's not going to be beneficial.

Verse 32. The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets for God is not a God of disorder, but of peace. Order and structure within a gathering reflects the God who calls us.

The creation that he has made reflects a structure and a goodness and so planning for our services, for our gatherings, brings added value to when we meet.

It enables us to use our gifts in this kind of way that Paul is insisting on, for the benefit of everyone, so that nobody misses out on the words of encouragement that you have to bring. And in fact, the planning itself is an expression of spiritual gifts from God for the blessing of the church.

Structure is beneficial and essential and so you might get intensely frustrated by the email that comes out every so often saying, can you tick this box to say you're going to do your roster work? You might think, I don't know what I'm doing in five weeks' time.

[30 : 15] Sure, and then forget about it. It might be something that annoys you at times and I understand that, but understand also that it is for the benefit of the body. If we know that someone will come prepared to read the word each week, that is to our benefit.

As opposed to racing around on a Sunday morning, handing someone a Bible who has the ability to articulate words on a page and then them going through the motions. Preparation and planning are a blessing on the rest of the body.

Structure. Second one, engagement. Verse 29. Two or three prophets should speak and the others should weigh carefully what is said. There's both the speaking and the listening in this gathering at Corinth.

There is a temptation for us to particularly exalt the gifts that put people up on a platform like this or give them a microphone or give them the ability to speak.

But actually, it is an exercise of your gifts and it is a blessing to the body the way that you receive what is spoken. The way you interact with what we do as a body.

[31 : 25] Our gatherings are not just about the preacher showing us that he can read the Bible and speak for 30 minutes. They're about the truth of God being spoken and heard and most importantly applied to our hearts and lives and the way that we live.

And so I want to challenge you do you approach our church gatherings prepared to hear God's word? Do you ensure that you've had enough sleep or enough caffeine or whatever it is that's going to help you listen when you walk into the gathering?

Do you come and beg God to remove from your mind the things that might be a distraction so that you can eagerly soak under his truth? Do you give yourself opportunity to follow up what's been said to reflect on it in a community group or with friends?

The way you engage even now as you sit and listen is part of the order that God has designed for us as his people. The way you are listening actually has a positive or negative effect on the people around you whether you're aware of it or not.

your eagerness as you sit forward to hear what God will say or your tiredness as you tolerate until I finish and then you can go out to afternoon tea.

[32 : 45] That communicates to your brother or sister next to you how much you care about what's going on. How much you care about this community. How much you care about being shaped as part of this community under God's word.

It's not to say every sermon's going to be riveting but it's kind of irrelevant. You're not here to get a riveting sermon. You're here to use your gifts to build your brothers and sisters.

It's that subtle shift in agenda for us. Structure engagement and the last one and the controversial one that you didn't think we were going to get to and which I'm going to skip through really quickly.

Silence. Let me read for you from halfway through verse 33. As in all the congregations of the saints women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak but must be in submission as the law says.

If they want to inquire about something they should ask their own husbands at home for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church. Let me give you a few things really quickly on the assumption that this is going to come up in the panel.

[33 : 53] In chapter 11 Chris showed us that women are prophesying in the church at Corinth. It happens because Paul gives a specific instruction to them when they prophesy or pray to do it a certain way with their head covered.

So this silence in chapter 14 cannot be absolute. There is a specific kind of silence that is being addressed. Second thing this silence is attached to the relationship between a husband and a wife.

it says women should remain silent verse 35 if they want to inquire about something they should ask their own husbands. So there is a specific relational context for this silence.

Third thing the lack of silence here is equal to disgrace. Did you catch that? It is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church.

Now again not to speak at all because they are prophesying and praying a couple of chapters earlier but the kind of speech that Paul is challenging them on here is disgraceful and you've got to see this as coming in a list of things that Paul is outlying on orderly worship.

[34 : 59] He said that when multiple people are speaking that's an issue as well so those people should be silent. He said that when there's tongues without interpretation that's an issue so those people should be silent and so he's got some specific issue here for women speaking in a particular way and those particular women need to be silent.

But in honesty this passage doesn't give us enough detail for me to tell you exactly what these women are doing that needs to be silenced and so we need to approach it with a bit of humility.

We need to be willing to say there is some issue here which is important and it includes the ideas of submission to authority it includes the idea of disgrace and shaming within relationship but the overarching principle that guides the way we read those couple of verses is right there at the end.

Verse 39 My brothers be eager to prophesy and do not forbid speaking in tongues but everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way. Fitting and orderly so that the body is built up so that the body is edified.

That's the agenda start to finish. Paul is calling this community to be a community that reflects God that reflects his love his service his order his peace this community our community and your role in it has absolutely nothing to do with what you want.

[36 : 28] It is all about what we need. Say that again this community of God's people and your role in it has absolutely nothing to do with what you want.

It has everything to do with what we need. But the blessing is that when we come to this community with that attitude when we serve with that heart position when we gather absolutely focused on edifying those around us and being a blessing we do it confident that God has provided what we need in those around us.

Until we let go of that need to look after ourselves and trust God we will be incapable of using our gifts for the sake of the church. There will always be that niggle that we need to do it this way but when we do let go when we do serve just so that our brothers and sisters are blessed and encouraged and edified God gets glory we get joy and people come to know Jesus.

That's why we exist as the church it's what the body is for. Please God make us more like the community you designed us to be. Amen.