DISCUSSION GUIDE

BUILT DIFFERENT :

"A Disciple Builds Up the Church"

SCRIPTURE | 1 Corinthians 14:1–40

MEMORY VERSE

"I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought" (1 Corinthians 1:10).

MAIN IDEA OF THE TEXT

Built different: disciples leverage their gifts

for the edification of the church.

DISCIPLESHIP RHYTHM

Discipleship Distinctive: Discipling Relationships

OBSERVATION: WHAT DOES IT SAY?

Gather in groups of three to five people to discuss the Observation and Interpretation questions.

OBSERVATION EXERCISE 1: GIFTS THAT BUILD UP

Read 1 Corinthians 14:1–12. How did Paul describe the spiritual gifts of prophecy and speaking in tongues? Write a list of descriptions for each one.

Suggested Response:

Prophecy	***Tongues***
• Should be earnestly desired (v. 1) *• Communicates a message others can understand (vv. 2–3)* *• Speaks to people (v. 3)* *• Builds up/edifies others (v. 3)* *• Encourages others (v. 3)* *• Consoles/comforts others (v. 3)* *• Benefits the gathered church (v. 4)* *• Can be more beneficial to the church than uninterpreted tongues (v. 5)*	*• Is directed toward God when uninterpreted (v. 2)* *• Is not understood by the hearers unless interpreted (vv. 2, 5)* *• Can involve speaking mysteries by the Spirit (v. 2)* *• Builds up the individual speaker (v. 4)* *• Does not build up the church without interpretation (vv. 4–5)* *• Can benefit the church when accompanied by interpretation (v. 5)* *• Is compared to an instrument producing an indistinct sound when not understood (vv. 7–8)* *• Requires intelligible speech to communicate effectively (vv. 9–11)* *• Can become a barrier to understanding when its meaning is unknown (vv. 10–11)*

OBSERVATION EXERCISE 2: UNDERSTANDABLE WORDS

Read 1 Corinthians 14:13–25. Paul said that, while using spiritual gifts, others should be able to understand what is being said. How did Paul explain the need for things to be understood?

Suggested Response: Paul said the person who speaks in a tongue should pray to interpret. He will pray and sing with both his spirit and his understanding. If others cannot understand, they cannot be in agreement (say "Amen"). He said he would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue. He also said understandable prophecy can convict unbelievers or inquirers and lead them to recognize that God is among His people.

OBSERVATION EXERCISE 3: ORDER IN THE GATHERING

Read 1 Corinthians 14:26–40. Paul talked about how people should behave when the church gathers. What instructions did he give? Make a list.

Suggested Response: Paul said everything must be done so the church may be built up. Tongues should be limited, one at a time, and interpreted. If there is no interpreter, the speaker should remain silent in the church. Prophets should also speak in order, while others weigh what is said. Paul said God is not a God of disorder but of peace, and everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.

INTERPRETATION: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

INTERPRETATION EXERCISE 1: GIFTS ARE MEANT TO HELP THE CHURCH

According to 1 Corinthians 14:1–12, why is prophecy more helpful than uninterpreted tongues when the church gathers?

Suggested Response: Prophecy is more helpful in the gathering because people can understand it and be strengthened by it. Paul was not rejecting tongues, but he kept measuring gifts by whether they build up the church. A gift may be real and still fail to help the body if others cannot receive what is being said. Love teaches disciples to care about the good of the people listening, not only the experience of the person speaking.

INTERPRETATION EXERCISE 2: WHAT'S IN A WORD?

In 1 Corinthians 14:13–25, why did Paul care so much about words people can understand?

Suggested Response: Paul wanted worship to include the whole church, not leave people outside the meaning of what was happening. If someone cannot understand the prayer or praise, they cannot say "amen." This means they cannot be in agreement with the things spoken. If an unbeliever or outsider comes in, confusing speech may push them away, but understandable truth can expose the heart and point them to God. Paul was teaching that clear words can become a form of love because they help people respond to the truth.

INTERPRETATION EXERCISE 3: ORDER IS CENTRAL

In 1 Corinthians 14:26–40, how do orderly worship gatherings help the church grow?

Suggested Response: Paul's instructions show that spiritual gifts are not meant to create confusion or competition in the gathering. Tongues need interpretation. Prophecy should be weighed. People should speak in turn. This order does not limit the work of the Spirit; it helps the church receive it well. God is not a God of disorder but of peace, so worship should reflect His character and strengthen His people. Disciples are built different because they leverage their gifts for the edification of the church.

APPLICATION: HOW DO I RESPOND?

QUESTION 1: In 1 Corinthians 14, Paul's central concern was that a gift builds up the church. What has God given you that could help others grow? Are you actively using your gift? What might be a next step?

Suggested Response: God may have given me the ability to teach, encourage, listen, organize, serve, pray, show hospitality, explain Scripture, or notice people who feel unseen. The point is not whether my gift feels impressive. The question is whether I am using what God has given me to help others follow Jesus.

As your group responds, use follow-up questions to guide below surface-level responses. Encourage transparent responses to shepherd your group toward understanding how they have a part to play and consider if God might be moving them toward a next step.

QUESTION 2: Paul said the one who prophesies speaks to people so they will be strengthened, encouraged, and comforted. Tell about a time someone encouraged you recently. How can you encourage someone this week?

Suggested Response: My words can strengthen someone when I take the time to listen to what is going on in their lives, then speak truth clearly and lovingly. I can encourage them to keep following Jesus and take another step of faith or remind them of God's faithfulness. This may happen in a conversation, a text, a prayer, or a moment someone needs help seeing what is true.

QUESTION 3: Paul said unclear words can leave people outside the meaning of what is happening. Where do you need to communicate with more clarity and care?

Suggested Response: I may need to speak more clearly with my family, group, coworkers, or someone I am trying to disciple. Clarity is not only about using the right words. It is about loving people enough to make sure they can understand and receive what is being said. This often means I first need to do the work of meeting someone where they are, which includes listening to them and discerning.

QUESTION 4: Paul said others should be able to say "amen" when God's people pray or give thanks. This means they are able to affirm agreement and alignment. How can you help someone, like a first-time guest, participate in worship rather than feel left out?

Suggested Response: I can help someone participate by noticing who may be confused or uncertain of where to go. It could also be as simple as sitting in the middle of a section rather than at the end of a row so others do not have to bother me to find a seat. When I speak to others, I can intentionally avoid using "Christianese." Disciples are motivated to help others connect with Jesus. Loving others seeks to help them understand, join in, and take their next step toward Jesus. Going back to previous lessons, I may need to embrace differences and let go of my preferences to invite someone in who is different from me.

QUESTION 5: How does considering the needs of others help you use your gifts more faithfully?

Suggested Response: When I think about the person receiving what I offer, I often have to become more patient, clear, gentle, prepared, or attentive. I can think about what would actually strengthen them right now. Paul reminded us that gifts are given for the good of the body, so faithfulness means using what God has given in a way that helps others be built up.

QUESTION 6: How can our group practice discipling relationships that build up the church?

Suggested Response: Our group can build discipling relationships by helping one another understand Scripture, praying together, speaking encouragement, asking honest questions, and pointing one another back to Jesus. We can look for people who need support and use our gifts to strengthen them. Disciples are built different because they leverage their gifts for the edification of the church.