

**II. Group discussion** *Each number below includes a set of questions that relate to the scripture text. I offer a few answers, but your perspective may be better. The point is to discuss, not to get 100% agreement. Rule of thumb: the fewer questions you ask, the better.*

Read I Cor. 14:22-28 aloud. Consider reading it from the Message:

<sup>22</sup>So where does it get you, all this speaking in tongues no one understands? It doesn't help believers, and it only gives unbelievers something to gawk at. Plain truth-speaking, on the other hand, goes straight to the heart of believers and doesn't get in the way of unbelievers. <sup>23</sup>If you come together as a congregation and some unbelieving outsiders walk in on you as you're all praying in tongues, unintelligible to each other and to them, won't they assume you've taken leave of your senses and get out of there as fast as they can? <sup>24</sup>But if some unbelieving outsiders walk in on a service where people are speaking out God's truth, the plain words will bring them up against the truth <sup>25</sup>and probe their hearts. Before you know it, they're going to be on their faces before God, recognizing that God is among you.

<sup>26</sup>So here's what I want you to do. When you gather for worship, each one of you be prepared with something that will be useful for all: Sing a hymn, teach a lesson, tell a story, lead a prayer, provide an insight. <sup>27</sup>If prayers are offered in tongues, two or three's the limit, and then only if someone is present who can interpret what you're saying. <sup>28</sup>Otherwise, keep it between God and yourself.

1. What was the problem in the church in ancient Corinth? Tongue-speakers were out of control and dominating the assembly.

Based on your reading of this text, what was occurring with speaking in tongues?

Could believers understand the tongue speaker? Could non-Christians understand the tongue speaker?

How might a non-Christian respond to a service that was mostly tongue-speaking? *See verse 23.*

2. Why does it matter what an unbeliever experiences in worship? Isn't worship primarily for believers?

In what sense is worship for believers? In what sense is worship for unbelievers?

Bring in the thoughts about 3 views of worship from the Bible class curriculum:

- Inside and outside – a holy huddle where Christians gather to prepare for our mission.
- Outside in – Seeker-sensitive worship where the service is geared toward non-Christians.
- Inside out – Worship is a way to join God's mission of reaching the world. Worship as a witness.

Which of these three views of worship fits your view?

How does it affect worship to have a non-Christian guest with you?

3. According to verses 24-25, what would be the ideal response from a non-believer?

What are some factors that might make it difficult for an unbeliever to recognize God among us?

What might help an unbeliever to recognize God among us?

4. What parts of our faith can be adapted to welcome those who know nothing about Jesus?

*Musical styles, attire, meeting times, avoiding strange words (thee, thou, foyer, pew).*

What parts of our faith cannot be adapted? What are the things we need to maintain, even though it might be difficult for a non-Christian? *Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead, and now he calls us to imitate him by denying ourselves and serving others.*

5. Evaluate our assemblies for their sensitivity to guests. What parts of our assemblies proclaim that God is working today?

How does the Lord's Supper tell about the work of God? How could we deepen that focus?

How do we begin our services, and what does that say about our spiritual priorities?

How do we end our assemblies? How do these final words prepare us to continue what we have been doing in worship?

6. Why is it that outsiders know so much about how Christians are supposed to act?

How could God be involved in their knowledge?

### **III. Other resources**

**The point** – Worship one way we proclaim that God is in charge of all creation and has changed our lives.

#### **Prayer:**

Pray for people God is trying to reach in our community. By name, if you know.

Ask God to make us more aware of what our assemblies communicate to outsiders.

Pray for the guests who will attend our next worship service.

Pray for our group to live in a way that is inviting to non-Christians.

**Kid-friendly activity.** *An activity designed to help kids and adults grow in faith together. Do this first, then dismiss the kids so the adults can talk.*

Read I Corinthians 14:26 aloud.

Pair up kids & adults one-on-one and answer the following questions:

What is something that is good about worship?

What is something that is difficult about worship?

What are we trying to accomplish in worship? Why is it worth our time?

# **The Church has Left the Building**

## **I Corinthians 14 – worship as a witness**

By John Grant (jgrant@collegehills.org)

**The theme** for this meeting: **Worship is a witness that God reigns in our lives.**

Like the last lesson on loving one another, worship is something Christians do mainly with one another in the church building. Yet we need to bear in mind that there are always guests checking us out. Our worship is a witness to them and to one another that God is King!

**Leadership tip:** Always be on the lookout for new members to attend your group. Sunday worship guests are great candidates for group attendance. Make it a goal to invite one new person to your group every meeting.

**I. Relate** *Use a few of these to introduce the theme and “break the ice.” No right or wrong answers – maybe goofy but not wrong! Look for opportunities to affirm and encourage individuals through these questions.*

- ❖ When was a time that worship was particularly meaningful?
- ❖ Where do you go for refreshment?
- ❖ When you visit a new church, what do you look for? What helps you find your way around?
- ❖ If a friend invited you to a wedding at a mosque or synagogue, what would be some of your concerns? How do you think your concerns resemble the way a first-time guest might feel in our assembly?

“The Church has Left the Building” is a series of Small Group guides written in support of the Missional Church curriculum by David Wray and Chris Benjamin. It is designed around the concept of adults discussing material in Bible class and then processing it in small group meetings during the same week. These guides, as well as the Missional Church curriculum, are based on the book, *Treasure in Clay Jars*, by Lois Barrett and others.

Training tools and study guides are at [www.collegehills.org](http://www.collegehills.org), then Ministries, then LIFE groups.