

1 Corinthians 14:29

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge.

Analysis

Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge—Paul regulates prophecy similarly to tongues: prophētai de dyo ē treis laleitōsan (προφήται δὲ δύο ἢ τρεῖς λαλείτωσαν, "let prophets, two or three, speak"), and hoi alloi diakrinētōsan (οἱ ἄλλοι διακρινέτωσαν, "let the others discern/judge").

Diakrinō (διακρίνω) means to discern, distinguish, evaluate—congregational testing of prophecy (1 Thess 5:19-21, "prove all things"). Even Spirit-prompted speech requires evaluation because human error can intrude. The limitation to 2-3 prophets prevents exhausting the congregation; the call to "judge" prevents uncritical acceptance. This is ordered freedom: prophecy is welcomed but tested.

Historical Context

Early Christian prophecy was spontaneous, Spirit-prompted speech (Acts 13:1-2, 21:10-11). Paul doesn't quench this but insists on congregational discernment to guard against error.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. Why does Paul limit prophecy to 2-3 speakers like tongues?
2. What does it mean for 'the other' to 'judge' prophecy?
3. How can we balance openness to the Spirit with discernment in corporate worship?

Interlinear Text

προφῆται δὲ δύο ἢ τρεῖς λαλεῖτωσαν καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι
the prophets ^{G1161} **two** ^{G1417} **or** ^{G2228} **three** ^{G5140} **Let** ^{G2980} **and** ^{G3588} **the other** ^{G243}
^{G4396}

διακρινέτωσαν·
judge
^{G1252}

Additional Cross-References

1 Corinthians 12:10 (Prophecy): To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: