

1 Corinthians 14:31

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.

Analysis

For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted—Paul explains the rationale: *dynasthe gar kath' hena pantes propheteuein* (δύνασθε γὰρ καθ' ἔνα πάντες προφητεύειν, "for you can all prophesy one by one"). Purpose: *hina pantes manthanōsin kai pantes parakalōntai* (ἴνα πάντες μανθάνωσιν καὶ πάντες παρακαλῶνται, "that all may learn and all may be encouraged").

"All" appears four times, emphasizing inclusivity: all can prophesy, all learn, all are comforted. Paul envisions widespread participation, but ordered participation: *kath' hena* (καθ' ἔνα, "one by one"). Sequential sharing ensures intelligibility, maximizes learning, and multiplies encouragement. Chaos prevents edification; order facilitates it. The double purpose clause (learn, comforted) recalls verse 3's three-fold effect (edification, exhortation, comfort).

Historical Context

Paul democratizes prophecy: not just leaders, but "all" can prophesy. Yet democracy doesn't mean anarchy—participation must be ordered to achieve its purpose (mutual learning and encouragement).

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What's significant about Paul saying 'all may prophesy' rather than limiting it to leaders?
2. How does 'one by one' serve the purposes of learning and comfort?
3. How can modern churches recover participatory worship that's both broad and orderly?

Interlinear Text

δύνασθε γὰρ καθ' ἔνα πάντες προφητεύειν τίνα
ye may For one by one G1520 all prophesy that
G1410 G1063 G2596 G3956 G4395 G2443

πάντες μανθάνωσιν καὶ πάντες παρακαλῶνται
all may learn and all may be comforted
G3956 G3129 G2532 G3956 G3870

Additional Cross-References

1 Thessalonians 5:14 (Parallel theme): Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.