

~Other Speakers S-Z: David Servant:

Second on Paul's list is teaching. This again indicates that anyone might share a Spirit-inspired teaching at a gathering. Of course, every teaching would be judged to see if it lined up with the apostles' teaching (as everyone was devoted to that: see Acts 2:42) and we should do the same today. But note that there is no indication here or anywhere in the New Testament that the same person gave a sermon every week when local churches met, dominating the gathering.

There were, in Jerusalem, larger gatherings at the Temple at which the apostles taught. We know that elders were also given teaching responsibility in churches, and that some people are called to a teaching ministry. Paul did a lot of teaching, publicly and from house to house (see Acts 20:20). In the small gatherings of believers, however, the Holy Spirit might use others to teach besides apostles, elders or teachers.

When it comes to teaching, it would seem that we would be greatly advantaged over the early church to be able to bring personal copies of the Bible with us to our gatherings. On the other hand, perhaps our easy access to the Bible has helped us elevate doctrine above loving God with all our hearts and loving our neighbors as ourselves, robbing us of the very life that God's Word was meant to impart. We have been doctrinalized to death. Many small group Bible studies are every bit as irrelevant and boring as Sunday morning sermons. A good rule to follow in regard to house church teachings is this: If the older children aren't hiding their boredom, the adults are probably hiding theirs. Kids are great truth barometers.