# The Connection Between Space, Place and the First Corinthian House Church

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# The Connection Between Space, Place and the First Corinthian House Church

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## Abstract

This paper explores connections between the space first century families occupied and the early Christian phenomenon of 'house churches' which met in that space. Since houses were common spaces of worship for first century believers, it is not surprising they are referenced throughout Acts and the Epistles. The Apostle Paul frequently used household and familial terms to characterize first-century Christians and the first extant letter to the Corinthians is no exception. This article argues that houses were ideal places to worship in the first century. In I Corinthians, Paul draws connections between first century Greco-Roman and Jewish familial roles with the roles of believers in worship. But how did this work? How did this space that belonged to a particular family become a place of worship for the Family of God? This paper will investigate the connection between space, place and sacred space/place. It will also explore the connection in I Corinthians between familial roles and roles in worship, which, I argue, differentiate insiders from outsiders.

## Introduction

The first century Corinthian believing community had 'issues'. From the beginning of Paul's first extant letter to the *ekklēsia* (assembly) of God in Corinth (I Corinthians 1.2; cf. 10.32; 11.22; 15.9), factions, dysfunction, and spiritual immaturity are apparent.[1] Paul bemoaned the fact that he had to feed them milk instead of solid food, since they were not in the spirit but in the flesh (3.1). As one continues to read I Corinthians, it becomes clear inappropriate behaviour was rampant throughout the believing community: they took one another to court, members abused the freedom they had found in Christ by eating meat sacrificed to idols causing others to stumble, and they participated in worship services where not all were included. Paul made

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[1] All scripture citations are from the NRSV, unless otherwise noted.

it evident that when the Corinthian *ekklēsia* gathered for worship, its negative behaviour undermined the believing community. It was not acting like the Family of God, inside or outside of the worship setting.

In the first century, most Christian worship happened in private dwellings, usually in the space of the family: a house.[2] The Corinthian *ekklēsia* was no exception. Whole households would be converted and those with enough room would host the worship service. What is striking is how the space of the *ekklēsia* impacts the language Paul used to address this believing community. Paul used household / familial language in more than forty examples in I Corinthians.[3] By using this rhetorically-charged language, Paul defined what the proper behaviour of the Family of God should be. The place of a home provided a much needed context to help define the fictive family roles of the Corinthian believing community, not only specifying how insiders should behave towards other insiders (brothers and sisters in Christ), but how insiders should behave towards outsiders, those within the worship service and those without.

This paper will investigate the concepts of 'space' and 'place.' These concepts will be defined and applied to familial dwellings and then broadened to consider how a space becomes sacred. Familial dwellings, such as a house, are typically spaces where one resides. A house becomes a home when meaning is attached to this space. 'Home' can take on varying levels of meaning depending on those experiencing and interacting with the space.

> As well as the space it occupies, people conceptualise their home as the functions it performs. To some, home is a comfortingly bounded enclosed space, defining an 'other' who is outside. Others, more socially attuned to their neighbourhood and friends, see 'home' not as a place but an area, formed out of a particular set of social relations which happen to intersect at the particular location known as 'home'. 'Home' can be a focus of memory, a building, a way of mentally enclosing people of great importance, a reference point for widening circles of significant people and places and a means of protecting valued objects.[4]

For those living in a first-century house, the space would be a home where members of the household would determine how one should behave, differentiating those inside the household

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[2] Examples include Priscilla and Aquila, who hosted a church in their house (Romans 16.3-5a; I Corinthians 16.19), as did Nympha (Colossians 4.15) and Philemon (Philemon 2).

[3] Examples of family language would be Paul's use of *adelfos, adelfē, adelfoi* ('brother,' 'sister,' 'brothers/siblings') and *patēr* ('father'). When Paul chastised the Corinthian believers for being spiritually immature (I Corinthians 3.1-2), Paul took on the maternal role of feeding milk to the infant who was not yet ready for solid food.

[4] Peter Read, *Returning to Nothing: The Meaning of Lost Places* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 102.

from those without. For those who would frequent the house for worship, the space of the family would change to a sacred place and a new set of behaviours would be assigned to members of the Family of God.

This paper will show how Paul, in First Corinthians, intentionally used the context of a home to characterize the identity of insiders versus outsiders, to define their behaviours in relationship to one another as brothers and sisters in Christ, as well as to observe the heritage and memories of the Family of God. The ideas presented will help lay the groundwork for understanding 'sacred space' and how it worked in the domestic setting of first century New Testament house churches.

## 'Space' vs 'Place'

Before one can contemplate 'sacred place', it is necessary to determine what 'place' means, especially in relation to the idea of 'space.' Superficially, the terms 'space' and 'place' appear interchangeable.[5] Yet space is a more abstract concept than place. It is 'amorphous and intangible […] not an entity that can be directly described'[6]; which is why it can be defined broadly as 'a region, an organized system, a structure or a model.'[7] Outer space can be explained in this manner: systems of planets and stars. Space can also be defined in geometrical terms: an object that takes up space has area and volume.[8] Yet, space can only be understood in its relation to place. Yi-Fu Tuan argues that space needs places in order to give it definition and 'geometric personality.'[9] Space is the distance between places, linking or separating localities, and it is from the perspective of place that one can understand the openness of space.

Edward Relph has distinguished two types of spaces: primitive space and perceptual space. 'Primitive space is the space of instinctive behaviour and unselfconscious action in which we always act and move without reflection.'[10] An infant exists in primitive space, acting on instinct, not seemingly concerned with its environment. Once a person becomes aware of its surroundings, becomes self-conscious, he/she shifts to perceiving space. Perceptual space

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[5] Thesaurus.com considers these terms synonymous.
[6] E. Relph, *Place and Placelessness*, ed. by Allen J. Scott, Research in Planning and Design (London: Pion Limited, 2008), p. 8.
[7] Joël Bonnemaison, *Culture and Space: Conceiving a New Cultural Geography*, ed. by Chantal Blanc-Pamard and others, trans. by Josée Pénot-Demetry (London: I.B. Tauris, 2005), p. 48.
[8] Tim Cresswell, *In Place/Out of Place: Geography, Ideology, and Transgression* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2004), p. 8.
[9] Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), p. 17.
[10] Relph, p. 8.

is 'the egocentric space perceived and confronted by each individual. This is a space that has content and meaning, for it cannot be divorced from experiences and intentions.'[11]

This connection between space and experience means that space is socially constructed. Henri Lefebvre argued that social space is real space (where individuals interact with the physical and imaged spaced) and not ideal space (a space in which a person interacts with it only in his/her mind).

> […] every society [...] produces a space, its own space. The city of the ancient world cannot be understood as a collection of people and things in space; nor can it be visualized solely on the basis of a number of texts and treatises on the subject of space. […] For the ancient city had its own spatial practice: it forged its own – *appropriated* – space.[12]

It is when space becomes socially constructed, socially appropriated, that the line between space and place blurs. Place occurs when space is assigned meaning.[13] From Lefebvre's point of view, social space is the same as place because it is appropriated; it is where social practice, social experience transpires. If space can be considered an abstract concept, place is 'tangible, physical, specific and relational.'[14] Jonathan Z. Smith contends that place is not a passive receptacle, but rather 'an active product of intellection.'[15] Meaning is conferred to place when one's experience of the human body is oriented in space.[16] Experiencing space creates meaning, which, in turn, creates place. 'Space-as-experience includes familiar spaces (*genres de vie*) as well as places that are acknowledged, loved (or rejected), perceived and represented.'[17] According to Philip Sheldrake, place has three characteristics: 'it engages with our identity, with our relationships and with our history.'[18] Experiencing space defines the identities of those within that space.

For the first century CE aristocratic household, the layout of the dwelling impacted how household members would ideally experience the space. According to Vitruvius, a Roman architect in the first century BCE, the private spaces of a household were only meant for the householders themselves and those with a special invitation. These spaces included rooms such

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[11] Relph, p. 10.

[12] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), p. 31.

[13] Cresswell, p. 7.

[14] Philip Sheldrake, *Spaces for the Sacred: Place, Memory, and Identity* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), p. 7.

[15] Jonathan Z. Smith, *To Take Place: Toward a Theory in Ritual,* ed. by Jacob Neusner and others, Chicago Studies in the History of Judaism (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), p. 26.

[16] Smith, p. 28.

[17] Bonnemaison, p. 49.

[18] Sheldrake, pp. 8-9.

as 'bedrooms, dining rooms, bathrooms.'[19] Women potentially threatened the honour of the family, so they, ideally, spent their days in these private spaces. Children stayed with the women in the private spaces until the sons came of age to be trained at the gymnasium and by their fathers, older brothers or uncles. Daughters stayed behind to be taught how to become an honourable wife and mother.  Household slaves also kept to the private spaces while familial outsiders, both invited and uninvited, were only allowed in the public, common, spaces. According to Galen, a Greek physician in the second century CE, men were perceived as stronger than their female counterparts.[20] Due to this perceived superiority of men over women, it was considered acceptable for men to access the common spaces of the house: 'entrance courts, *cavaedia*[21], peristyles and all intended for the like purposes.'[22] In these public spaces, men conducted business and met with their clients.  It was unlikely, due to their superior nature, that men would dishonour the household by interacting with outsiders in the home, whereas women ran the risk of shaming it.

The identities of first century family members were also affected by these spatial rules. Fathers, as leaders of the household, had a much more dominant role in the family. The Roman *paterfamilias* held an almost 'omnipotent position' over his household.[23] Among other responsibilities, he held the family's purse-strings, determined who married whom and whether a new-born would be accepted into the household.  The Greek *patēr*, like the *paterfamilias*, functioned as the household's priest and held an authority over his household like 'that of a ruler over his subjects.'[24] The Jewish *'av* was also the spiritual leader of his household, charged with teaching his children Torah (Deuteronomy 6.4-8).

Greek, Roman and Jewish children were taught from an early age that their main responsibility was to bring honour upon their household by respecting and loving their elders through their obedience. Though the debt to their parents for all they had been provided was too great ever to repay, their honourable actions were a good start: daughters were to keep

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[19] Vitr. 6.5.1.

[20] *De usu partium* 14.6.

[21] *Cavaedium* literally means 'hollow of rooms', the rooms of the interior of the house, such as the atrium, dining room and master's study.

[22] Vitr. 6.5.1.

[23] E. Lassen, 'The Roman Family: Ideal and Metaphor', in *Constructing Early Christian Families: Family as Social Reality and Metaphor*, ed. by H. Moxnes (New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 103-120 (p. 105).

[24] C.S. Keener, 'Family and Household', in *Dictionary of New Testament Background*, ed. by C. Evans and S. Porter (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000), pp. 353–368 (p. 357).

themselves pure for their future husbands, and sons were to carry on the family business and the familial cult.[25]

When people in the same space interact with one another, forming relationships, the space takes on meaning, creating place. Siblingship is an example of an interactive relationship. For the most part, siblings were to be prized in the ancient world. The Hebrew Bible presents the benefit of having a brother. Proverbs 17.17 states it is good to have a brother because he shares in adversity. Ben Sira 7.18 claims a brother is too precious to lose and in 29.10 he commands to be generous with a brother in need. In the Greco-Roman world, brothers were to honour one another, which would bring honour to their family and to themselves.[26] Xenophon (ca. 430 BCE-354 BCE) declares that a pair of brothers, especially brothers who act as friends, is more useful than even a pair of hands, feet or eyes.[27] Plutarch, in the first century CE, echoes the importance of brothers being friends and adds that they were not only to share the same friends, but also the same enemies, so as never to be on opposing sides of a fight.[28]

The interaction siblings would have had in their familial space might have grown more limited as they grew older. As already mentioned, before the sons came of age, siblings would have ideally spent time together in the women's space. As the siblings grew older, the oldest brother would have taken on a more hierarchical role over his younger siblings, especially if the father had passed away. Though the identity of the oldest brother did not change (he was still his siblings' elder brother), his relationship changed as he interacted with his younger siblings as a father-figure: he determined proper marital matches, making household decisions concerning finances, etc. These sibling interactions could have potentially increased sibling rivalry, which was even an issue in the fictive kinship Family of God. In the Corinthian *ekklēsia*, there was in-fighting over who was baptized by whom. Paul retorts, 'Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized in the name of Paul?' (I Corinthians 1.13). As expressed in this passage, Paul's relationship with the Corinthian believing community appears to resemble that of an older brother in Christ correcting his younger siblings.

Along with identities and relationships, a space needs to have a history in order to be considered place. This history is comprised, among other things, of the memories of those experiencing the space. The idea of remembered space has been considered by Victor

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[25] A. Hanson, 'The Roman Life', in *Life, Death, and Entertainment in the Roman Empire*, ed. by D. Potter and D. Mattingly (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), pp. 20–66 (p. 42).
[26] *Cyr.* 8.7.15.
[27] *Mem.* 2.3.19.
[28] *Mor.* De Frat.

Matthews, building upon H. Lefebvre's and E. Soja's 'trialectics' of space. Lefebvre breaks social space into three types: perceived, conceived and lived. Soja renames these three types as FirstSpace, SecondSpace, and ThirdSpace. Soja's FirstSpace 'can be empirically mapped' because it has 'concrete materiality.'[29] SecondSpace is imagined space, where people can conceive of space 'in thoughtful re-presentations of human spatiality.'[30] ThirdSpace, the space of experience, is where FirstSpace and SecondSpace combine, allowing a rethinking and balancing of historicality, sociality and spatiality.[31] Victor Matthews creates a 'fourthspace':

> It is [Lefebvre's] lived spaced (Soja's 'thirdspace') that combines the physical features with the imagined character of the space as it is occupied, manipulated, and modified while at the same time being invested with meaning and symbolic value and identity. Expressed in this way, space is produced and reproduced as it becomes part of human consciousness. But, perhaps, it is still possible to slice the concept of spatiality once more in order to coin 'fourthspace' as the receptacle of 'remembered space.'[32]

When a space becomes place through social practice, the subsequent users of the space need to perpetuate these practices, actions, and behaviours in order for this space to remain place. The repetition of these acts create a collective memory, a heritage. '[T]he memory attached to social space [will influence] later usage of that space.'[33] Though the users of the remembered space look back to the past, the memories become 'resources for the present.'[34]

The repetition of the Lord's Supper during worship is an example of a collective memory that becomes a resource for the present worship service. In chapter 11, the Apostle Paul passes along to the Corinthian believing community that which he received from the Lord (11.23). Paul stresses that every time the believers partake of the bread and the cup, they are remembering and proclaiming Christ's salvific work. Though few, if any, were at the actual crucifixion, the act of repeating the meal creates a heritage that will ultimately be passed down through the ages. Since this act of remembering is so powerful, Paul instructs the Corinthians not only to examine themselves individually before participating in the meal, but also to discern the body of Christ (11.29). If the believing community properly discerned the body of Christ, the (richer) individuals would wait for those late arrivals who had to work. If this examination

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[29] Edward W. Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and other Real-and-Imagined Places* (Malden: Blackwell, 1996), p. 10.
[30] Soja, p. 10.
[31] Soja, p. 73.
[32] Victor H. Matthews, 'Remembered Space in Biblical Narrative', in *Constructions of Space IV: Further Developments in Examining Ancient Israel's Social Space*, ed. by Mark K. George (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), pp. 61-75 (p. 62).
[33] Matthews, p. 62.
[34] G.J. Ashworth and Brian Graham, 'Sense of Places, Senses of Time and Heritage', in *Sense of Places: Sense of Time,* ed. by G.J. Ashworth and Brian Graham (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005), pp. 3-12 (p. 4).

and discernment were not done, the believing community would be found guilty and bring judgment upon their heads. '[T]he recollection of the Lord's last Passover-meal automatically functions as a corrective to the wrong pattern of action of the Corinthians.'[35]

## Identities in New Testament House Churches

When the earliest believing communities gathered, they took on the behaviours and roles of the space in which they met: a house. Paul became the spiritual father, the *paterfamilias/ pater/'av*, of the Corinthians through the gospel message. He provided religious instruction while present, through his letters, and when he sent emissaries to remind them of his teachings (I Corinthians 4.14-17). He provided a positive example for his children to follow and urged them to imitate him (4.15-16). He admonished them for their arrogance, asking if, when he next visited, they would prefer he come with a rod of discipline, or with love and a spirit of gentleness (4.21). Paul viewed the Corinthian believing community as his beloved children (4.14) and treated them as such: lovingly, but with a stern hand.

A more important role that the believing community adopted was that of siblingship. Paul refers to the Corinthians as *adelfoi* (brothers and sisters) over twenty times in this first extant letter. It is clear that this familial dynamic is the most prevalent among the Corinthian community. As the Family of God, insiders were taught to relate to one another as siblings who were supposed to look out for, protect, and support one another. By frequently using the term *adelfoi*, Paul uses a pathos rhetorical argument, subtly playing on the believers' emotions, to stress how insiders should behave toward one another.[36] This sibling dynamic should be present every time the believers interact with one another: when interacting outside of the sacred place, and certainly when meeting as *ekklēsia*.

## Sacred vs Profane

Not only do the people interacting with a space gain an identity, changing it to place, but the place itself can take on an identity, different from the identity of the space. Natter and Jones present an equation that has become 'deeply etched in the fabric of spatial and cultural thought, which has normalized a set of operating assumptions regarding the relations between space and

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[35] Jorunn Økland, *Women in Their Place: Paul and the Corinthian Discourse of Gender and Sanctuary Space* (London: T&T Clark, 2004), p. 147.

[36] Aristotle argues '[t]he orator persuades by means of his hearers, when they are roused to emotions (*pathos*) by his speech; for the judgements we deliver are not the same when we are influenced by joy or sorrow, love or hate' (*Rhet.* 1.2.5).

identity: certain spaces = certain identities.'[37] Natter and Jones contend social space has an element of emptiness which needs to be filled with meaning and behaviours.[38] During the week, the house was the household's dwelling but, when the believing community joined together, the identity of the space changed. It changed from a profane space to a sacred place.[39]

This article has demonstrated how social space is considered place when meaning is attached to that space; how so even more when the social space is considered sacred. Mircea Eliade contends, in *The Sacred and the Profane*, that '[e]very sacred space implies a hierophany, an irruption of the sacred that results in detaching a territory from the surrounding cosmic milieu and making it qualitatively different.'[40] R. Kevin Seasoltz asserts a space is sacred because 'it fulfils a religious role.'[41] J. Z. Smith argues that a space becomes sacred when attention is 'focused on it in a highly marked way . . . Sacrality (*sic*) is, above all, a category of emplacement.'[42] Smith maintains that when ritual occurs, location does not matter: whatever situation lends itself to ritual would make that place sacred.  Hubert claims that not only is ritual required in sacred places, but also restrictions on behaviour.[43]

People usually experience space, and create meaning, by moving in it. This allows them to understand the concept of space: the distance between localities in the surrounding landscape. However, Tuan argues it is the stop in movement, a pause, that can be more meaningful, more impactful to people in their space. This pause changes space to place, making the locality 'a center of felt value.'[44] Every other day of the week, the first century space where the believing community gathered would have functioned as a home for the household who lived there. When these household activities stopped, when insiders of the believing community gathered, this space became meaningful in a different way: it became a sacred place. It became a place that fulfilled a religious role, where ritual was performed, where rules of behaviour were defined (and perhaps the scene of hierophany). Paul stresses proper

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[37] Wolfgang Natter and John Paul Jones III, 'Identity, Space, and Other Uncertainties', in *Space and Social Theory: Interpreting Modernity and Postmodernity*, ed. by Georges Benko and Ulf Strohmayer, The Royal Geographical Society with the Institute of British Geographers Special Publication Series, 33, ed. by Chris Philo (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), pp. 141-161 (p. 152).
[38] Natter and Jones, p. 151.
[39] Økland, p. 142.
[40] Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion,* trans. by William R. Trask (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1959), p. 26.
[41] R. Kevin Seasoltz, *A Sense of the Sacred: Theological Foundations of Christian Architecture and Art* (New York: Continuum, 2005), p. 69.
[42] Smith, pp. 103-104.
[43] Jane Hubert, 'Sacred Beliefs and Beliefs of Sacredness', in *Sacred Sites, Sacred Places,* ed. by D.L. Carmichael and others, in One World Archaeology, 23, ed. by P.J. Ucko (New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 9-19 (p. 11).
[44] Tuan, p. 138.

behaviour for members of the Family of God in the first few chapters of I Corinthians. The proper behaviour would have set this place apart, making the worship space sacred, and creating a distinction between those that met for worship (insiders/us) versus those that did not (outsiders/them).

A very clear 'us' versus 'them' dichotomy may be seen in I Corinthians 5 and 6. Those outside of the community (fornicators, idolaters, thieves, drunkards, revilers…) will not inherit the kingdom of God (6.10). God judges those who are outside (5.13); while insiders will judge angels (6.3). It is why, in the midst of the discussion of insider vs. outsider, it is so startling to see an insider behaving worse than an outsider. A man has taken his father's wife; a sin even the outsiders do not commit. What is even more troubling is that the believing community has done nothing about it. Their disregard of the sin is an acceptance of the sin. But this should not be. As insiders, the believing community is the temple of God, a holy, sacred place; the place where the Holy Spirit dwells (3.16). If sin is acceptable in the sacred place, the place no longer remains sacred, it is profaned. We see an example of this movement from sacred to profane in chapter 11 when, by the divisive behaviour of the *ekklēsia*, the members have disqualified their observance from being considered the Lord's Supper (11.18-21). In 3.16-17, Paul goes on to say that not only are the insiders God's temple but they are holy, because God's temple is holy. Once they start allowing outsider behaviour (or worse-than-outsider behaviour) into the holy, sacred place, they too run the risk of becoming profane. '[…] if God is to dwell in his Temple, the people who form the Temple have to be pure.'[45] This is why Paul commands the insiders to clean out the old leaven, removing outsider, sinful behaviour, and act like the washed, sanctified and justified believers they are (5.7).

Another example of the insider versus outsider dichotomy appears in chapter 14. In this setting, the insiders are those believers who have been blessed by the Holy Spirit with spiritual gifts, including speaking in tongues and prophesying. Paul elevates prophesying over speaking in tongues because of the fact that outsiders (*idiōtai ē apistoi*) are unable to understand what the speaker is saying (14.23-24). Outsiders are those present who have not been blessed by the Holy Spirit with the gift of interpretation, but also those that are passing by outside the house. The layout of an atrium house (which, according to Oseik and Balch, was the most common setting for the earliest churches[46]) had a 'visual permeability' due to it being constructed on an

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[45] Økland, p. 159.

[46] Carolyn Osiek and David L. Balch, *Families in the New Testament World: Households and House Churches*, ed. by Don S. Browning and Ian S. Evison, The Family, Religion, and Culture (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), p. 24. While some question how many early churches met in houses as opposed to other

axis.[47] This axiality allowed someone peering in through the entrance to see through the *fauces* and peristyle and into the common living spaces.[48] Not only do the insiders need to worry about how they include those outsiders physically present for worship, but also how they appear to those walking down the street. The house does not create a boundary between those inside and outside of the house. Instead it creates an even wider circle of connection of which insiders need to be mindful. When speaking in tongues or offering a prophecy with no one able to interpret, the insiders need to be conscious of the spiritual outsiders who are not even able to say 'Amen' to the thanksgiving (I Corinthians 14.16), and they need to be aware of those who are physically outside who may turn away because of the chaotic worship service.

In order for an outsider to become an insider (a member of the Family of God) he/she would need to learn the rules of the place. An outsider 'is not just someone literally from another location but someone who is existentially removed from the milieu of 'our' places—someone who doesn't know the rules.'[49] Meeting in a house helped create the context for new insiders to take on their identities as children of God, children of Paul, and brothers or sisters to the other members. Though some aspects of secular familial roles would not transfer to this new family, much would remain the same.  When participating in worship in the sacred place, one needed to act honourably toward God and one another since they are all members of the same body, gifted by the Holy Spirit, sanctified in Christ Jesus. Siblings in Christ also needed to edify one another and be willing to rebuke one other when needed. These proper behaviours would ensure the place of worship would continue to remain sacred.

Space is an abstract concept that needs places to help define and understand its openness. Place occurs when space has been assigned meaning, when it engages with the group's identity, connecting it with relationships and history. For New Testament house churches, the household helped form the identity of the *ekklēsia*. Paul used traditional familial roles to teach the worshiping community assembling in a house how to become the Family of God.  Paul was the (spiritual) father to the *ekklēsia*, teaching how worshipers should treat one another as brothers and sisters in Christ. When meeting for worship, this new family changed the social familial space, creating sacred place. Brothers and sisters in Christ were not to fall prey to sibling rivalry that could be found in pagan families, instead they were to have

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spaces (workshops, *tavernas*, rented spaces, etc.), the household still remains a preferred model for the church in much of Paul's rhetoric, and in the later Pauline sphere (e.g., the Pastoral Epistles).

[47] Lisa C. Nevett, *Domestic Space in Classical Antiquity,* ed. by P. A. Cartledge and P.D.A. Garnsey, Key Themes in Ancient History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 81.

[48] Nevett, p. 81.

[49] Creswell, p. 154.

relationships marked by equality. They also needed to remember that God's Spirit now dwells in them, making them holy since they are God's Temple. In order to remain sacred, the proper behaviour needed to be carried out in this place, disconnecting the insiders (those bestowed with gifts by the Holy Spirit) from the outsiders, whether they be in the worship service or outside. This would enable the Corinthian believers to become the holy ones they were called to be.

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