

## The Role of Women in the Church

### I. Introduction

- A. This subject is characterized by \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
- B. England is unique because of the influence of \_\_\_\_\_.
- C. \_\_\_\_\_ is the author of confusion. He will exploit any opportunity to neutralize or alienate members of the Body from one another.
- D. Caution # 1 – Don't approach this topic \_\_\_\_\_. Recognise that the battle is a \_\_\_\_\_, choose to \_\_\_\_\_, and let go of a \_\_\_\_\_ mentality.
- E. Caution # 2 – Must be \_\_\_\_\_ God's heart, mind, will and purposes for women.
1. 2 Tim 2:15 – takes effort to rightly divide the word of truth
  2. Prov 2:3-6 – diligence to seek; to search; to cry out to God; to weed out the contamination of tradition, prejudice and culture from our understanding of the Word
  3. John 5:39-40 – willingness to search the Scriptures BUT ALSO to come to Him personally and allow Him to breathe His life into all that we are doing ... or reading.
  4. 2 Cor 3:6 – Paul said something similar: “the letter kills but the Spirit gives life.”
  5. \_\_\_\_\_ makes all the difference in the world!

### II. Genesis: The Father's Heart

- A. Genesis means \_\_\_\_\_ Every biblical truth can be found in Genesis, at least in seed form.
- B. A few key concepts found in Genesis:

1. 'adam in Gen 1 & 2 was BOTH \_\_\_\_\_ – until the \_\_\_\_\_ was taken OUT OF 'adam and they became two separate beings.
2. The picture in Gen 1 is that of 'adam, male and female, sharing in \_\_\_\_\_ as God's representatives on the earth. It is a picture of \_\_\_\_\_ over the earth.
3. Gen 2:18 – “helpmeet” – *ezer kenegdo* – literally means a help of his like, corresponding to him, one equal to himself as in a mirror image. The word for help *ezer* comes from the root *azar* meaning to \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
a) Used predominantly in the Old Testament to refer to \_\_\_\_\_.  
b) It does NOT imply \_\_\_\_\_ as so much church teaching as suggested!  
c) Rather, etymologically, it signifies \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ the man and the woman ate of the fruit, \_\_\_\_\_ were disobedient and \_\_\_\_\_ sinned. \_\_\_\_\_ experienced the curse or penalty of sin in their lives, reaping what they had sown.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ – mistranslations of this “curse” on Eve have contributed to misunderstanding. Several of the words can be translated quite differently from what we find in the typical English Bible.  
a) A key thing –  
b) This is very important because this passage is often used to \_\_\_\_\_.  
c) Jesus came to set us free from the power and the \_\_\_\_\_ of sin. We've been redeemed from the \_\_\_\_\_ God put on our sin. So it is \_\_\_\_\_ to try to use Gen 3:16 as “proof” that men are supposed to rule over women as God's judgement for Eve's sin.

### III. Sinful Patterns as Sin Has Multiplied

- A. The enemy's strategy has been to \_\_\_\_\_ mankind, male and female, not only from God, but from each other!
- B. The \_\_\_\_\_ stronghold started operating in both genders from the time sin entered into the world.
- C. Sin brought \_\_\_\_\_ in man/woman relationships characterized by fear, mistrust, competition, blame, deception, selfishness, stubbornness and domination. \_\_\_\_\_ has fueled \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ wherever possible!
- D. Historians acknowledge that the greatest influence on modern day western culture has come from a \_\_\_\_\_ developed hundreds of years before Christ. \_\_\_\_\_ thought, attitudes and reasoning pervade our culture and we don't even realize it.
1. Pandora's box –
  2. Socrates, Plato and Aristotle (5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C.) –
  3. During 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries B. C. there was a \_\_\_\_\_ of Jewish culture. The Jews adopted thoughts, attitudes and worldview of the \_\_\_\_\_.
  4. Ecclesiasticus (also called Sirach) – written by a rabbi 250 B.C. - \_\_\_\_\_ to Eve being evil and responsible for all the sin in the world like Pandora.
  5. \_\_\_\_\_ such as Augustine, Origen and Tertullian were influenced greatly by the Greek philosophers. Many were actually trained extensively in Greek stoic philosophy and were considered followers of Plato. This spilled over into their theology and what they taught concerning \_\_\_\_\_ in the Church.

### IV. Jesus Re-Expressed the Father's Heart Towards Women

- A. He intended His teachings for BOTH \_\_\_\_\_.
1. He taught using numerous \_\_\_\_\_ of both a man and a woman (Ex Luke 15). This balance reveals Jesus' heart to give equal importance and place to men and women.

2. He taught using \_\_\_\_\_ that both men and women could relate to. It's important when we realize that women were not normally taught the Scriptures or allowed to receive teaching under a rabbi. They were not considered worthy of it.
  3. Jesus, however, showed that HIS teachings were for \_\_\_\_\_ men and women!!
- B. His depictions of women were \_\_\_\_\_. This was not true of how He depicted men.
- C. He \_\_\_\_\_ of women by taking time with them and by healing them. This was a monumental departure from the attitude of the day.
- D. Jesus encouraged \_\_\_\_\_.
1. Luke 8:1-2; Mark 15:40-41; Matt 27:55-56
    - a) The word \_\_\_\_\_ is used – means servant or minister – the word from which we get the English word “deacon”. *Early historical sources identified these women “disciples.”*
  2. Mary of Bethany in Luke 10 –
  3. Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ Mary (in Matthew, Mark and John) for her act of worship in barging in on the dinner party, anointing his Head and feet and wiping His feet with her unbound hair.
  4. Jesus also \_\_\_\_\_ the other woman (Luke 7:36-50), most likely a prostitute, who had done a similar thing earlier on. He gave her honor, dignity and blessing.
- E. Jesus Revealed Himself to and Released Women
1. The first evangelist recorded in the New Testament was the \_\_\_\_\_.
  2. Jesus revealed Himself uniquely to Martha as \_\_\_\_\_.
  3. Jesus revealed Himself first as \_\_\_\_\_ to Mary Magdalene and then gave her a commission to go tell other the good news of the resurrection (John 20:11-18).
    - a) *Apostolos* –
    - b) The significance of this –

4. Historical records indicated that, for this reason, the early Church gave Mary Magdalene the title \_\_\_\_\_.

## V. Early Church Practice

A. There were 3 key paradigm shifts recorded in the early Church:

1. Anointing for everyone – the HS, with His empowerment and giftings, was now for \_\_\_\_\_ not just a select group.
2. Every Christian a priest – The priesthood, those who could minister to God and minister to the people, was no longer limited to the tribe of Levi but opened up to \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The dividing walls broken down in Christ – dividing walls between Jew/Gentile, slave/free and men/women were broken down to bring a new \_\_\_\_\_ in Him.
  - a) Gal 3:27-29
  - b) Eph 2:14-18

B. Theology in practice – women in the early Church

Note: The fact that women are mentioned at all is important. We miss the full importance of this because it is not unusual in our culture. We don't understand how astounding it is that the writers of the New Testament spoke so frequently of the women. It is evidence of the important role that women played in the early Church as well as evidence of God's power to transform the men who He used to write the New Testament Scriptures.

1. **Lydia** (Acts 16:14-15,40) – \_\_\_\_\_ to Christianity; many sources identify Lydia, being the head of a great household, as \_\_\_\_\_ of the church which met at her home.
2. **Damaris** (Acts 17:34) – the only woman mentioned by name who was converted as a result of Paul's preaching on Mars Hill. The account says she and the others converted joined themselves to Paul \_\_\_\_\_!
3. **Chloe** (1 Cor 1:11) – many scholars believe Chloe was the leader of a \_\_\_\_\_.
4. **Dorcas** (Acts 9:36-42) – She was a woman \_\_\_\_\_ from Joppa who had died. She was very highly esteemed and loved. Her friends sent for Peter who came and prayed for her and raised her from the dead.

5. **Priscilla** (Acts 18:2-3, 18:28; Rom 16:3-5; 1 Cor 16:19; 2 Tim 4:19) – Priscilla and Aquila were the first \_\_\_\_\_ of the emerging Church. They are ALWAYS mentioned together! They were BOTH recognized as able ministers of the gospel. Paul called them BOTH fellow workers in Christ and ones who had risked their own necks for his life. He gave his personal thanks and extended thanks to them BOTH from all the Gentile churches. They \_\_\_\_\_ together a church that met in their home and Priscilla was actively involved in \_\_\_\_\_ Apollos, who went on to be a very well known church leaders in Corinth region.
  
6. **Eunice and Lois** (2 Tim 1:5) – Paul credited them with the \_\_\_\_\_ of their sincere and unhypocritical faith to Timothy, the young pastor mentored by Paul. His implication is that the Lord used these two women to \_\_\_\_\_ this man of God, who would go on to be a significant figure in the early Church.
  
7. **Euodia and Syntyche** (Phil 4:2-3) – two women that Paul says “labored with him in the gospel”. The verb he uses is a strong one and implies the idea of \_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_ . The very fact that he names them in this letter and is so concerned about their disagreement indicates their important role within the Church!
  
8. **Nympha** (Col 4:15) – Paul, in writing to the church at Colosse, sends greetings to Nympha personally and the church in her house. The KJV and NKJV use the \_\_\_\_\_ form of the name, but the better original manuscripts of the Greek NT specify the \_\_\_\_\_ form of the name. Many scholars agree that Nympha was unquestionably a woman and probably the \_\_\_\_\_ of this church.
  
9. **Rom 16:6-7 women** – Paul lists a number of church leaders by name who are worthy of praise and greeting. In this list of 28 people, about \_\_\_\_\_ of them are women!
  
10. **Mary** (Rom 16) – very likely that she is the mother of \_\_\_\_\_ also mentioned in Acts 12:12. Very possibly \_\_\_\_\_ of a house church. Well known Bible encyclopedias acknowledge that her house was a “well known center of Christian life and worship.”
  
11. **Junia** (Rom 16) – Paul describes her as of note among the apostles. Most sources acknowledge that Junia was a \_\_\_\_\_. Even \_\_\_\_\_, one of the Early Church Fathers

who upheld the Platonic view of women, acknowledged that Junia was a \_\_\_\_\_. The earliest commentator on the book of Romans, \_\_\_\_\_ of Alexandria (born in 2<sup>nd</sup> century), also understood Junia to be a \_\_\_\_\_.

12. **Phoebe** (Rom 16) – Paul uses two key words: *diakonos* and *prostatis*.

a) *Diakonos* means a servant, minister or deacon. In the Pauline epistles, it usually indicated a person with a \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_. In 5 passages it is used to specifically refer to someone who \_\_\_\_\_.

It was \_\_\_\_\_ used to identify Paul, Timothy, and the church leaders spoken of in 1 Timothy 3:8,12.

b) *Prostatis* means a woman set over others, a patroness, guardian, protectress, leader, officeholder or chief. The rendering of this word as “a good friend” or “a great help” is extremely \_\_\_\_\_ – none of these words carry the full impact of what *prostatis* really means! It belongs to a word group with a strong connotation of \_\_\_\_\_.

13. **Apphia** (Philemon 1:1-2) - greeted by Paul along with Philemon and man named Archippus, along with the church that met their home. The “your” is singular and several scholars have concluded that Apphia was very likely one of the \_\_\_\_\_ of this house church.

### C. Historical Evidence of Official Ministry by Women

1. \_\_\_\_\_ in the form of papyri and inscriptions from the first centuries prove that women held ecclesiastical offices in the Church.

2. Studies of \_\_\_\_\_ from the \_\_\_\_\_ which sought to bring guidelines to the practices of the Church reveal that women were evangelizing, baptizing, teaching, officially interpreting the Scriptures, doing visitation, functioning as leaders, and speaking publically in the assemblies.

3. Another early Church document shows that women were involved in leading and giving \_\_\_\_\_ as well.

4. “The last 30 years of American scholarship have produced an amazing range of evidence for women’s roles s deacons, priests, presbyters and even bishops in the Christian churches from the first

through the thirteenth centuries.” – Karen Torjesen in *When Women Were Priests*

5. Corroboration by the early Church Fathers – their writings corroborate that women were \_\_\_\_\_ in the early Church. (This was in spite of the fact that most of these men were either Platonists or greatly influenced by the Greek philosophers, and subsequently held the same disparaging views of women!)

## VI. The Problem Passages

- A. These are primarily 1 Corinthians 11, 1 Timothy 2:11-15, Ephesians 5:21:23 and 1 Corinthians 14:33-35.
- B. \_\_\_\_\_ reveal that these some of these passages, if not all, are a response to the effects of \_\_\_\_\_, which many new believers were coming out of, and the \_\_\_\_\_ which were infiltrating the Church at the time. In both, women were exalted above men. Men were considered unimportant, unnecessary, weak and clueless. Both taught the \_\_\_\_\_ of the female and advocated \_\_\_\_\_ over the male. Also, there was the lack of propriety, discipline or modesty that was associated with the cult worship of the day.
- C. These passages *at first glance* appear to be saying one thing quite clearly, yet closer examination reveals that they are most likely saying something quite different! The first indicator that we should have that *all is not as it appears* is that the English translations often suggest \_\_\_\_\_ on the part of the Apostle Paul that is in \_\_\_\_\_ to New Testament practice and to his own practice!
- D. Four key words that change a great deal:
  1. ***Kephale*** – translated “head” – many scholars admit our understanding of it has been warped by importing secular concepts into our reading of the Greek. Recent scholarship has revealed that *kephale* really means \_\_\_\_\_. It has nothing to do with authority, rulership, or leadership. Headship in the NT does not speak of power over, but of \_\_\_\_\_.
  2. ***Various forms of hupotassomai*** - “submit”, “submission” – Paul usually used this word within the context of mutual submission to one another. In fact, \_\_\_\_\_ is a major theme of the NT. *Hupotassomai* means a voluntary willingness to be responsive to the needs of others, to be considerate, willing to serve and honor one another. It embodies the consideration of one another required in \_\_\_\_\_, whether it is a team of two or a team of many. It is NOT a \_\_\_\_\_ of persons as a ruler and those being ruled. It does NOT mean \_\_\_\_\_.



3. **Authentien** – “have authority over” – this is the \_\_\_\_\_ this word is used in the NT; It is NOT the normal word used for the exercise of authority. It means to \_\_\_\_\_ in a very negative sense. The word has coarse sexual overtones, with sexual license implied in its meaning. It embodies the idea of seizing power where there is no right to do so, through control and seduction. It can also mean to claim authorship, to represent oneself as the author or originator or source of something. In every way, the use of this word in 2 Tim 2 indicates that Paul is addressing the influence of \_\_\_\_\_ in the early Church and bringing some much needed \_\_\_\_\_ to its influence.
4. **Hesuchia** - Often translated “silence” or “be silent” but does not mean \_\_\_\_\_. It expresses instead the idea of harmony, a restful quietness, to be quietly attentive, and to learn with an attitude of \_\_\_\_\_.
5. **Signao** – Translated “keep silent.” It is a \_\_\_\_\_ silence (such as when the apostles and elders listened to a report from Paul and Barnabus (Acts 15:12) or a \_\_\_\_\_ silence such as when the beggar was told to quit yelling (Luke 18:39). It is also used when a crowd was told to be quiet in Acts 12:17. One source notes that “*signao* is the kind of silence asked for in the midst of disorder and clamor.” The root is a word meaning \_\_\_\_\_, and several references translate it as meaning simply, “to hold one’s peace.” Usage of this word in the NT indicates that it does NOT impose a universal silence, but only a \_\_\_\_\_ one dictated by a \_\_\_\_\_ time and situation.