

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 (5th and 6th centuries B.C.) –
 3. During 3rd and 4th 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 2nd 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.