

# What Does the Bible Teach About the Roles of Women in the Church?

Thursday (10/15/20) Indepth Bible Class  
of the Trilacoochee church of Christ

# Progressivism and The Role of Women in the Church

- “West Islip Church of Christ is led by a group of gifted shepherds known collectively as the Council. The Council is currently composed of nine individuals: Don Bayer, Sue Bayer, David Fritz, Methel Gale, Hubert Gibbons, Julie Madsen, Barbara O'Connor, Donna White, and John White. Our ministers, Katie Hays and Lance Pape, serve under the guidance of the Council.”

# Progressivism and The Role of Women in the Church

- "In general, gender justice means recognizing that men and women are created by God, redeemed by Christ, and gifted by the Spirit truly without distinction or partiality. In Christian community, gender justice means encouraging both men and women to exercise their Spirit-given gifts in the church's work, worship, and leadership, and celebrating the truth that the Spirit grants such gifts without respect to gender. Concretely, gender justice in the Church of Christ includes opening traditionally masculine leadership roles and activities (deacon, elder, minister, worship leader, preacher, teacher, etc.) to women, and encouraging men to discover and cultivate their gifts for activities traditionally performed by women." ([www.gal328.org](http://www.gal328.org))

# Progressivism and The Role of Women in the Church

- Bering Drive Church of Christ (Houston, TX)
- Bowie Church of Christ (Bowie, MD)
- Brookline Church of Christ (Boston, MA)
- Cahaba Valley Church, An Ecumenical Church of Christ (Birmingham, AL)
- Culver Palms Church of Christ (Los Angeles, CA)
- Malibu Church of Christ (Malibu, CA)
- Manhattan Church of Christ (New York, NY)
- Stamford Church of Christ (Stamford, CT)
- Stoney Creek Church of Christ (Stoney Creek, Ontario)
- West Islip Church of Christ (Long Island, NY)

# Progressivism and The Role of Women in the Church

- As the city churches go, so will the suburban and rural churches follow eventually. This movement began nearly 20 years ago. It is firmly embedded and growing.
- It often begins with incremental changes: waiting on the Lord's Table, scripture reading, team teaching in Bible classes, praise teams in singing; then, it progresses to deaconesses, public teaching and preaching, and the eldership.

# What Do The Scriptures Teach?

- Men and women are equal in the sight of God.
  - Gal. 3:28 – “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”
  - 1Cor. 11:11-12 – “Nevertheless, neither is man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord. 12 For as woman came from man, even so man also comes through woman; but all things are from God.”
- However, the roles of men and women differ in the family and local church.

# God's Order Of Authority

- God is over all - 1Cor. 15:27-28
- Christ is subject to God - 1Cor. 11:3
- Elders are subject to Christ - 1Peter 5:2-4
- Christians, men and women, are subject to elders - Heb. 13:7, 17
- Wives are subject to husbands - Eph. 5:23
- Children are subject to parents - Eph. 6:1; 1Tim. 5:14
- These are relationships in the church and the home.

# Value And Function Defined In Scripture

- God and Christ are equal in value as Deity - Phil. 2:6
  - Christ is subordinate in function for the purpose and plan for redeeming us from sin.
- Men and woman are equal in value as human beings before God - Gal. 3:28
  - Women are subordinate in function for family and worship purposes.
- Not a matter of value or inferiority, but of function and role.

# Women's Roles In The Work Of The Local Church

- The God ordained difference in functional role is manifested by silence
  - 1Cor. 14:34-35 - “Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says. 35 And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church.”
- Context refers to a called worship service, not an informal Bible study - 1Tim. 2:11-12

# Women's Roles In The Work Of The Local Church

- "Well, what does silence mean?"
  - 1Cor. 14:28, 34 - "But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church, and let him speak to himself and to God... 34 Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak..."
- What is meant by one is meant by the other.

# Women's Roles In The Work Of The Local Church

- Does not void other direct commands for Christian women. Permits:
  - Singing - Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19
  - Bible study - Acts 18:24-26
  - Confession - Rom. 10:10
  - Commanded activities in which subjection is actual and visible.

# Women's Roles In The Work Of The Local Church

- Prohibits:
  - Taking authority, exercising domination or being disorderly and disruptive in any aspect of the work of the church.
  - Preaching or teaching when men are present - 1Tim. 2:11-14
  - Paul is not forbidding women from all forms of teaching - Titus 2:3-5; Acts 18:26
  - Paul is teaching the women that they are not to teach or to exercise authority over the man. This is to be understood in the context of worship and leadership in the church in harmony with his instructions to the Corinthians, no more and no less.
  - What does this permit? Everything else authorized for Christians in the work of teaching the lost, edifying one another, and attending to the needs of the less fortunate

# Women's Roles In The Work Of The Local Church

- To avoid developing the kind of environment that facilitates these changes, consider the factors that lead up to it.
  - Cultural changes
  - Men who are spiritual bullies
  - Men who are spiritual wimps
  - Men who will not listen
  - Women who want to be men

# Women's Roles In The Work Of The Local Church

- ...when Christians, men and women alike, treat one another with respect and affection, both will be content with and eager to fulfill their God designed roles in the home and in the church.
- ...when Christian men become domineering or passive or indifferent, they create a fertile soil for the seeds of digression.
- Sisters, do not be uncomfortable, but rather glorify the role God designed for you in this world.
- Brethren, be men like Christ and you will never give your sisters in Christ cause to be uncomfortable with your role in this world.

# The Work Of Godly Women According To Scripture

- "As the law also says" - 1Cor. 14:34
  - What does the law say? - Numbers 30
- Was there a role for women under the law?
  - Ex. 15:20-21 - Miriam and women singing
  - 1Chron. 25:5-6 - Daughters of Heman played instruments for the temple.
  - Ezra 2:65; Neh. 7:67 - Women singers assigned to Temple worship
  - Ex. 38:8; 1Sam. 2:22 - Serving women assisted in preparations for temple worship
  - Ex. 35:22 - Women made freewill offerings to construct the tabernacle
  - Joshua 8:35; Deut. 31:12 - Women were instructed to attend the reading of the Law
  - Deut. 27; Neh. 8 - Women were instructed to agree with the reading of the law

# The Work Of Godly Women According To Scripture

- "In the beginning" - 1Tim. 2:13; Gen. 3:16; 1Peter 3:4-6
- "As in all of the churches" - 1Cor. 15:33
  - Answers the argument that the command was only for Corinth - Acts 12:12-15, 1:14
  - 1Cor. 11:3, 14:40 - Is this true in all churches?

# The Work Of Godly Women According To Scripture

- "Because of" (why?)
  - Consistency - 1Cor. 14:33 - "As in all the churches."
  - Submission - 1Cor. 11:3, 14:34; Col. 3:18; Eph. 5:22-24
  - To prevent shame - 1Cor. 14:35
  - Commanded - 1Cor. 14:36-37
  - Orderliness - 1Cor. 14:40

# There Is Much Work For Godly Women

- The church at Rome:
  - Phoebe, a helper of Paul and many others - Rom. 16:1-2
  - Priscilla, risking her life for Paul - Rom. 16:3-4
  - One named Mary, who bestowed "much labor" - Rom. 16:6
  - Twin sisters, Tryphena and Tryphosa - Rom. 16:12
  - The beloved Persis - Rom. 16:12
- The growth of many churches is the result of labor by women.
  - Lydia at Philippi who opened her home for Paul and his preaching companions - Acts 16:15
  - Mary, Joanna, and Susanna who financially helped to support Jesus preaching ministry - Luke 8:1-3

# There Is Much Work For Godly Women

- How can that be, if women are limited in what they can do in public worship?
  - Public assemblies are a small part of the overall work of a congregation.
  - Most of work that makes a church grow is done outside of assemblies.
  - Women are often in a position to provide much of this needed work.
- Benevolence is an important work primarily performed by individuals.
  - It is a mark of pure and undefiled religion - James 1:27
  - Women are well-suited for the work of benevolence.
  - They bring pleasant graciousness, tender kindness, and gentle courtesy of which most men are normally not capable.

# There Is Much Work For Godly Women

- They possess skills through which benevolence can be performed.
  - Understanding clothing, as Dorcas made garments for needy widows - Acts 9:36-39.
  - Cooking, baby-sitting, ministering to the sick, extending hospitality, etc.
  - Women who were “taken into the number” had to be known for the good works they had done in benevolence - 1Tim. 5:9-10.
  - Have you noticed that these things are what Paul said were those things that make one content in life? - 1Tim. 6:8

# There Is Much Work For Godly Women

- Women can do much to edify the church through formal teaching of others:
  - Grandmothers and mothers can teach children, as Lois and Eunice did Timothy - 2Tim. 1:5, 3:14-15
  - Older women should teach younger women - Titus 2:3-5
  - For people who come into the church without the benefit of godly mothers and grandmothers, Christian women can step up and fill the role of being an edifying influence.
- Through informal words of encouragement:
  - There is a special need for women to see themselves as teachers of young people and other women, and as encouragers of men in their work of preaching the gospel.

# There Is Much Work For Godly Women

- Evangelism is a crucial work.
  - This work can and must be done by everyone - Acts 8:1, 4
- Convert the lost and erring as Priscilla did with Aquila
  - Provided a place for Paul to stay during his ministry at Corinth - Acts 18:1-3
  - Converted Apollos at Ephesus - Acts 18:24-26
  - Hosted a church at Ephesus in their own home - 1Cor. 16:19
  - Hosted a church at Rome in their own home - Rom. 16:3-5
- Even by example, godly women can lead others to Christ, including unbelieving husbands - 1Peter 3:1-2.

# What Does the Bible Teach About the Roles of Women in the Church?

- Brethren, Hold your sisters in Christ in high esteem for their good works and wonderful character. Without them, local churches would not long exist.
- Rom. 16:1-2 - “I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea, that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you; for indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also.”