

“Women In Office? YES”

What happened in the last several decades that the church revisited the issue of Women in Office?

Report 44 on the “Nature and Extent of Biblical Authority” (1972)

Studies on the first-century world, helping us understand something of the culture.

Some Preliminary Background

In the church there are many parts or varying gifts and abilities. Also, a plurality of leadership.

Ephesians 4:7, 11; I Corinthians 12:27-28

Question: Which of these functions can women perform? Or, which of these functions can women *not* perform?

Biblical Passages relating to this community (the Church)

Foundational Scriptures: Galatians 3:26-28; I Peter 2:4-5, 9

All are “priests” - the most exalted office!

Some specific Scriptures that seem to limit the function of women in the church:

I Corinthians 14:33b-35; I Timothy 2:11-12 [Ephesians 5:22-24]

The Biblical Background of the role of women in the community of Israel

The Creation account:

Genesis 1:26, “then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let *them* rule....’”

Genesis 5:1-2, “When God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. He created them male and female and blessed them. And when they were created, He called them ‘man’ (Hebrew: *adam*).”

The second creation account

Genesis 2:18, “The Lord God said, ‘I is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a *helper* suitable for him.’”

Hebrew: “Helper suitable” - *ezer kenegdo*.

Ezer - “a help, a rescue, a counterpart, a match”

kenegdo - “like him,” “one who is equal to him.”

Therefore: “One who is equal to and adequate for, in every respect.” Or:

“A strength or a power equal to man.”

The role of women in the Old Testament

Women functioned in many capacities: prophetesses, judges, generals, Queens.

- **Miriam** - Speaking of Israel’s redemption from Egypt, God says in Micah 6:4, “I brought you up out of Egypt and redeemed you from the land of slavery. I sent Moses to lead you, *also* Aaron and *Miriam*.”

- **Deborah** – called a prophetess (Judges 4:4), a judge (Judges 4:5), a commander-in-chief. In Judges 5:1, she's named first – a Hebrew linguistic and cultural practice indicating emphasis (and importance).
- **Huldah** – a prophetess (2 Kings 22:14). When King Josiah went to “inquire of the Lord,” he sent representatives to her. In spite of the fact that both Jeremiah (1:2) and Zephaniah (1:1) were prophets during the reign of Josiah!
- Women who were Queens: **Athaliah** (2 Chronicles 22, 1 Kings 11), and **Esther**.

Jesus and women

Women were disciples/followers of Jesus – Luke 8:1-3.

Not only were they His “helpers,” they were in fact taught by Him – Luke 10:38.

In His teaching Jesus selected images and created parables with a deliberate concern to communicate His message to women listeners on as deep a level as to His male followers.

- Luke 4:25-27 – an account of the woman of Zarephath and a man, Naaman the Syrian.
- Luke 5:36-39 – twin parables of the mending of a garment (task of a woman) and the making of wine (the work of a man).
- Luke 13:18-21 – the parable of the mustard seed (men do the farming) is linked to the story of a woman kneading leaven into bread dough.
- Luke 15:3-11 – the parables of the lost coin (sought by a woman) and a lost sheep (sought by a man).
- In debating with the Pharisees, Jesus affirms equality between men and women in the resurrection (Luke 20:27-36).

In Luke's Gospel there are 27 sets of stories that focus in the one case on a man and in the other on a woman.

It's noted that Jesus chose only male apostles. It's also true that the apostles chose only male deacons, yet it's obvious that women also served – I Timothy 3:11.

Awaiting the promise of the Holy Spirit - Acts 1:14; Acts 2:17-18.

Paul and women

Romans 16:

Phoebe (vs. 1); Priscilla (vss. 2-3); Mary (vs. 6); Junia (vs. 7); Tryphena, Tryphosa, Persis (vss. 12-13)

I Corinthians 11:2-16; 14:34; I Timothy 2:11-12.