

Greetings saints of God in the Wonderful Name of Jesus!

The following is an attempt to clarify my understanding of the issue regarding women in ministry. I fail to fully comprehend this issue myself, but through prayer and the study of God's Word and the history that lies behind the following letters I have a peace with what God has shared with me and would like the opportunity to share it with you.

Thank you for your patience with this growing servant of our most gracious and Holy King and for indulging me by allowing this message to be read in the midst of your ever-busy schedules. I cherish your fellowship and am privileged to be co-laboring in the same harvest field (this global expanse we call earth) with you for His glory!

My fellow saints, I don't know much, and even claim to know less, but I know this... My understanding of God's Word is based solely on the guidance of His Holy Spirit to interpret the complexity of His multidimensional Being. I hope this explanation aids in both your and my pursuit to more fully comprehend the boundless knowledge of His grace and mercy as hidden neatly within His Word for those who desire to seek it.

Thank you for being students and not just spectators. May God richly bless you as you continue your pursuit of His splendor and majesty!

With love in the Name of our Lord and Savior, the Mighty and Wonderful Jesus Christ,
Sincerely privileged to be co-laboring and co-learning with you,

Rev. Robert D. Kee

WOMEN IN MINISTRY

Many times within the Body of Christ lie areas of gray in our understanding of God's Word that are hard to define and so often misinterpreted. Women in Ministry is one of those issues. With that in mind I would like to share with you what I believe God has revealed to me regarding this fragile matter.

The reference in 1 Cor 14 and 1 Tim 2 regarding a woman keeping silent in the church, being under obedience, asking their husbands at home about the instruction given, being in subjection, not to teach, and to not usurp man's authority, could be explained accordingly:

(1 Cor 14:34 KJV) Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law.

(1 Cor 14:35 KJV) And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.

1. Paul found that a specific problem was occurring in Corinth and later he addressed the same issue with Timothy's congregation. The city of Corinth was a city full of debauchery. The women obviously had a very heavy influence and more than likely held positions of power since it was the home of the Temple Aphrodite, the "love goddess". The women seemed to be esteemed as prophetesses and provided sexual pleasure for all who brought offerings to the temple. This influence of female dominance was not far from the church and was continually trying to creep in. Paul addresses this by instructing the women to keep silent, meaning to be peaceable, quiet, or still. They were obviously used to having the upper hand in their previous lifestyle and Paul was trying to bring order back to the church. He then commands them to be under obedience, meaning submissive to instruction as disciples of Christ. They apparently were also not used to receiving instruction either, and Paul is attempting to regain the proper structure in the

church. He tells them to ask their husbands when they get home so as to begin rebuilding the order of the family. It's not reflective of the man's intellectual superiority, because we both know that's not the case (ha!), but that the dependence upon each other would be reestablished for fellowship and revelation in the home setting. The women in the church at that time were still struggling with authority issues and would apparently not show reverence for the instructor, but constantly interrupt with questions that would be distracting or even gender strife in the congregation.

(1 Tim 2:11 KJV) Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection.

(1 Tim 2:12 KJV) But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.

2. Again in Timothy, Paul is addressing this issue. We realize this because he begins by instructing the women to learn in silence with subjection. Meaning peaceably, in a holy reverence. He goes on by telling Timothy that he is not to allow women to teach which he directly relates to giving a woman positions of authority over men, as though to lord over them. Again this is probably related to the fact that Ephesus was the capitol for the great Temple of Artemis or Diana, the Greek goddess of fertility. Women were used heavily to solicit funds for the temple worship through prostitution and selling of various wares, sorcery, etc. This would again put the women in a place of dominance that, when saved, would have to be put in proper place. A place of co-laboring.

We know from numerous texts in the scripture that Paul was not saying that women should never have public speaking or teaching ministry in the church. He gives instruction regarding when they pray, when they prophesy, when they teach, the lifting up of their hands in worship. He refers to women as deacons (Rom 16:1) and co-laborers. He even refers first to the wife of a husband and wife team as co-laborers, one's who put their necks on the line for him (Rom 16:3). Paul also clarifies this teaching by his statement of equality yet order in Gal 3:28. Other than John, Women were apparently the only ones to faithfully follow Christ to the cross (John 19:25). Women were the only ones brave enough to step out from behind the safety of their homes and visit the tomb (Mtt 28:1). And Women were the first to be given the honor of proclaiming the Gospel message (Mtt 28:7). The Samaritan woman was the ambassador of the Gospel to her city (Jhn 4:28-30). God used Esther to preserve a nation (Esther). Again He used Deborah to judge His people. She was appointed by God to be their system of justice as well as provide counsel and commandment to the head of the nation's army and lead them to victory (Judges 4). The Queen of Sheba was a seeker of truth and will be one who condemns Israel on Judgment Day for their rebellion (Mtt 12:42). Candace, Queen of Ethiopia, granted permission to, possibly even commissioned, one of her eunuchs of great authority to go to Jerusalem to worship brining the message of Christianity into the Ethiopian governmental structure (Acts 8:27). Jesus didn't treat women as inferior, but rather as friends, disciples and co-laborers (Luk 10).

A QUESTION IS POSED:

If there are no contradictions in the Bible, and this response to Paul's writing is the truth, then we have a problem. Or do we? People have said, "I have no issue with women doing any of the things that have been addressed, just not in the "Church". Is the Bible the word of God or Paul's word? God's! Then there is no contradiction only a need for clarification.

RESPONSE

In reference to the history we have regarding the above stated issue; we find that Paul was dealing with a specific situation to bring order back to the church in Corinth. But in dealing with the issue to restore a Godly order he also was not suppressing the women from becoming all God created them to be (Gal 3:28). We can also find other examples cited where the women referred to were very much involved in the church in various capacities. Phebe was highly

revered by Paul as an official aid, teacher, and minister, possibly even pastor. Paul so greatly trusted her that he, according to some commentaries, entrusted her with the delivery of what would become one of the most revealing texts in the Bible, the book of Romans (Rom 16:1). One thing we have to realize also is that the "church" as stated by Paul is not a building, but the "ekklesia", meaning the "called out ones of the assembly", the "saints of God", or also stated as the "Church of God". So to the best of my limited understanding at this time I am still led back to the notion that Paul was dealing with some very difficult issues that were affecting a specific church body(s), but condones the assistance and/or leadership of women in many areas of body or church ministry. In contrast, if we as the church were dealing with the type of cultural issues of Corinth we would seize these principles and apply them just as Paul commanded in order to bring a structured balance back to the congregation. Once temperance is reestablished then Christ can begin the redevelopment process and remold us into the ministers He desires all of us to be so we may reach out to the lost of the world and bring edification to the church.

PRAY AND DECIDE FOR YOURSELF. Remember, we are finite beings analyzing the perfect Holy reverential Word of the Infinite God Himself. Let's continue to be students of this incredible testament!

God bless, P. Rob ☺
