

The Role of Women in the Local Church (Cont. from pg. 3)

patriotism of an exaggerated kind” (*The Reader’s Encyclopedia*, p. 189). One who is referred to as a “Male Chauvinist” is one therefore, who is blindly patriotic to men. *Was this the character of Paul? We should note that as much if not more restriction is placed upon the general behavior of men as upon the behavior of women. Further it must be realized that Paul’s words were not his own but the Lord’s. In First Corinthians fourteen verse 37 Paul claims – “If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord.”* Thus regardless of

how our culture views the admonitions of Scripture they are the Lord’s word on the matter!

By Kyle Pope

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Sunday: 9:30 a.m.
10:20 a.m.
6:00 p.m.
Wednesday: 7:00 p.m.

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The Role of Women in the Local Church

If we are to be true to our commitment to follow the pattern the New Testament sets for us, then we must do so even when it does not match the world’s thinking. Many in the religious world and even among our own brethren have found the things taught in Scripture regarding a woman’s role in the local church simply too unpalatable to uphold in this age.

“What Does the Bible Teach?”

It could generally be said that the responsibilities of Christian women and men in the church are the same except in the areas of leadership and teaching. Two

texts outline the limitations women are given in these areas: I Corinthians 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. And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for a woman to speak in church.” And I Timothy 2:11,12 - “Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or have authority over a man, but to be in silence” (NKJV).

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“What Is The Context?”

In the two texts mentioned above we find two different contexts and two different prohibitions. The context of First Corinthians fourteen concerns spiritual gifts as they are used in the assembly. The context of First Timothy two deals with general conduct. First Corinthians fourteen commands absolute silence “in the church” (that is to say - in the assembly). First Timothy two commands “quietness” (ASV) in all places.

“How Far Does This Go?”

It is clear that these teachings were not intended to remove women from the assembly (as the Jews did in some cases in their synagogues). Nor does this contradict the instructions given to men and women alike related to singing (Colossians 3:16). But it does teach the absolute silence of women when the church is assembled and the prohibition of women exercising spiritual authority over a man in any setting.

Modern Day Questions

“*Could a woman preach?*” - No. While Titus 2:3,4 refers to woman teaching other women, and Acts 18:24-28 gives the example of Priscilla and Aquilla together teaching Apollos, preaching in the church would violate both the passages above.

“*Could A Woman Lead Prayer Or Singing In The Church?*” – No. Both would violate the instructions of First Corinthians fourteen that it is shameful for a woman to speak in the church. Further, “leading” in prayer and “leading” in singing are acts of leadership. First Timothy two makes it clear that women are not to be in “authority over a man.”

“*Could A Woman Be A Deacon?*” – No. The example of Phoebe in Romans 16:1,2 simply shows the word from which we get the word “deacon” used in its general sense of “servant” or “minister” (as it is used of Jesus in Galatians 2:17). To appoint a woman to the role of leadership which is to some degree given to a deacon would not only violate the two main texts above but the very qualifications for such a work (I Timothy 3:8-13). That is not to say

that women can’t be “servants of the church” as Phoebe was when it comes to some of the many needs and roles of service necessary for the local church to function. Examples of this world include preparation of the Lord’s supper, visitation of the sick, opening their homes for Bible studies, etc.

“*Could a Woman Teach Children or Other Women?*” – Yes. Some of our good brethren have opposed this notion on the basis of Paul’s word in First Timothy two verse twelve forbidding a woman to - “teach or have authority over a man,” The argument is that Paul was commanding two distinct



things: 1. Teaching (in any context) and 2. Having Authority Over a Man. *Is this confirmed by Scripture?* As previously mentioned, in Titus 2:1-5 Paul through the Holy Spirit writes - “**But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience; the older women likewise,**

en to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed” (Emphasis Mine). All Scripture must be harmonized in order to make sound interpretations. Here is what is clear: 1. Women are referred to as “teachers of good things.”

2. This involves more than simply teaching by example – they are told to “admonish the young women”.

3. If Paul in Titus commands women to teach younger women then in First Timothy forbids women to teach (in the context of male female relationships) what is being forbidden is teaching “over a man” not teaching in any context.

“*Wasn’t Paul Just a ‘Male Chauvinist’?*” – No. The term “Chauvinist” has only in recent years been applied to feminist philosophy. Nicolas Chauvin was a soldier of the French republic and empire who was fanatically devoted to Napoleon. Chauvinism in general is “blind and pugnacious (cont. on page 4)