



ior. In either case, Paul offers the binding command “**Let your women keep silent in the churches**” (14:34). Can we read this and conclude “so long as women behave orderly they *can speak*?” No. That is the same mistake our liberal brethren make in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34. There we have a PROBLEM—the Corinthians had abused the Lord’s Supper making it a common meal (11:21-22). We also have a CORRECTION—the Lord’s Supper was intended as a memorial (11:23-26). But we also have the SOLUTION—eat at

home for hunger (11:34). Social meals are not the business of the church.

In our text, if we try to say there was a PROBLEM—women were perhaps speaking out in a disorderly manner, what is the CORRECTION and SOLUTION? Clearly the CORRECTION is “**if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home.**” This is in perfect harmony with Acts 18:24-26 and 1 Timothy 2:11-12—in a context outside of the church assembly a woman is to discuss spiritual matters. But the SOLUTION is also clear “**it is shameful for a woman to speak in church.**” That doesn’t say “so long as it is orderly she can speak” or even “so long as she doesn’t teach she can speak”—it prohibits a woman from speaking in the assembly of the church. In our next article we will consider some specific questions that this raises.

¹“Frequently Raised Objections” 5 <http://www.gal328.org/articles/Pape-FRO.html#five>.

²“Women ‘Be Silent’ in the Church (1)” <http://wherethespiritleads.org/spiritleads/Women%20Be%20Silent.htm>.



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Faithful Sayings Issue 14.31 July 29, 2012

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ISSUE

14.31

BULLETIN OF
THE OLSEN
PARK CHURCH
OF CHRIST

Faithful Sayings

July 29
2012

Services

Sunday: 9:30 AM
10:20 AM
6:00 PM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:

Pat Ledbetter
Jeff Nunn
Kyle Pope

Deacons:

Dean Bowers
Eddie Cook
Bill Davis
Steve Dixon
Pat Goguen
Jack Langley
Neil Ledbetter
Brady McAlister
Walker McAnear
Lance Purcell
Rusty Scott

Evangelist:

Kyle Pope



The “Gender-Inclusive” Movement Among Churches of Christ

Part Three: First Corinthians 14:34-35 **By Kyle Pope**

In the previous articles, as we addressed the growth of the movement among some churches to open roles of leadership, public teaching, and worship in church assemblies to women, we began to consider three texts that outline the role and restrictions of women in the New Testament. These three may be seen in the chart on the next page. We learned from Acts 18:24-26 that a woman is authorized to discuss spiritual matters with men in settings outside of the assembly, although she must still maintain a quiet and submissive disposition. We learned from 1 Timothy 2:11-12, that a woman is not to teach or exercise authority over a man in religious matters. A woman may teach children and other women (Titus 2:3-4; 2 Tim. 1:5; cf. 3:15; Acts 16:1), but according to Scripture she is not permitted to lead a class over a man. Her influence to teach a man (as in the case of Apollos) must involve submission. We now consider the most restrictive text regarding this matter...

1 Corinthians 14:34-35: The context of this text comes in a broad section that began in chapter eleven and spans through chapter fourteen. Paul first addresses some general principles regarding the demonstration of female submission to men (1 Cor. 11:1-16), then slowly

Women’s Roles and Restrictions in the New Testament

1 Corinthians 14:34-35	1 Timothy 2:11-12	Acts 18:24-26
Context: Spiritual gifts and conduct in the assembly of the church.	Context: General conduct—not specifically the assembly of the church.	Context: A private meeting outside of an assembly of the church.
Command: "Keep silent" Prohibition: A woman is not permitted to speak when the congregation is assembled as a church.	Command: Learn in "quietness" (ASV) or "quietly" (NASB).	Example: "They took him aside" and (in the Greek) "they explained to him the way of God"more accurately."
Prohibition: A woman is not permitted to speak when the congregation is assembled as a church.	Prohibition: In general conduct a woman may not teach or exercise authority over a man.	Necessary Inference: In a setting outside of the assembly of the church (such as a Bible class) a woman may discuss spiritual things with those other than her husband, while maintaining a submissive and quiet disposition.

begins to narrow the context to “when you come together as a church” (1 Cor. 11:18). In this context Paul first addresses the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor. 11:17-34) and then moves to the use of spiritual gifts in the assembly (1 Cor. 12:1-14:40). The context is undeniable—it is behavior “in the

church” (1 Cor., 11:18, 22; 12:28; 14:4, 5, 12, 19, 23, 28, 35). We should note that women are not the only ones restricted in this context. One who could speak in a foreign tongue was to “keep silent” (1 Cor.14:28) if there was no interpreter. Even the prophet, to whom something was revealed during the assembly was to “keep silent” (1 Cor. 14:30) until another prophet finished speaking. While miraculous spiritual gifts have passed away (cf. 1 Cor. 13:8-12), this passage teaches many principles regarding conduct in church assemblies in any age. For example, Paul concludes this section with the admonition, “let all things be done decently and in order” (1 Cor. 14:40). Assemblies of the church are not to be chaotic and disorganized, but reverent, orderly, and suited for worship and edification.

It is within this context the Holy Spirit leads Paul to command: “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 women to speak in church” (1 Cor. 14:34-35). A simple reading of this text should settle the whole matter. Paul declares through the Holy Spirit that a woman may not “speak in church” and to do so is “shameful.” This is not Paul’s opinion or personal preference. Only two verses after this he declared, “the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord” (1 Cor. 14:37). This is not talking about general behavior. A woman is not to be silent at all times. Rather, in the specific context of the local church assembled a woman is to “be silent.”

Challenges to this Position

Unfortunately, for advocates of the “Gender-Inclusive” movement, simple and clear truth is not enough to answer this issue. Lance Pape, the former “co-minister” with his wife Katie Hayes of West Islip Church of Christ on Long Island New York, administers a website called *Gender Justice and Churches of Christ* (www.gal328.org). In answering the challenges posed by 1 Tim. 2:11-15 and 1 Cor. 14:33b-36 he argues that understanding these texts calls for “interpretive humility, and a sensitivity to the theological undercurrents in Scripture” going on to offer Galatians 3 and Acts 15 as “good starting points for thinking theologically about gender” arguing that “1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2 do not.”¹ This is a puzzling statement! We noted in our first article the prominent use of Galatians 3:28 by advocates of this position because of its teaching that in Christ “there is neither male nor female for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (NKJV). Yet, we also noted that equality of value does not mean equality of responsibility and role (cf. the apostles vs. all Christians). Pape’s appeal to Acts 15 is curious. It says nothing about gender, but addresses the controversy over the circumcision of Gentile converts. Undoubtedly, Pape is trying to compare Jewish and Gentile equality to male and fe-

male equality, but the difference is we have no Scripture restricting Gentile roles and responsibilities. Whatever our “starting point” we must still accept all of Scripture for what it says. I would agree that we must approach Scripture with “humility” but this is not accomplished by rejecting what a text says but by carefully harmonizing Scripture with Scripture so that we might rightly divide the word (2 Tim. 2:15).

Edward Fudge addresses our text more directly, but tries to argue that this is addressing “some disorderly women who apparently are interrupting the proceedings with their questions,” going on to argue that the passage “certainly is still authoritative” but applies specifically to those who would begin to “call out” in the assembly while someone else is speaking.² This interpretation may confuse the prohibitions to the tongue speaker (14:28) and the prophet (14:30) with what is commanded regarding women (14:34-35). It is unclear whether any women had actually tried to speak, or if Paul was simply laying down the governing ordinance regarding possible behav-



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