



people could assemble for distinct purposes under which different rules would apply.

qahal)? Numbers 10:1-7 outlined the procedure by which two silver trumpets were to be used to call the Israelites to meet or advance for various purposes. When both trumpets were blown, “all the congregation (*edah*) shall gather before you at the door of the tabernacle of meeting” (10:3). However, there was some type of distinct call that summoned the *qahal*. Numbers 10:7 declared, “When convening the assembly (*qahal*), however, you shall blow without sounding an alarm” (NASB). So the same

The New Testament does not teach a method like sounding a trumpet to indicate when we are assembled for a different purpose, but the same principle may provide the answer. There must be a stated purpose that determines the reason for the assembly. Are the members assembled to go fishing?—Then they are not assembled “in the church.” Are the members assembled for a Bible study that does not constitute the church assembled?—If this is clearly stated, although a woman cannot teach over a man, a woman may discuss spiritual things with a submissive quiet disposition (Acts 18:24-26; 1 Tim. 2:11-12). If the members are assembled for the stated purposes of coming together “as a church” (cf. 1 Cor. 11:18) a woman must remain silent during the assembly of the church. In our last articles we will address some final issues raised by the so-called “gender-inclusive” movement.



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ISSUE

14.32

BULLETIN OF
THE OLSEN
PARK CHURCH
OF CHRIST

Faithful Sayings

August 5
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 Four: Questions By Kyle Pope

A key passage that challenges the objectives of the so-called “Gender-Inclusive” movement to place women in roles of leadership and preaching within churches of Christ, is First Corinthians 14:34-35. To understand how this applies to this issue we must consider some specific questions...

What Does this Command and What Does it Prohibit? The Holy Spirit leads Paul to begin this text with the command “let your women keep silent in the churches” (NKJV). Unlike the word used in 1 Timothy 2:11-12 which properly applies to a quiet disposition the word *sigao* used here is much stronger. It is in the imperative form which indicates it is a command—“women must be quiet” (Simple English NT). The nine instances of the use of this word in the New Testament clearly demonstrate its force. It is used of the disciples’ silence after God spoke from heaven (Luke 9:36); the crowd’s silence after Jesus’ answer about payment of taxes (Luke 20:26); of assemblies remaining silent to listen to a speaker (Acts 12:17; 15:12, 13); of the silence of God in concealing the mystery of the gospel in ages past (Rom. 16:25), and twice earlier in this very chapter of the tongue-speaker (1

Cor. 14:28) and the prophet (1 Cor. 14:30) who must remain silent if there was no interpreter or when another was speaking. This is absolute silence, it is not merely a quiet disposition.

To this command Paul further adds a prohibition, **“for they are not permitted to speak”** explaining further in the next verse **“it is shameful for a woman to speak in church.”** The word *laleo*, translated “to speak” in both verses is a very broad word for oral communica-

tion. Thayer defines it “to utter a voice or emit a sound.” It is used almost 300 times in the New Testament and 24 times in this chapter. Although it can be used of public speaking (1 Cor. 14:19), it is also applied to private conversations (John 4:26), or even one speaking **“to himself, and to God”** (1 Cor. 14:28). The fact that Paul adds this prohibition is important. Unlike the command to the tongue-speaker (14:28) and prophet (14:30) who were to remain silent under specific conditions (i.e. no interpreter, or when another was speaking) the prohibition defines the terms under which a woman must remain silent—“in the churches” a woman is prohibited from speaking. This is not merely leading the congregation, but speaking out at all. This prohibition is more restrictive than the command to the tongue-speaker and prophet. To advocate a position that places women in the assembly of the church preaching, leading the worship, or even offering comments is a violation of this text. However, another question arises...

What Does Paul Mean By “As The Law Also Says”?

Some see the command **“to be submissive”** as the connection Paul makes to the Law. Mike Willis in his commentary on First Corinthians writes, “The reference to the law appears to be to Genesis 3:16. ‘Unto the woman he said, ‘...thy desire shall be to thy husband and *he shall rule over thee*’” (421, emphasis MW). If Willis is correct, this parallels 1Timothy 2:11-14 where Paul commands women to learn “in quietness with all subjection” (2:11, ASV). As we noted in our second article, immediately after this command Paul offered Adam’s creation before Eve (2:13) and Eve’s sin (2:14) as the reason for male headship.

While Genesis 3:16 does show the principle of subjection, it does not illustrate that women were not permitted to speak “in the churches.” I submit that the explanation may be found elsewhere. In the Hebrew Old Testament there were two words that referred to the “congregation” of Israel—*qahal* and *edah*. Most of the time these words were used synonymously, but occasionally the word

qahal had a special meaning. There were certain foreigners and even Israelites who could be considered a part of the Israelite community in a general sense but were prohibited from *entering* the *qahal* (Deut. 23:2). Jack P. Lewis calls this sense of *qahal* the congregation as a “judicial representative of the community” (*Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, Vol. 2, p. 790). This was not just any assembly of Israel, but a special assembly of the Israelites for worship and important purposes (cf. Deut. 4:10; Judg. 20:2; 1 Sam. 17:47; 2 Chron. 1:5).

How does this relate to our study? When the Greek translation of the Old Testament produced before the time of Christ translated *qahal* it generally used the Greek word *ekklesia* (rendered “church” in the New Testament). A study of both the Hebrew and Greek Old Testaments reveals that a woman never spoke before that portion of the Israelite community called the *qahal* or the *ekklesia*. Paul’s phrase, “as the law also says” may refer to this fact in that it precisely parallels what is taught in First Corinthians 14:34-35, women were silent in the *qahal* (i.e. *ekklesia* or “church”).

When Are We “In the Church”? When one is obedient to the gospel the Lord adds him or her to the church (Acts 2:47 KJV, NKJV). Because of this “all the saints” in a local congregation (Phil. 1:1) are considered part of the “church” in that place (cf. Phil. 4:15). Yet, it is clear that while one can be *in the church* as a member of the Lord’s church (universally or locally) that does not mean that he or she is always assembled “in the church.” This is clear in several passages. Jesus commanded in Matthew 18:17 after two or three call a sinner to repentance “if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.” Obviously we can only *tell* the “church”

something when the church is assembled. Paul instructed that his epistle to the Colossians was to be read “in the church of the Laodiceans” (Col 4:16). Paul rebuked the Corinthians for having divisions among them “when you come together as a [lit. “in the”] church” (1 Cor. 11:18). The one who could speak in tongues was to be silent “in church” if there was no interpreter (1 Cor. 14:28).

So what determines when a group of Christians that are members of a local congregation are assembled “in the church” and when they are assembled for some other purpose? It is not merely being together, nor is it the nature of the activity. Every member of a local congregation could go fishing, shopping, engage in business together, or sing and study together, but that wouldn’t mean they were fishing, shopping, doing business, or even necessarily studying as a church. The Old Testament may help us with this. How did the Israelites distinguish the more general assembly of Israel (the *edah*) from the special representative assembly (called the



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