

THE WOMEN'S WORK

by

Keith Hunt

What responsibilities can women perform in the church? Are women to be ministers/elders and preachers? Can women be allowed to teach in church? Can women have "spiritual gifts" and if they can, are they allowed to use them in church services?

Are women to exercise personal evangelism? Will ladies be lower or higher than men in positions of reward in the kingdom? These questions can only be answered by a careful study of the scriptures and by looking at the examples given in God's word. The truth may surprise many.

SALVATION - EQUAL FOR BOTH SEXES!

Let it be said at the onset, as far as **salvation is concerned** there is *no difference* between Greek, Jew, Black, White - men or women. There is ONE Lord for all. Men and women must be *saved exactly the same way*. ALL have sinned - ALL need redemption - ALL need Christ's blood to justify and His life in us (through the Holy Spirit) to save us. **Both men and women are called the sons of God.** *Both will be glorified, made immortal and inherit all things.* Women are to pray, study, fast and grow in grace and knowledge as MUCH as men are to do these things. Both will be *rewarded according to their works*. If a woman has been faithful in what God has given her to do, she will be rewarded accordingly. God is no respecter of persons. Both men and women will be rewarded according to what they have done with what they were given. *All scripture asserts the truth of that mentioned above.*

But God did make men and women for *different roles in life and the church, in some respects and in some functions*. Let's find out what God wants WOMEN to do in the church.

TO TEACH GOOD THINGS

One of the greatest blessings a woman can give to the church is to be the kind of feminine woman God intended all women to be. Read I Pet. 3:1-6; I Tim. 2:9-15; Eph. 5:1-24; 1 Cor. 11:3.

Man was created to need the help of a woman. He is not all encompassing - woman was made to be a serving, inspiring, helpful companion to man (Gen. 2:18, 21-25). She was

not only to be the bearer of all children but it was through a woman that Christ was born - the savior of MAN as well as WOMAN (Matt. 1:18-25; Lk 1: 26-35 ; I Tim. 2: 15, see these passages in the Amplified Bible).

She is not only to be an example of Godly character and femininity but also to teach it to others. Paul writing to Titus told him to "teach the older women to be quiet and respectful in everything they do. They must not go around speaking evil of others and must not be heavy drinkers, but they should be TEACHERS OF GOODNESS. These OLDER WOMEN MUST TRAIN THE YOUNGER women to live quietly, to love their husbands and their children, and to be sensible and clean-minded, spending their time in their own homes, being kind and obedient to their husbands, so that the Christian faith can't be spoken against by those who know them" (Titus 2:3-6 Living Bible).

SERVICE AND GOOD WORKS

During Christ's ministry there were evidently certain women who were "rendering Him services" (Matt. 27:55 Modern Language Bible) in one way or another. Christ did not only have His immediate twelve disciples but others also who followed him (Matt. 10:1-5; Lk 10:1-2). With all those men following him, there would be ample work for the service of women to repair clothes, to cook meals, wash clothes, and all the other 101 things that women are so good at doing for men.

In Act 9:36 we read about a woman of God called Dorcas who was known for "good works and acts of charity" (RSV).

Act 16:13-16 tells us about Lydia and how she was converted, baptized and was hostess to Paul and others for a short time. She no doubt not only gave them a place to sleep but food and drink and other acts of service and kindness.

Timothy and other ministers at one time were in the need of women to help them as they preached the gospel. Paul wrote and told Timothy that "A widow who wants to become one of the special church workers should be at least sixty years old, well thought of by everyone because of the good she has done. Has she brought up her children well? Has she been kind to strangers as well as to other Christians? Has she helped those who are sick and hurt? Is she always ready to show kindness?" (I Tim. 5:9-10 Living Bible). The women chosen for this special group probably did the same kind of service that the women who followed Christ during his earthly ministry did.

WOMEN - "SPIRITUAL" ELDERS?

Was Paul speaking about "spiritual elders" in I Tim. 5:1-2? Was he instructing Timothy how to deal with women who were church *pastors* or *overseers*? The **Modern Language Bible** renders these verses - "Do not rebuke an older man but plead with him as a father, and younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and the younger women as

sisters with absolute purity." Paul was speaking of AGE - not ministerial office or function. Just before the day of Pentecost Christ's disciples were together *with the women* in the upper room. "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication"(Act 1:13,14). But there is NOTHING in these verses to prove or disprove **what** the women did or said - if indeed they did or said anything.

Some say I Cor. 11:1-6 is talking about church services and both men and women *praying and preaching* - one wearing a hat (women) and the other (men) not.

First, the "covering" Paul is speaking about is not hats but hair (v.14-16) - women are to have long hair, while men have short hair in relation to each other. **Second**, the words "church service" or "synagogue" or "meetings" can not be found in this passage, nor the words "when you come together." Praying or foretelling future events or speaking forth the word of God (as the Greek word can mean) can be done any time or any place. Paul is NOT here talking about church services.

WOMEN AS MESSENGERS?

Certainly, it is possible for God to send an angel to a woman with a message to the church about some future event, or something He wants His ministers to do. But NEVER WILL such a dream, revelation be contrary to God's inspired word as given in the Bible (Isa 8:20). If it is, then we can know it is not from God - but Satan. For Satan can also appear as an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:13-15).

Christ appeared to the two Mary's shortly after his resurrection and he gave them a message to His ministers to be, the men were to go into Galilee there Jesus would meet them (Matt. 28:5-9). This amounted to a prophecy - the two Mary's were at this time as prophetesses. God has used women as prophets - to foretell future happenings (Ex. 15:20; Judges 4:4; 2 Kings 22:14; 2 Chron. 34:22; Neh. 6:14; Isa. 8:3).

The only example in the entire Bible of a *prophetess* doing any what we call "preaching" is that of Deborah in Judges 4. The Israelites had left off obeying God - obviously, there was no man around God could use until Gideon was old enough (Judges 6:11-16) to do God's work. So God used a woman under this ONCE in many years situation. If the circumstances are such God can raise up the stones to do His work if He chose. God only used Deborah for a short time to lead and teach the Israelites - ONLY UNTIL a man came along to assume leadership. This is not "putting down" women. It is just looking at what God has said and how He has decided to do things.

Let us be willing to be honest. Nowhere in the Bible do we have ANY prophetess becoming a *priest, apostle, church minister/overseer or elder*. Nowhere in the Bible can we find a prophetess *preaching or teaching* from the Temple or Church meetings. Never to date has God once used a prophetess to write ANY book of the Bible. No other so-called "inspired" books by women or men have been handed down to us except those

in the Bible. *Prophetesses were/are* used by God, but to date God has never used a prophetess to WRITE "inspired books" - any church CLAIMING it has a *prophetess* as its founder or has "inspired books" written by a claimed prophetess does so without one word of scriptural background authority.

Prophetesses were used as MESSENGERS to the church. They were used VERBALLY by God.

NEW TESTAMENT PROPHETESSES !

There are only TWO passages in the New Testament where the word "prophetess" is used. *The first is in Luke 2:36-37*. Anna, a prophetess, served God in the temple with prayers and fastings. It does not say she PREACHED or was a TEACHER in the temple.

She did on one special occasion talk to others about Jesus (v-38). This was on the day that Joseph and Mary had brought Jesus to the temple to dedicate and buy him back (redeem) - as was required by the law(Ex. 13:2,13,15; Lev.12) - and being blessed by Simeon(v-34). It was certainly fitting that Anna, "...began thanking God and telling everyone in Jerusalem who had been awaiting the coming of the saviour that the Messiah had finally arrived."(verse 38, Living Bible).

Notice, she only told those who were also looking for the arrival of the Messiah - she did not "preach" or "teach" in any official way. All women can talk of Jesus to all who look for salvation, on ANY day of the week. They can talk of Christ before church and after church. There is nothing in this example to prove that women should be MINISTERS, ELDERS, PASTOR/TEACHERS in church.

The only other place in the New Testament where the word "prophetess" is used is in Rev. 2:20 - where God tells the church of Thyatira, "I have a few things against thee, because you sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to TEACH and to seduce My servants to commit fornication." God goes on to say He will cast her and the ones following her into tribulation if they do not repent(v-32). Not a good commentary at all. God said the CHURCH of Thyatira was PERMITTING this woman Jezebel to teach and lead people astray.

TO TEACH OR NOT TO TEACH?

After being willing to look at all the verses in the Bible pertaining to *women, woman, wife, prophetess*, we come to TWO plain passages on the question of *women as preachers, ministers or church teachers*. These two passages of scripture are I Cor. 14:34-35 and 1 Tim.2:11-12.

Paul says in I Cor. 14:34, "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak." Now, is Paul saying that a woman cannot say "hello" to

anyone? Is she not permitted to have a conversation with anyone while she is in church? Is she not to speak if someone talks to her? Hardly. This was not the problem at Corinth. Paul was answering the question about women being *teachers, elders, ministers* over men in and *during church services*, as well as a woman who had a "spiritual gift" - when or when not to use it.

I Tim. 2:12 says - "But I suffer not a woman to teach." Is Paul saying that a woman *cannot teach her children, cannot teach in a secular school, college or at the YWCA*? No! This verse must be put with the passage in I Cor. 14:34. Then the truth is clear.

Paul is talking about the DUTY of a women **during church meetings, when they "came together"**

Notice the whole context of 1 Corinthians 14. It was when outsiders may attend and hear and see what was being done. When Paul was writing to Timothy it was to inform him, "...how you should behave yourself in the house of God..."(1 Tim.3:15).

The Living Bible renders 1 Tim. 2:12 as "I never let a woman teach men or lord it over them. Let them be silent in your church meetings..." 1 Cor. 14:34 is translated as - "...women should be silent during the church meetings. They are not to take part in the discussion, for they are subordinate to men as the scriptures also declare."

Some would have us believe that Paul is only talking to Jewish churches about a Jewish custom. This can hardly be the case, when the church at Corinth was predominantly GENTILE, and Paul uses the plural - "churches" - not just one church, but all the churches of God. Paul was desirous that all the churches be run "decently and in order" (verse 40). "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints" (v-33).

The letters to Timothy are known as "pastoral letters" by the Bible Commentaries. They contain instruction to the *pastors* on church administration - how things should be run in the churches at large. Paul's instruction was inspired of God, and is applicable as much today as in Paul's lifetime.

MATTHEW HENRY'S BIBLE COMMENTARY says this on I Cor. 14:34-35.

Here the apostle...

Enjoins silence on their women in PUBLIC ASSEMBLIES, and to such a degree that THEY MUST NOT ASK QUESTIONS for their own information in the church, but ASK THEIR HUSBANDS AT HOME. They are to LEARN IN SILENCE with all subjection; but, says the apostle, I SUFFER THEM NOT TO TEACH (I Tim. 2:11,12)

They are not permitted to speak (v-34) in the church, neither in praying nor PROPHECYING. The connection seems PLAINLY to INCLUDE THE LAST - in the limited sense in which it is taken in this chapter; that is, for preaching or interpreting scripture by inspiration. And indeed, for a woman to PROPHECY, in this sense, were to teach, does not so well befit her state of subjection. A teacher of others has in that respect a superiority over them, which is not allowed the woman over the man, nor must she therefore be allowed to teach in a congregation.....uttering HYMNS inspired were not teaching. There were women who had spiritual gifts of this sort in that age of the church.

Why should they have this gift, if it must never be publicly exercised? They were not ordinarily to teach, not so much as to DEBATE AND ASK QUESTIONS IN THE CHURCH, but learn in silence there; and, if difficulties occurred, ASK THEIR OWN HUSBANDS AT HOME. Note - as it is the woman's duty to learn in subjection, it is the man's duty to keep up his superiority, by being able to instruct her. If it be her duty to ask her husband at home, it is his concern and duty to endeavour at least to be able to answer her inquiries. If it be a shame for her to speak in the church, where she should be silent, it is a shame for him to be silent when he should speak, not being able to give an answer when she asks him at home.

We have here the reason of this injunction. It is God's law and commandment that they should be under obedience (v-34); they are placed in subordination to the man; and it is a shame for them to do anything that looks like an affectation of changing ranks (which speaking in public seemed to imply)....as would public teaching much more: so that the apostle concludes it was a shame for women to speak in the church, in the assembly. Note - our spirit and conduct should be suitable to our rank. The natural distinctions God has made, we should observe. The woman was made subject to the man, and she should keep station, and be content with it. For this reason they must be silent in the church, not set up for teachers; for this is setting up for superiority over the man... " (end of quote).

We may also note here the spiritual gifts of TONGUES, INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES, PROPHECY, REVELATION - all of which may be given to women as well as men. Paul in 1 Cor.12 verse 1,7,11, makes it plain that these gifts are to ALL as the Spirit distributes. But such gifts are not to be exercised by the women DURING the church meetings or assemblies. Any woman who would claim she is compelled to use such gifts, Paul would answer, THE SPIRITS OF THE PROPHETS ARE SUBJECT TO THE PROPHETS (v-32). God does not give a gift to His child which cannot be controlled by His child and controlled as to when it may be used.

The other question not raised here is: if women are to learn in silence in church and ask questions to their husbands at home - what about the WIDOWS and UNMARRIED WOMEN who have no husband to ask? Paul's instruction on keeping silent in church

meetings is to ALL women - married, widows, single. The woman who has no physical husband certainly does have a SPIRITUAL husband - the elder/s of the church. They are the ones to whom these women should direct their questions on Biblical understanding.

MATTHEW HENRY' S COMMENTS on 1 TIM. 2:11-15 are also very pertinent:

"Women must LEARN - learn the principles of their religion, learn CHRIST, learn the scriptures; they must not think that their sex excuses them from that learning which is necessary for salvation.

Women must be silent and submissive, and subject, and NOT USURP AUTHORITY. The reason given is, because ADAM was FIRST FORMED, then EVE - out of him - to denote her subordination to him, to be a HELP, MEET for him. And as she was last in the creation, which is the one reason for her subjection, so she was first in the transgression; and that is another reason. Adam was not deceived (that is - not first).

The serpent did not immediately set upon him but the woman was first in the transgression; (2 Cor.11:3) and it was part of the sentence - THY DESIRE SHALL BE TO THY HUSBAND, AND HE SHALL RULE OVER THEE. (Gen. 3:16)

But it is a word of comfort (v-15) that they who continue in sobriety shall be SAVED IN CHILDBEARING, or WITH childbearing. The Messiah, who was born of a woman, should break the serpent's head (Gen. 3:15) - or - the sentence which women are under for sin shall be no bar to their acceptance with Christ, IF they CONTINUE in faith, and charity, and holiness, with sobriety.

Here we observe According to St. Paul, women must be learners, and are not allowed to be public teachers in the church; for teaching is an office of authority; whereas she must not usurp authority over the man, but is to be in silence But, notwithstanding this prohibition, good women may and ought to teach their children at home the principles of God's teaching. Timothy from a child had known the holy scriptures; and who should teach him but his mother and grandmother? (2 Tim. 3:15)

Aquilla and his WIFE PRISCILLA expounded unto Apollas the way of God more perfectly; but then they did it PRIVATELY, for THEY TOOK HIM UNTO THEM (Acts 18:26). Here are two very good reasons given for man's authority over the woman, and her subjection to the man (v-13,14). Adam was FIRST formed, then EVE; she was created for the man, and not the man for the woman (I Cor. 11:9). Then she was deceived, and brought man into the transgression..." (end of quote).

In Romans 16:3 we see that PRISCILLA was a HELPER in Christ. A woman can and should be a worker for the gospel WITHIN the bounds God has decreed. As we can see

from Acts 18:26, a WOMAN can on a personal basis be an instrument for the spread of the Gospel and teaching of God's word as much as any man.

The teaching of God on the ROLE that women are to take in the Church may not be popular with the "WOMAN'S LIBERATION" movement, but it is the truth of God and God is LOVE and WISDOM. He knows what is best for us and why in this life we were created MALE and FEMALE. God is the DESIGNER and LAWGIVER - when we are willing to obey His laws governing every facet of our lives, then we shall have happiness, peace and joy.

God has given us instruction on how the family relationship - husband, wife, children - should be run (Eph. 5:21-33; I Cor.11:3; Col. 3:18-21; Gen. 3:16). He has revealed to us the roles each is to fulfil in the family structure, and He has revealed the role that **women** are to take in the function of the church.

Let us willingly obey, so Christ may present the church to himself "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph.5:27).

POSTSCRIPT

Since the writing of this article I have read and studied the comments of 1 Corinthians 14 by ALBERT BARNES in his commentary called *Barnes' Notes on the New Testament*. His comments on this whole chapter are very good indeed, and it is worthwhile for the reader to take the time to read those comments. It is possible your public library will have the one volume New Testament commentary by Barnes.

Here I will only give his comments on verses 34,35.

ALBERT BARNES One Vol. Commentary on the New Testament, page 782.

Let your women keep silent etc. This rule is positive, explicit, and universal. There is no ambiguity in the expressions; and there can be no difference of opinion, one would suppose, in regard to their meaning. The sense evidently is, THAT IN ALL THOSE THINGS WHICH HE HAD SPECIFIED, *the women were to keep silence; they were not to take part.* He had discoursed of speaking *foreign languages*, and of *prophecy*, and the evident sense is, that in regard to all these they were to keep silence, or were not to engage in them. These pertained solely to the MALE PORTION of the congregation. These things constituted the business of the PUBLIC TEACHING; and in this the female part of the congregation were to be silent. "They were not to teach the people, nor were they to interrupt those who were speaking" *Rosenmuller*. It is probable that on pretence of being inspired, the women had assumed the office of public teachers...He here argues the practice ON EVERY GROUND; forbids it altogether; and shows that on every

consideration it was to be regarded as improper for them even so much as TO ASK A QUESTION in time of public service...the force of the whole is, that ON EVERY CONSIDERATION it was improper, and to be expressly prohibited, for women to conduct the devotions of the church. It does not refer to those only who claimed to be inspired, but to all; it does not refer merely to acts of public preaching, but to ALL ACTS OF SPEAKING, OR EVEN ASKING QUESTIONS, *when the church is assembled for public worship*. No rule in the New Testament is more positive than this; and however plausible may be the reasons which may be argued for disregarding it, and for suffering women to take part in conducting *public worship*, yet the AUTHORITY of the apostle Paul is POSITIVE. and his MEANING **cannot** be MISTAKEN. Compare 1 Tim.2:11,12.

To be under obedience. To be subject to their husbands; to acknowledge the superior authority of the man. Note, chapter 11:3.

As also saith the law. Genesis 3:16, "And thy desire shall be to thy husband. and he shall rule over thee."

And if they shall learn anything. If anything has been spoken which they do not understand; or if on any particular subject they desire more full information, *let them inquire of their husbands in their own dwelling*. They may there converse freely; and their inquiries will not be attended with the irregularity and disorder which would occur should they interrupt the order and solemnity of public worship.

For it is a shame. It is disreputable and shameful; it is a breach of propriety. Their station in life demands modesty, humility, and they should be free from the ostentation of appearing so much in public as to take part in the public services of TEACHING and PRAYING.

It does not become their rank in life; it is not fulfilling the object which God evidently intended them to fill. He has appointed **men** to rule; to hold offices; to instruct and govern the church; and it is improper that women should assume that office upon themselves. This evidently and OBVIOUSLY refers to the church assembled for PUBLIC WORSHIP, in the ordinary and regular acts of devotion. There the assembly is made up of males and females, of old and young, and there it is improper for them to take part in conducting the exercises. BUT THIS CANNOT BE INTERPRETED AS MEANING that it is improper for females to speak or to pray in meetings of their own sex, assembled for prayer or for benevolence; nor that it is improper for a female to speak or to pray in a Sabbath-school. Neither of these come under the apostle's idea of a church. And in such meetings, no rule of propriety or of the Scriptures is violated in their speaking for the edification of each other, or in leading in social prayer... (emphasis his and mine).

After all that has been said, some may still want to argue that women with *spiritual gifts* are excluded from those women who are to keep silent in the church *during public divine services*. My answer and my question to such arguments is: If women are allowed in *divine public services*, to use the gift of *revelation, prophecy*(inspired oracles of God), *tongues, interpretation of tongues*, then WHO ARE THEY THAT ARE TO KEEP SILENT? Are they those who would want to talk about their new house decorating plans, or aunt Sue's visit, or what happened at the mid-week garage sale? Most know that such "chit-chat" is not for the Sabbath hours, let alone for divine public services.

The structure and flow of Paul's instructions to the Corinthians in this chapter fourteen, can give no credence to the notion that *women with spiritual gifts can speak* while women *without such gifts* are to be **silent**. If you have none of the spiritual gifts of the Spirit why would you want to speak to the church during public devotional services, what purpose would your speaking be for, what edification for the church would it bring?

Paul is plainly emphasizing two points in this whole chapter - **1)** Everything said must be for *building up, edifying and instructing* all that are present. **2)** Everything is to be done *decently and in order, no confusion* is to prevail. The only speaking with whichever gifts of the Spirit are used, is to be for EDIFICATION. Paul has already stressed that point, so it would be redundant for him to be in verses 34,35 expressing his view that women with only "chit-chat" talk were to keep silent. And if that was what he wanted to say, he could have easily used language that spelled it out clearly - words such as: "Those women *without spiritual gifts* are to keep silent, they must not even ask questions but should ask their husbands at home."

No such words are used by Paul for the simple reason that he was not trying to convey such a teaching as women with only unedifying, no purpose, "six days of the week" talk were to remain silent. The truth of the matter is what Albert Barnes and others could see from the whole context of this chapter, from the way Paul had systematically talked about the use of *certain spiritual gifts in public services without any mention of male or female, then knowing that his readers would naturally, after hearing his rules, ask about where the women with such gifts would fit into the conducting of public divine services, he gives his answer to that question in verses 34 and 35.*

He anticipated that question (where do women with spiritual gifts fit into conducting public services?). He led up to his answer in verses 32 and 33 showing that anyone with a gift of the Spirit is NOT A ROBOT, *controlled by the Spirit* to the point where one says, "I could not help myself, the Spirit made me do it, the Spirit made me speak."

On the contrary said Paul, the person with a Spiritual gift is in COMPLETE CONTROL of that gift. Someone with the natural gift of singing can control that gift, can sing or not sing as they determine. I have the natural gift of being able to YODEL. I can determine at any time and in any situation, in any public meeting, to either stand(or sit) and yodel or not yodel. The ability to yodel does not control me, I control it! So it was in Paul's mind with

any of the gifts of the Spirit - the person having them was also able to control them, *the gift did not control the person, but the person controlled the gift.*

Paul went on to show that any UN-controlled use of these gifts (and many using them at the same time, as he had previously mentioned) was CONFUSION, and such confusion was NOT FROM GOD - the Lord was the author of order and peace, not confusion. Order and peace was the hallmark of ALL the churches of the saints. It should be clear from this that the church at Corinth was ONE SINGLE EXCEPTION TO ALL THE OTHER CHURCHES OF GOD. They were the "black sheep of the family" the "odd one out", the "exception to the norm", and needed to be instructed and corrected in the way of the Lord more fully on the matter of how and when spiritual gifts were to be used in the **public** worship hour.

After laying down all the instructions, guide lines, and rules of using spiritual gifts in public worship, Paul then answers the obvious question about women with such gifts. They controlled the gift, the gifts did not control them, and as these gifts were to be used for TEACHING, for EDIFYING all present (male, female, young and old), THIS WAS THE MAN'S WORK IN PUBLIC DIVINE SERVICES, and women PERIOD, SHOULD KEEP SILENT! EVEN TO THE POINT THAT IF THEY HAD ANY QUESTIONS ON THE THINGS BEING TAUGHT, THEY SHOULD HOLD THEIR PEACE AND ASK THEIR HUSBANDS AT HOME, NOT THE MINISTER/S AFTER SERVICES, BUT THEIR HUSBANDS!

THE WHOLE SPIRITUAL STRUCTURE OF GOD IS BEING TAUGHT HERE - IN THE CHURCH AND OUT OF THE CHURCH! The minister is not to be the answering machine for all the women at all times. **This is a lesson, this is instruction, this is correction if you will, to ministers also.**

They need to realize God wants all family men to be spiritual head of their wives and children. Their wives and their children need to look to them for the answers to their spiritual questions. If they cannot answer then they need to ask the minister/s, then instruct their wives and children.

We need to deeply LEARN that God is the God of LAW, He is the God of ORDER, He is the God of PEACE. God the Father is Spiritual HEAD of everyone. He is the head of Christ. Jesus said He came not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him. He said the words that He spoke were not His own but were the words of Him that sent Him - the Father's words. Jesus is spiritual HEAD of every man (including all ministers). The man is spiritual HEAD of the wife. That is what 1 Corinthians 11 and verse 3 is all about! By the same token we can say that the woman is spiritual HEAD of her children (they are usually the ones that spend more time teaching and training the children). God has set law and order and peace within the church in the same way He has set law and order and peace within the home. Under certain situations within those two very important God ordained structures, there are forms and principles and rules to follow, laid down by the

Lord for the end result of producing PEACE and not confusion.

Sometimes carnal human nature does not like the way God wants things done, or the laws He implements, sometimes our nature thinks they are "strange" or "unfair" or even "sexist." What we have to believe and practice is that we do not walk by sight in this Christian life, but by FAITH! We look through a glass darkly now as Paul said. One day we shall see face to face - we shall see clearly that the ways of the Lord are right and just and good.

We must, if we are to be the children of God, and brothers and sisters to Christ Jesus, develop and cultivate within us the VERY MIND of Christ (Phil.2:5). And His mind always said: "Not my will be done but your(the Father's) will be done."

FOR THOSE WHO MAY DESIRE TO STUDY THIS SUBJECT IN FULL DEPTH I RECOMMEND THE FOLLOWING TWO BOOKS:

1. *MAN AND WOMAN IN BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE* by James B. Hurley, Published by Zondervan Publishing House.

2. *WOMEN IN THE CHURCH* by Samuele Bacchiocchi, obtainable from the author at: Biblical Perspectives, 4569 Lisa Lane Berrien Springs. MI 49103, USA

I do not agree with ever sentence in the above books, but their overall teaching is I believe the truth of the matter. They are two very scholastic works on the subject at hand.

SECOND POSTSCRIPT

If some still do not understand the specifics of 1 Cor.14:34,35 in connection with questions like: "Are women permitted to sing a song, or read a selected portion of scripture, during public divine services?" Then let me answer that question and also the question about women *praying during the public service*.

Paul in this chapter is talking about people in the church using their tongue to TEACH, to INSTRUCT, to EDIFY through instructions THE WORD, the MESSAGES of the Lord. To his mind this teaching could come through various uses of spiritual gifts, but it was still TEACHINGS FROM God.

You may be given a REVELATION from the Lord, but it was still teaching to edify and instruct. You may have a DOCTRINE to expound, but it was still a teaching. You may have a PROPHECY to elucidate on, but it was still a teaching.

You may have a PSALM (the psalms of the Bible were originally a teaching of various truths spoken), but it was still a teaching. You may have a TONGUE, or an INTERPRETATION, but it was still a teaching from God.

The context in all this is *TEACHING*, and on that issue of teaching the women were to remain silent in public services.

But for a woman to SING a song or to READ a selected portion of scripture and sit down without any common or amplified expounding, can not properly be classified as "teaching" in the context that Paul was using to the Corinthians.

Nearly all commentators on this topic find no contradiction of these verses in letting women sing or read scripture, in public divine worship services. Neither do I.

Now concerning PRAYER in divine services. Some could argue the word prayer is not used in 1 Cor.14 and that it should not be classified as "teaching." The last idea could be debated strongly by both sides of the issue. I will not enter that debate because there is a *very specific verse* of instruction from Paul on this topic. Most will not see it as a specific when reading the English translations of the New Testament because it is hidden in the understanding of the Greek, which was not conveyed over into the English translations. The verse of scripture I refer to is found in 1 Timothy 2:8.

Many of the things Paul wrote to Timothy were for the purpose that he should know "how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God...."(chapter 3:15, first letter). Notice the first 8 verses of chapter two. The Greek for "I will therefore" is better rendered "It is my direction." This was a direction of Paul inspired by the Holy Spirit. It was not a *suggestion*, or a *wish*, or a "do if you like to" but a DIRECTION from Paul. His direction was that MEN pray everywhere, not just in a certain local church only. The word "men" some would immediately say is GENERIC for "mankind." But is that so? No it is not when you study the Greek.

Let me give you what *W.E. VINE* had in part, to say about this word:
"ANER....is never used of the female sex; it stands (a) in distinction from a woman... "
 (Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, page 706).

Paul is being VERY specific in this verse. He does not spell it all out for us. He does not tell us here WHEN, at what times, only the men are to pray, but there obviously WAS A TIME IN HIS MIND THAT ONLY MEN SHOULD PRAY!

We are left to try to understand from his other writings and teachings WHEN this time of only men praying was to be.

With what he wrote about women keeping silent in public worship services (part study of this paper), I believe the only time then that MEN *only should do the praying* must be

during the service when women are not to teach but to remain silent. I see no other possible time for this direction to be employed other than during the public divine service of the Sabbath days.

FOR WOMEN ONLY

Among all the talk about this "silent women" issue, I would like to address just the ladies and try to put this topic in proper perspective. What, when it comes down to the bottom line is the TIME length of the issue, as found in the discussion concerning 1 Cor.14:34 and 1 Tim.2: 11 ,12?

Paul wrote the letters to Timothy mainly, "that you may know how you ought to behave yourself in the house of God, which is the CHURCH OF GOD ..." (1 Tim.3:15). Much instruction on how he should teach, direct, and guide in his ministry within the context of the church. 1 Cor.14 is even more specific within its context of the church. Note verses 4,5,15-17,19. Note carefully verse 23-25. See verse 26,28. What could be clearer? Surely a young child can see it. The CONTEXT is "the whole church come together into one place...and there come in one that believes not...when you come together.....if there be no interpreter, let him keep silent in the church...." The context is an official PUBLIC CHURCH SERVICE!

Now ask yourselves: How many HOURS A WEEK is that taking up? Maybe ONE, maybe TWO, maybe a little more if there are two Sabbath days in the week (one an annual Sabbath). But on the AVERAGE, round figures we shall say TWO HOURS. How many hours are there in the week? Simple arithmetic - $24 \times 7 = 168$. Two hours from 168 = 166. Two hours is just about NOTHING when compared to 166 hours.

I want you to FORGET about the two hours. I'm not entering that realm and debate here, I've already done so. I want you to FOCUS on the 166 hours. Let's put things in true perspective ladies.

Are you women just as much a child of God as I am? Answer as clear as the sun in a cloudless day, Gal.3:26-29; 2 Cor.6:17,18; Rom.8:14,16,17. All are to live by every word of God. All will stand before the judgment seat of Christ. God says He is no respecter of persons. All will be rewarded according to our works. When it comes to SALVATION and REWARDS both men and women stand on EQUAL ground. Are the gifts of the Spirit ONLY for MEN? Oh, not at all!! Look at 1 Cor.12. Verse one Paul was writing to the BRETHREN, not just the males. Verse seven from the Greek reads: "But to EACH is given the manifestation of the Spirit for PROFIT." And verse 11, "But all these things operates the one and the same Spirit, dividing separately to EACH according as he wills" (from the Greek by Berry's Interlinear).

So putting aside a small little average of two hours a week (just forget about the debate on that small crumb of time and focus on the BIG picture), there are 166 HOURS for you

to BE USED BY THE LORD WITH THE GIFTS HE GIVES YOU! Wow!, I call that IMPORTANT. I call that BIG TIME USE for the Lord and His work.

JERUSALEM EXAMPLE

Turn to Acts chapter 8. A persecution arose against the "church" at Jerusalem, not the men, but the church. All were scattered abroad except the apostles. All means all, not just the men, but ALL! Now notice verse FOUR. "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where PREACHING THE WORD."

There it is, read it again. Simple to understand. Men(single and married). Women(single and married), Widowers and Widows, male and female teens. They were all scattered and they all went out teaching and preaching the word to others where they went. This was NOT the context of a 1 Cor.14. This was *PERSONAL evangelism!* And how may it have been done? Perhaps some ladies stopped to talk about Jesus to the merchants along the roads. Perhaps some ladies talked about the Kingdom to Inn keepers and their families. Maybe they went to the markets and spread the word of Christ there to all who would listen. Then they may have talked about the Lord after the Synagogue services to those attending. They may have spread the word through the local PTA club(if they had any back then). Maybe they stood on the street corners and asked people if they wanted to hear some "really good news, the best you've ever heard." Well you let your imagination run wild for a moment as to how they ALL spread the word.

NOW FOR TODAY

At least on the average, 166 HOURS (well I know you have to sleep, if you are like us men, but you get the point) to be used by the Lord to do His work with the abilities and gifts He has given you. And for some of you who do not have to work OUTSIDE the home, that can be quite a bit more than a lot of men are given or have at their disposal. Maybe you may want to stand on the corner with literature to hand out and talk to people about the faith, who may stop(men, women, teens etc.). Maybe you want to start a neighbourhood Bible Study(with men and women attending) where YOU are the leader and chair person. Perhaps you prefer to write articles for the religious page of your local newspaper on Biblical topics. Then there maybe a religious magazine you may want to write articles for, to teach others the way of the Lord. Perhaps there is some MAN that could be used mightily of Lord but he needs a little more instructions in "the way of the God more perfectly"(see Acts 18:24-26), and you can help him find that more perfect way. Getting the picture? I think so! None of the above are in a 1 Cor.14 context.

Let's suppose you are teaching a class of men and women in a community college during the evening hours. It does not matter what the class is, but many are of a spiritual minded attitude. They know a little about your "different" religion. One evening for whatever the reason a conversation comes up about religion. Most want you to tell them about your faith, the others are willing also to let you speak. Would you? Oh, I HOPE SO! This is not

a 1 Cor.14 context, no need to hold back! Go for it, ask God to INSPIRE you preach forth the oracles of God loud and clear. Maybe someone will say, "Almost you persuade me to be a Christian." Perhaps with some personal Bible studies they will(either men or women).

Say I am invited to conduct lectures at a Bible College on "The laws of the first five books." I have done it many times we shall say for this example, and my wife has been through it all again and again. She has good notes, knows the course as well as I do. Likes to attend just to meet others who want to talk about the Bible. One day she is there with everyone else and I am still to arrive. But I have a flat tire. I call to tell her I will be late. Now she knows the course as well as I do. The class must keep on schedule. There are men and women in the class. I would NOT hesitate to ask her to take my place and start the class until I arrive. No hesitation at all! This is NOT a 1 Cor. 14 context.

Writing articles for a religious magazine is personal evangelism, not a 1 Cor. 14 context. Arranging a neighbourhood "bible study"(with men and women) is NOT a 1 Cor.14 context. Teaching and instructing over the *Internet* and through *E-mail* clubs is NOT a 1 Cor.14 context. Teaching a religious class in some college to men as well as women is NOT a 1 Cor.14 context. Whatever the truth of the matter is concerning 1 Cor.14 and 1 Tim.2 we have discussed, the above I'm mentioned is NOT the context Paul was dealing with.

Let's get things in true perspective, a few little, petite, itsy-bitsy hours in the week is like NOTHING to the rest of the week in which you can be used in so many ways to do the work of the Lord.

Paul deeply appreciated the ladies that did so much in the work of Christ, even calling Priscilla "my helper"(Greek means, fellow-worker or co-worker), Rom.16:3. Then look at wonderful Phebe(name means, pure or radiant as the moon), she was a servant of the church at Cencrea. Exactly the service she rendered is not given in detail. But her work was so highly thought of by Paul that he stated to the Christians at Rome, "That you receive her in the Lord, as becomes saints, AND that you ASSIST HER if WHATSOEVER BUSINESS she has NEED OF YOU..."(Rom.16:2).

We also need to get the true perspective about Paul and women. It was the SAME perspective as that which the Lord Himself had when walking this earth. A perspective of TRUTH, and COMPASSION, KINDNESS, THANKFULNESS, and LOVE.

Now, why worry or fret(I sure hope you do not) over a few hours WHEN YOU HAVE AT LEAST ALL THE REST TO WORK THE WORK OF GOD.

Go to it ladies, the world is just waiting for you to turn it upside down and right way up. Thank you for your help, teaching. inspiration and patience towards us men.

.....