

Gender Roles In The Assembly

CONCLUSION

OUTLINE

- Definition of Assembly
- Background:
 - The history of our studies of this topic
 - Lesson Learned
- Study & Findings:
 - Guidelines: How to study the Bible
 - Summary Level Findings
 - Contradicting Passages?
 - Other Issues Against Traditional or Complimentarian Views
 - Possible approaches
 - The Elders' Conclusions
- Path Forward:
 - Previous Roles For Women In The Assemblies
 - Current Roles For Women In The Assemblies
 - Implementation
- Closing

ASSEMBLY:

A meeting of two or more Christians for the purpose of pursuing God, and may include Bible study, prayer, communion, or singing.

- Note that this does not mention “worship”
- Nor does it mention “class”
- Plus it does not mention location
- And it does not include the leadership of the congregation

BACKGROUND & IMPORTANCE

- 2013

- Women answering questions during sermon & issues raised
- Elders' studied the issue & presented lessons to the congregation which said, among other things:
 - The Bible does not say that all women everywhere must remain silent and cannot teach men
 - We will have women “prophecy”, as appropriate, and we will do that in what we consider worship or class settings. (In 1st Corinthians 14:3 Paul said that prophecy means to “strengthen, encourage, and comfort the church.”)

- 2017/2018

- Youth takeover where women prophesied – and issues were raised
- Elders re-studied the issue
- 16 Week study: High level overview; in-depth studies; wrap-up; listening sessions; private meetings; conclusion

LESSON LEARNED

Findings that aren't implemented are soon forgotten

- The path forward was stated in 2013
- Little has been done to implement it
- Almost 5 years later we are still on Square One

100% Utilization Of The Gifts Of The Spirit



0% Utilization Of The Gifts Of The Spirit

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GUIDELINES FOR BIBLE STUDY

1. No Contradictions:

- Scripture is God's word. God does not contradict Himself, nor does Scripture
- If our understanding of one passage appears to be in conflict with another, we don't understand it or them correctly

2. Context & Consistency

- Understand the context of the passage
- Treat everything in the context consistently – don't pick and choose
- It has to fit with the rest of the chapter, book, testament, and Bible

3. No Blinders:

- Don't read the Bible through our "traditional" lenses
- Read to understand how God intended for us to live our lives

FINDINGS: MAIN QUESTION

Do 1st Cor 14:34 & 35 and 1st Timothy 2: 11 & 12 mean that women everywhere must remain silent and cannot teach men?

As we will see, using the study guidelines it is fairly straightforward to realize that reading those passages in that manner is improper as it puts them in conflict with other passages in the same chapter, in other books by the same author, and in many other books of the Bible.

FINDINGS: SECOND QUESTION

If the answer to the main question is “no”, then what do those passages mean?

It is highly probable that Paul was countering early gnostic claims as well as addressing issues arising from pagan temple worship practices that were rampant in the cities to which he wrote – Corinth and Ephesus.

- We must also remember if we find ourselves in the same situation, having a woman within our body who is boisterous, refusing to yield to scripture, violently demanding her way or the highway, then she is to have no part in teaching and must instead humble herself in quietness.
- There is also a principle being taught on how we are to engage in relationship with one another that promotes spiritual growth by putting the needs of others above our own.

FINDINGS: Contradicting Passages?

The Only Passages Which Say Women Are To Be Silent or Cannot Teach

- 1st Cor 14: 34 & 35 “Women should remain silent”
- 1st Timothy 2:11 & 12 “I do not permit ... teach”

Our traditional approach of reading the above passages as saying all women everywhere must be silent in the assemblies ignores the fact that doing so causes them to contradict many other passages in the Bible where women took a leading role.

Some Of The Many Passages Where Women Led or Taught

- 1st Cor 14: 26–33 Women & men praying, singing, & teaching
- 1st Cor 11: 5 Women praying & prophesying
- Acts 18: 26 Priscilla taught Apollos
- Acts 2: 17 Sons and daughters will prophesy
- Micah 6: 4 Miriam led God’s people
- Judges 4: 4 Deborah was a prophet
- 2nd Kings 22 Huldah was a prophet
- Rom 16: 1 Phoebe – a minister or deacon
- Rom 16:7 Junia – an apostle
- Colossians 3:16 Singing is teaching & admonishing
- John 20: 18 Mary was told by Jesus to deliver the message that He was risen

FINDINGS: Other Issues Against Traditional or Complementarian Views

- There is no differentiation in scripture between locations for assemblies. In other words, the idea of “class time” vs “worship” is one that man has contrived to get around a perceived issue.
- Spiritual gifts are not ever connected with gender in the New Testament. Again, in Galatians 3: 28 Paul said “...nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus”. So why are we not using all of the gifts?

POSSIBLE APPROACHES

Study Guidelines

1. FACE VALUE: The difficult passages mean exactly what they appear to say, & women cannot speak or teach in any fashion in any assembly, men must pray with their hands raised, and women cannot wear gold, pearls, or expensive clothing
2. PICK & CHOOSE: Out of a list of 7 things in only 5 verses we could choose to accept only 2 of them – the ones about women being silent & teaching, & ignore the rest
3. SPECIFIC ISSUES: The two difficult passages are dealing with specifics in the two churches – Ephesus & Corinth

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THE ELDERS' CONCLUSION

- The only answer that is consistent with the ground rules of studying Scripture is that Paul's statements in 1st Corinthians and 1st Timothy are to be understood as addressing issues specific to those churches – Corinth and Ephesus.
- In other words, Paul did not tell us that all women everywhere must remain silent and cannot teach men.
- Therefore women can scripturally do everything a man can do in the assembly. In other words, it is scripturally appropriate for a woman to preach, lead singing, make announcements, pass communion, read scripture, teach a class, lead the congregation in prayer, etc.
- We realize that this doesn't fit with our traditions. But our aim as leaders of this church is to apply teachings in a way that is consistent with Scripture, regardless of tradition.

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ASSEMBLY:

A meeting of two or more Christians for the purpose of pursuing God, and may include Bible study, prayer, communion, or singing.

NO DIFFERENCES:

- There are no differences between locations for assemblies
- There are no differences between types of assemblies
- There are no differences between times of assemblies

ROLES WOMEN FILL IN THE ASSEMBLIES: PREVIOUSLY

ACTIVITY	AUDITORIUM	CLASSROOM	SMALL GROUP
Preach/Teach/Prophecy	No (Yes)	No & Yes	No & Yes
Lead Singing	No	No & Yes	No & Yes
Teach & Admonish (Sing)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lead a prayer	No	No	Yes
Communion Table prayer Pass aisle to pew Pass down pew	No No Yes		
Read Scripture	No	Yes	Yes
Make announcements From podium/up front From seat	No Yes	No Yes	No Yes

ROLES WOMEN FILL IN THE ASSEMBLIES: **AS OF NOW**

ACTIVITY	AUDITORIUM	CLASSROOM	SMALL GROUP
Preach/Teach/Prophecy	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lead Singing	Yes	Yes	Yes
Teach & Admonish (Sing)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lead a prayer	Yes	Yes	Yes
Communion Table prayer Pass aisle to pew Pass down pew	Yes Yes Yes		
Read Scripture	Yes	Yes	Yes
Make announcements From podium/up front From seat	Yes Yes	Yes Yes	Yes Yes

100% Utilization Of The Gifts Of The Spirit



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Women
Answering
Questions
& Concerns
Raised

India, Ukraine, Camp, Honduras,
Summer Mission Trip, etc

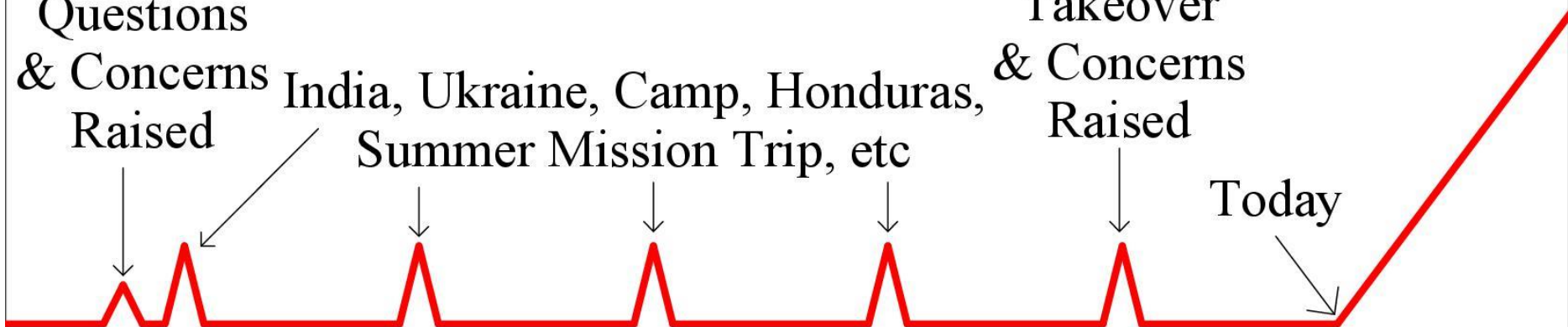
2017 Youth
Takeover
& Concerns
Raised

Today

Elders' 2013
Study &
Findings Report

Elders' 2017
Study & 2018
Congregational
Study

0% Utilization Of The Gifts Of The Spirit



IMPLEMENTATION

- The Elders understand that this is difficult for some to accept, but that does not make it wrong
- We need to utilize all of the gifts given to us by the Spirit, and that means we need to have women participating alongside men in the assemblies
- Just saying women are equal but doing nothing about it is playing like they aren't
- While we don't want to cause anyone problems, we do have to start the movement toward full participation
- Therefore, we ask that women pray and think seriously about participating in some way
- If you are considering participating in some role in the auditorium then perhaps it would be good to talk to the Elders initially to ensure we migrate slowly
- If you are moved to do something spontaneously, such as leading a prayer when someone asks for volunteers, then please do so.

CLOSING PRAYER