



The Voice of Truth



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Should Women Have a Leading Part in The Assemblies Today?

By Jimmy Pettigrew

The churches in the first century, like the church today, faced the danger of being consumed, devoured, and engulfed by its culture. Judaism and paganism were all forces at work in the early days of the church. One of our greatest dangers is still conformity to the world. Jesus said, *They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world (Jn. 17:16)*. We are not to be conformed, but rather to be transformed (**Rom. 12:1-2**). But we can see in the church, we have adopted the world's standards, and have become like the world in many areas. One area we need to watch out for in the church is the Feminist Movement; the Feminist Movement is very powerful in today's society. They are dedicated to restructuring the family, the institution of marriage, and even the church itself.

Over the past few years we have witnessed a growing interest in the role of females in public worship. We see, read and hear of people *ordaining women*. Will the pressure be applied for us to conform? Will we allow women to fill our pulpits? To be appointed to serve as elders and deacons? It is annoying, rousing and unsettling to hear members of the church to assert that they see nothing wrong with a female leading prayers, waiting on the Lord's table, leading singing or teaching Bible class where both men and women are present. Let us examine this question, in hope that we will respect and obey God's Word in this matter. **SHOULD WOMEN HAVE A LEADING PART IN THE ASSEMBLIES TODAY?**

Women played a significant role in the work of the church in the first century, and this is very apparent in the New Testament. Women labored in missions with the apostle Paul (**Phil. 4:3**). Females were authorized to teach children (**2 Tim. 1:5-6**) and other females (**Tit. 2:3-4**). Paul commended Phoebe who was a servant of the church (**Rom.**

16:1). A woman could assist a man in expounding the scriptures to a man, as in the case of Priscilla and Aquila teaching Apollos (**Acts 18:26**). Although it is apparent that women were active in the part of the early church, it is equally apparent that God places some restrictions and limitations on the women's role in the church. We must never assume or conclude that they (women) can teach anywhere that Paul was authorized to teach! Their work was limited to such places and situations as would not cause them to exercise dominion over a man.

In the Old Testament Cain and Abel had sisters; but mention is made only of offerings made by Cain and Abel. Are we to assume *that the sisters did not worship the Lord? When Noah and his family emerged from the ark after the flood, they worshiped the Lord. But the record says: And Noah builded an altar unto the LORD; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar (Gen. 8:20)*. We do not understand from this that Noah was the only one of eight souls delivered from the flood that worshiped, but that it was he who took the lead in that worship. When the Jews came out of Babylonian captivity back to Jerusalem, there was an occasion when all the people gathered themselves together with both men and women present (**Neh. 8:1-8**). Ezra, the priest, brought the Law before the congregation and read it to them. All the people worshiped the Lord, and certain of the men *caused the people to understand the Law*. But not one word is said to indicate any women took any leading part in this great assembly. The women were a part of the assembly as were the men, and they worshiped just as did the men, but they did not take any leading part!

Women were not authorized by God to take a leading role in worship. In a mixed

assembly, both males and females were present. This will be seen from our discussion of **First Timothy chapter 2**. The book of **First Timothy** was by the apostle Paul to the young evangelist Timothy who was ministering to the church in Ephesus. The purpose of the epistle was to provide Timothy with written instructions about methods of procedure in the church (**1 Tim. 3:14-15**). Chapters two and three deal with some of the specifics of church life, worship, work and the organization of the church. The word church (EKKLESIA) in this book is used in its broader, more general sense and is not limited to public assembly. The immediate context of chapter two is worship, not merely *public* worship, but worship wherever and whenever it is offered. In **First Timothy**, Paul begins by mentioning prayer for all men (**1 Tim. 2:1-2**). The word men (ANTHROPOS) in the Greek, it means mankind, human beings, male and female. Now notice this; *I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting* (**1 Tim. 2:8**). Paul used (ANDRAS), another Greek word for men, which means **MALE**. The point is this prayer is to be made for all mankind, but where both men and women are present the males (**ONLY**) are to do the praying, they are authorized to take the lead! In such a gathering *women* are to learn from men, not teach over them (**1 Tim. 2:11-12**). Women are to be in a role of subjection, not authority or dominion. These verses show the woman is to be in relative quietness in respect to authority. She is prohibited from exercising roles of leadership in which she would usurp authority over man. Man is in the leadership role, and women are not to teach over the man having dominion over him. Since men are told to pray (lead prayers) and in the context in which women are to be *in silence*, the conclusion is inescapable that women are not to lead prayers in public worship. Let it be understood that a woman is not forbidden the position of teaching (**1 Tim. 5:4; Tit. 2:4**), but she is not given leadership of teaching over the man. While she may teach even in the assembly, for when she sings she is teaching (**Col. 3:16**), she is restricted in that she is not to be in the lead.

First Corinthians chapter eleven shows that there were occasions when women both prayed and prophesied. The prophecy of Joel quoted by Peter in (**Acts 2:17-21**) said both men and women would prophesy. Philip the evangelist, had four virgin daughters who prophesied (**Acts 21:8-9**). But there is not a single statement in the Bible to indicate that any of these women ever took a leading part in any public worship involving men. All the praying and prophesying they did was in harmony with the restrictions placed upon them in (**1 Tim. 2:8-15; 1 Cor. 14:23, 34-35**), she was ordered to keep silence.

If Jesus had intended for women to have the role of leadership in public worship, it would have been a simple matter to make that plain in the New Testament. He might have selected at least one woman among the apostles. The apostle Paul states two reasons why God placed men instead of women in the position of public leadership in the church. *For Adam was first formed, then Eve.* (**1 Tim. 2:13**). Read carefully (**1 Cor. 11:1-16**). Man did not come from a woman. The woman came from man. And man was not made for the woman. The woman was made for man. So that is why a woman is under authority. Second reason why God placed men instead of women in the position of public leadership in the church; *And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression* (**1 Tim. 2:14**). For a woman to stand before the congregation of the saints to lead in any capacity, whether leading singing, prayer or serving the Lord's Supper, she would have to go beyond the teaching on the New Testament (**2 Jn. 9**), beyond things which are written (**1 Cor. 4:6**).

It is not a matter of what we *think* or what we *want* or *like* or *I don't see anything wrong with it*, but we need to have a **THUS SAITH THE LORD!**

"Dealing With Death"

By Jarrod Jacobs

Just as sure as you are born, you will die" someone has said. "As soon as you are born, you begin to die" is a phrase coined many years ago. A fact of life is that we will have to

deal with the death of a loved one (or many loved ones) during the course of our lives before finally facing our own death. How can we come to terms with a part of our lives that so many choose to ignore? Let the Bible give us the answer! In this article, let us take the word "death," and for every letter in that word, suggest a lesson that we might learn from death.

Decided

Death has been a fact of life almost since the beginning of man. The Bible reveals that it was because of man's sin that death has come upon us (**Gen. 3:19, 24; I Cor. 15:22**). Since Adam and Eve chose to disobey God, death is something for which we must prepare. In fact, the Bible has many passages which speak of death being a reality. Let us read what Solomon said. "*For the living know that they shall die*" (**Ecc. 9:5**). James wrote, "*For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also*" (**Jas. 2:26**).

James' words really sum up death. Really, all death is is a separation. In this case, it is the separation of the spirit from the body. When the body is no longer fit to house the spirit, then the spirit leaves or separates from the body. The result is physical death. The body returns to the dust, while the spirit goes to God (**Ecc. 12:7**).

End

Death means an end to this earthly life. Jesus stated it best when He said, "*I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work*" (**Jn. 9:4**). This verse shows the parallel between life and day with death and night. Jesus is literally saying, "I must work the works of God while I am alive; soon I will be dead, and not able to work." Death is also an end to the cares and worries of this world. "*For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content*" (**I Tim. 6:7-8**). We know that we will leave our material possessions behind, but did you know that you will leave all your intentions, wishes, and work behind as well?

We will "carry nothing out." Read **Job 1:21**. Death means an end to all the opportunities we have. There are no more choices to make. All the things we should have, or could have done are gone. Are you using the time you have wisely?

All

It is promised that all will die. "*For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive*" (**I Cor. 15:22**). Solomon said, "*For the living know that they shall die*" (**Ecclesiastes 9:5**). Again, it is written, "*And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment*" (Heb. 9:27). Death is serious business. We need to see the importance of being prepared now while there is time (II Cor. 6:2). When we learn of the aged, the infants, and everyone in-between dying, it is evident that there is no one who will escape physical death.

Teaches

Death teaches us many things. First, it teaches us the brevity of life. "*My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope*" (**Job 7:6**). "*Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not*" (**Job 14:1-2**). The words of Job say it better than I ever could. Death also teaches us the sure coming of the judgment. **Hebrews 9:27** says, "*And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.*" Other passages to study include: **II Corinthians 5:10** and **Acts 17:30-31**. Death's approach teaches us to be prepared. When we see one's body buried beneath the sod, we need to realize that our death is coming as well. Let us be prepared for eternity by obeying God's will and being baptized before it is too late (**Acts 2:38**).

Hades

After death, the soul is sent to the hadean realm to await the judgment. Let us look at some verses that show the reality of hades. "*And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not*

thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Lk. 23:39-43). This word "paradise" has reference to the hadean realm where there is rest and peace for the righteous. This is not a reference to Heaven, the home of God, for Christ did not go there after His death, but to the hadean realm of paradise (Acts 2:31-32). Notice also **Luke 16:19-31**. This account is of two people who died. One went to the paradise side of hades (rest), while the other went to the tartarus side of hades (torment). "And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom" (Lk. 16:22-23). Both were await-

ing the final judgment of all mankind (Acts 17:31; II Cor. 5:10).

Let us take to heart the valuable lessons we learn from death. Are you prepared for your coming death? This is the time to prepare. Do not wait! "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (II Cor. 6:2).

"The obligation to preach the gospel rests upon all Christians. The rest of the church should be as interested in preaching the gospel as preachers are. If a church is not interested in preaching the gospel to a lost world, it can hardly be considered a church of Christ. Professing to be a church of Christ is not enough. Jesus came to seek and save the lost, and He died that men might live; and if we have not the spirit of Christ, we are none of His. No church, however small it may be, can escape this responsibility."

R.L. Whiteside, *Reflections*, p. 470

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What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear and Learn - Rom. 10:17 m. 10:9-10 ; 1 Pet. 3:21 ; John 6:45; 17:3

Believe - Heb. 11:6; John 6:29; 8:24

Repent - Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 17:30

Confess the Lord - Matt. 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21

Be Baptized - Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27

Continue in the Apostles' Teaching - Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:14-17

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Schedule of Assembly

Bible Study: Sunday, 9:00am
Worship Service: Sunday, 10:00am
Bible Study: Wednesday, 7:00pm*

*A song service is held on the last Wednesday of every month

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