

The Role of Women in the Church according to Scripture

Let's start with two very clear, unqualified, scriptures:

"Let a woman learn in quietness in all subjection; but **I do not suffer a woman to teach nor to exercise authority over man, but to be in quietness; for Adam was formed first, then Eve: and Adam was not deceived; but the woman, having been deceived, was in transgression."** (1 Tim. 2:11-14)

"Let [your] women be silent in the assemblies, for it is not permitted to them to speak; but to be in subjection, as the law also says. But if they wish to learn anything, let them ask their own men at home; **for it is a shame for a woman to speak in assembly. Did the word of God go out from you, or did it come to you only? **If any one thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him recognise the things that I write to you, that it is [the] Lord's commandment.**"** (1 Cor. 14:34-37)

Is there anything unclear about what God says in these two passages? Women should not teach or have any authority over men . . . and this is true always and everywhere in assembly (church) meetings or other public settings.

Now, in connection with 1 Cor. 11:3-16, which speaks of woman praying and prophesying: This passage encompasses both public and private ministry and worship, both inside and outside of the assembly setting—unlike when we get to 11:17, which speaks of the assembly setting in particular, i.e., gathering together as the assembly. As such, since 1 Tim. 2 and 1 Cor. 14 are perfectly clear about women in church meetings or other public settings not teaching or speaking or having authority over men, then 1 Cor. 11 (where women are seen praying and prophesying) obviously (since the Word of God cannot contradict itself) must have reference ONLY to "private" (not "public") settings. (Such would also have to be the case with the female prophets in Acts 18:26 and 21:9).

And by "private," this is meant not in terms of when one is all alone, by herself, but "private" as to the setting (e.g., in the privacy of a home), and under the headship of a husband or father (Acts 18:26 and 21:9).

None of this has to do, by the way, with being able to preach or share the gospel with lost souls. But women should not preach in a "public" way (which God forbids in 1 Cor. 14 and 1 Tim. 2), but in private, personal, one-to-one situations. There she can share the gospel freely with God's blessing!

Acting otherwise is purely the work of the flesh, self-will, acting against the Holy Spirit who inspired these scriptures and gave these directions.

Now let me address some of the other specifics and “dust thrown in the eyes” in the statements that were made on a particular website (all designed to negate the Word of God and base everything on personal “experience” and self-will, thus exalting self above subjection to God and His Word):

>>> Christian women, you have a God given destiny for your life. The Holy Spirit has given you spiritual hunger for the kingdom of God. Christian women, do not permit yourself to be silenced by gender prejudice in the Christian church.

Notice that whoever wrote this is pretending that this is about “gender prejudice” . . . but 1 Tim. 2 and 1 Cor. 14 are all too clear. It is God who is speaking, not “gender prejudice” (designed as a cover and deflection to get around the Word of God).

>>> Christian men, know that there is more than enough Christian ministry work for all the body of Christ. This is not about having dominance or power over you. Every Christian needs to flow in the Holy Spirit to bring the kingdom of God to earth.

Here is another false statement. The Holy Spirit is not trying to “bring the kingdom of God to earth.” That is NOT God’s purpose in this age; His purpose is to form the heavenly Body of Christ, the Church in this age. The Kingdom will not be established without the presence of the King on earth, so the Kingdom will not be established till the Lord Jesus Christ returns to this earth at His second coming.

>>> 1. There is not one Scripture in the Bible that forbids women from preaching, but on the contrary, there are many verses that encourage both men and women to preach the Gospel.

Again, 1 Cor. 14 and 1 Tim. 2 are perfectly clear, and ENTIRELY ignored, because it not to their liking! No subjection to the Word of God!

“Preaching” in a public sense is prohibited to women by 1 Cor. 14 and 1 Tim. 2; but as mentioned earlier, that does not mean that women are not free to share the gospel on a personal/individual/one-on-one basis (i.e., privately). The writer of this statement is conflating the two and pretending that those who truly believe the Word of God (1 Cor. 14 and 1 Tim. 2) are against women sharing the gospel with someone in a non-public way or role/position.

>>> 2. *The Bible teaches that God is not a respecter of persons, and He will use any and all who will yield to Him, regardless of race, age, or sex. Galatians 3:28 - "...neither male nor female...for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."*

First of all, the fact that God is not a respecter of persons means that He does not show favoritism; it does NOT mean that there are no distinctions between men and women and roles that God assigns to each sex. Citing Gal. 3:28 is a perfect example of scripture-twisting, to get around the Word of God and cause it to seemingly contradict itself (1 Cor. 14 and 1 Tim. 2). Gal. 3:28 does NOT mean that there are no distinctions between men and women or their respective roles in service/ministry for God. What Gal. 3:28 DOES mean is that all believers (men and women) are all "one" or equal sons and heirs in Christ in our salvation. No distinctions are true in regard to our position or standing and blessings in Christ before God. But that does not mean that distinctions do not exist in other respects, such as service/ministry and roles in the home, etc. Such an absurd notion would contradict all of scripture!

In fact, if Gal. 3:28 meant (what it does NOT say) that there are no distinctions between men and women in Christ, then that would mean that there would be no distinction between husband and wife, that the man was not the head of the woman (1 Cor. 11:3), and that homosexuality would be impossible to condemn and be permissible . . . after all, there is supposedly no distinction between men and women!!

The writer cited above mentions that God will use anyone . . . true . . . but He will NOT contradict His Word (what He has revealed as His will for us) in so doing! Also, God, in an exceptional case, used a "donkey" in the Old Testament to speak through it and rebuke a false prophet (Balaam). Does that exceptional case, then, mean that we should expect God, as a rule, to speak through donkeys all the time?!

>>> *Moses said in Numbers 11:29, "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His spirit upon them!"*

First of all there were no Christians, no Church, no Body of Christ in the Old Testament (in Moses' day). Moses is referring (in his "wish") to "the Lord's people" Israel, NOT the Church. And we know that in the Church it is certain that NOT all are prophets (1 Cor. 12:29).

At any rate, the issue is not about whether there were or were not female prophets. There were. But in the Church no woman, whether a prophetess or not, is to have a "public" role in service/ministry or worship. 1 Cor. 14 and 1 Tim. 2 are too CLEAR. God hath spoken!!

>>> 3. *The Great Commission, Mark 16:15, "Preach the Gospel," is to ALL believers, and to all the church of Jesus Christ. The command to "preach the Gospel" is to both male and female.*

First of all, Mark 16:15 was spoken by our resurrected Lord directly to the 11 Apostles (verse 14), who were ALL men, and directing them "to preach the gospel to all creation." Of course, Christians today are to continue to preach and spread the gospel to lost souls all over the world, but we are to do so within a biblically-defined framework, guidelines, orders—and thus WITHOUT contradicting the Word of God (1 Tim. 2 and 1 Cor. 14). As such, women are to freely share/spread the gospel, but NOT in a public way or role!

>>> 4. *It is an undeniable fact that God has called and anointed thousands of women to preach the Gospel.*

What is undeniable is God's Word and His directives in 1 Cor. 14 and 1 Tim. 2, which are absolutely prohibitive of the public role of women in ministry/service. Thus God has undeniably NOT called women to contradict what He has revealed as His will in His Word. Personal "experience" cannot be used to override and negate the Word of God!

>> > *The Full Gospel organizations have hundreds of licensed and ordained women who are preaching, teaching, evangelizing, pastoring, and doing mission work with the signs following their ministry. God is using them for the salvation of the lost, deliverance from sin, gifts of the Spirit, and infilling of the Holy Spirit.*

In addition to what I have stated above, I would also add that God, in His sovereignty, often brings good out of bad (evil works or disobedience of men and women). But the fact that God overrules man and works through their disobedience to bless and accomplish much good (as in the salvation of souls)—this does NOT justify or vindicate our self-willed, self-chosen, disobedient path and lack of subjection to His Word!

>>> *The Bible says, "Touch not mine anointed and do my prophets no harm." And may we be reminded of the Scripture in Acts 5:39, "If it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God."*

We are not talking about "harming" a prophet of God, whether male or female. What we are talking about is the different roles that God has assigned to men and women, based on creation and deception in the fall (1 Tim. 2) as to how men and women should carry out their God-given ministries/service. God has NOT called women to contradict what He has revealed as His will for them in His Word (1 Cor. 14 and 1 Tim. 2). Again, personal "experience" cannot be used to override and negate the Word of God!

Female prophets (prophetesses), in harmony with 1 Cor. 14 and 1 Tim. 2, were to, therefore, exercise their ministry/service ONLY in “private” (not “public”) settings (which would be the case with the women prophets in Acts 18:26 and 21:9).

>>> 6. *The Bible declares that women will prophesy: 1 Cor. 11:5, "For every woman that prayeth or prophesieth...."*

I've answered this at length above. Female prophets (prophetesses), in harmony with 1 Cor. 14 and 1 Tim. 2, were to exercise their ministry/service ONLY in “private” (not “public”) settings (which would be the case with the women prophets in Acts 18:26 and 21:9).

>>> *Both the Hebrew (Nebrah), and Greek (Proph) used for prophetess means (female preacher). (See Young's Concordance, Pg. 780.) The word "Prophet" means a public expounder. The word "Prophecy" means to speak forth, or flow forth. The Bible says in 1 Cor. 14:3, "But he that prophesieth speaketh unto MEN to edification, and exhortation and comfort."*

The word “prophet” does NOT mean or imply any PUBLIC role or activity whatsoever; and definitely not in contradiction of 1 Tim. 2 and 1 Cor. 14.

>>> Therefore we learn from the original translation, from the Bible interpretation, and from the dictionary, that to prophesy means more than to tell the future, but it is to speak publicly about the past, present, or future.

Again, false, and in contradiction of the Word of God in 1 Tim. 2 and 1 Cor. 14. This whole “public” idea is purposefully being injected into the word “prophet” so as to pursue self-will, careless of the fact that the Word of God is thereby being rendered null and void by the lack of subjection to it and disregard for it and making it to contradict itself.

>>> *Even if the words prophet and preacher could be separated, how could anyone prophesy to bring exhortation, comfort and edification to the church, if she were forbidden to speak in church and was to keep silent?*

What “if she were forbidden”? 1 Tim. 2 and 1 Cor. 14 DO IN FACT forbid such speaking in a public setting or role. There is no “if” about it!

“Let a woman learn in quietness in all subjection; but **I do not suffer a woman to teach nor to exercise authority over man, but to be in quietness; for** Adam was formed first, then Eve: and Adam was not deceived; but the woman, having been deceived, was in transgression.” (1 Tim. 2:11-14)

“Let [your] women be silent in the assemblies, for it is not permitted to them to speak; but to be in subjection, as the law also says. But if they wish to learn anything, let them ask their own men at home; for it is a shame for a woman to speak in assembly. Did the word of God go out from you, or did it come to you only? If any one thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize the things that I write to you, that it is [the] Lord's commandment.” (1 Cor. 14:34-37)

Again, female prophets would bring “exhortation, comfort and edification” in exercising their ministry/service ONLY in a non-public/private setting and role, under the headship of her husband or father (Acts 18:26 and 21:9).

>>> *Would God inspire and anoint someone to do something that was wrong and sinful???*

NO!! Therefore such behavior is not “inspired and anointed” from God! No, God would never contradict His Word nor ever cause someone to sin. It is all wicked self-will, with lack of subjection to the clear revelation of His will for women as recorded in His inspired Word!

Again, personal “experience” (and disobedient conduct) cannot be used to override and negate the Word of God!

>>> 7. *God called and used women preachers in the Old Testament.*

Even if this were the case in the Old Testament for Israel, should this be used as an excuse and pretext to contradict God’s revealed will for women in the New Testament Church?! Far be the thought!!

>>> a. *DEBORAH - Judges 4:4-5. Deborah was a Judge for both civil and criminal cases. The children of Israel came to her for judgment. She was the chief ruler of Israel for 40 years, giving orders to the Generals and all the army. She did the work of an evangelist, prophetess, Judge, and a preacher. God gave her authority over the mighty (Judges 5:13).*

First of all, Deborah was not an “evangelist” or “preacher.” That is FALSE.

And exceptional Old Testament cases for Israel should NOT be used as an excuse and pretext to contradict God’s revealed will for women in the New Testament Church!

And this is indeed an exceptional case (like when God used a donkey to rebuke the false prophet Balaam).

The Book of Judges (where Deborah is seen, chapters 4-5) is a book focused on Israel’s disobedient ways and departure from the Lord, and the depths of moral degradation to which they sunk, and where “everyone did what was right in their own eyes” (Judges 17:6 and 21:25), not in accordance with God’s revelation of His will.

It is in this context that God used a women (Deborah) to rule over Israel . . . as a SHAME to them in their complete moral degradation and departure from God. Israel should have felt absolute shame at the fact that God used a women to rule over them. That was NOT something for Israel (or we today) to be PROUD of, but to be ASHAMED of!

In fact, according to Isaiah 3, women ruling over men is clearly indicative of *abnormal circumstances and divine judgment*:

“Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him, because the desert of his hands shall be rendered unto him. As for my people, *children are their oppressors, and women rule over them*. My people! they that guide thee mislead [thee], and destroy the way of thy paths.” (Isa. 3:11-12)

And as I stated earlier, God, in His sovereignty, often brings good out of bad (evil works or disobedience of men and women). But the fact that God overrules man and works through their disobedience to bless and accomplish much good—this does NOT justify or vindicate our self-willed, self-chosen, disobedient path and lack of subjection to His Word.

>>> c. *HULDAH - 2 Kings 22:14. Five men went to Sister Huldah and communed with her. She spoke to a congregation of men concerning the book of the Law. A female preached to a man's congregation, and her message was taken to the nation and produced a revival.*

This characterization (of an Old Testament case with Israel, not the NT Church) is completely FALSE. And notice that this characterization that “a female preached to a man’s congregation” is made even though it directly contradicts 1 Tim. 2 and 1 Cor. 14! How shameful!!

Read 2 Kings 22:14-15: “So Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam, Acbor, Shaphan, and Asaiah **went to** Huldah the prophetess, **the wife of Shallum** the son of Tikvah the son of Harhas, the keeper of the robes. Now she was living in Jerusalem in the second district. Then they spoke to her, and she said to them, “Thus says Yahweh the God of Israel . . .”

Notice that the men went to the PRIVACY of her home. This was a private/non-public setting! And further notice that it was in the home of/under the headship of her husband (Shallum).

This is in perfect harmony with what I have been stating above from the Word of God.

>>> 8. *God called and used women preachers in the New Testament.*

a. *The first message of the Resurrection of Christ was spoken by women to a group of men.*

Again, this was not a matter of exercising ministry/service in a PUBLIC way or role, or exercising authority over men! This was done in a godly, obedient, private manner and setting.

>>> *b. Anna - Luke 2:36-38. She must have prophesied in church, because she did not depart from the temple.*

First of all, there was no Church, Body of Christ in existence yet (which was formed on the Day of Pentecost after the Crucifixion, Resurrection and Ascension of Christ). Anna was a godly Jewish saint, and also a “prophetess.”

Notice, again, that this characterization is completely FALSE, and made even though it would directly contradict 1 Tim. 2 and 1 Cor. 14! How shameful!!

Luke 2:36-38 actually says the following:

“And there was a prophetess, Anna the daughter of Phanuel of the tribe of Asher (she was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, and herself as a widow up to eighty-four years) who did not depart from the temple with fastings and prayers, serving night and day. And at that same hour she approached [the temple] and began to give thanks to God, and to speak about him [Jesus who was to be born soon] to all those who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.”

Even though Anna was not part of the NT Church, the Body of Christ, nonetheless, her actions are in harmony with 1 Tim. 2. She was not exercising her ministry/service in a “public” leadership role or exercising authority over men. She was sharing the good news of the coming birth of the Saviour who would redeem Israel. She was perfectly free and blessed to do so . . . on a personal/individual/one-on-one basis to “all” who were “waiting” for the Saviour as she was.

>>>c. *Phillip had 4 daughters who prophesied. Acts 21:9.*

>>>d. *Priscilla assisted Paul in his revival meeting and even taught Apollos in the way of the Lord more perfectly.*

I’ve already answered these above. There is NO evidence from the Bible that the 4 daughters who prophesied (Acts 21:9) or Priscilla (Acts 18:26) exercised their ministry/service in contradiction to 1 Cor. 14 or 1 Tim. 2; i.e., in a “public” way or role. Rather, in harmony with 1 Tim. 2 and 1 Cor. 14, as obedient believers, they must have done so in a “private” manner, under the headship of a husband (in Priscilla’s case, Acts 18:26) or father (in the case of the 4 daughters, Acts 21:9).

Here are the two passages:

- 1) “And he [Apollos] began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when **Priscilla and Aquila** heard him, **they took him aside** and explained the way of God to him more accurately.” (Acts 18:26)

Notice that it was done PRIVATELY, not in a public manner or display or role, and under the headship and presence of Priscilla’s husband, Aquila.

- 2) “And on the next day we departed and came to Caesarea, and entered into the house of Philip the evangelist . . . and stayed with him. Now this man had four virgin daughters who prophesied.” (Acts 21:9)

Notice that they came to the house of Philip, the father of the 4 female prophets. The house was a private setting, and nowhere is it stated or even remotely implied in scripture that the 4 daughters exercised their prophetic ministry/service in a disobedient manner; i.e., in a public manner or role or apart from the headship and presence of their father Philip.

>>> Some say God will not use a woman to preach, because "The woman was deceived," but remember Romans 5:12: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world." It seems to indicate that Adam was just as guilty as Eve in the fall of man. If anyone should be kept from preaching because of sin, it would be Adam. But God does not forbid anyone from preaching, because of Adam's or Eve's sin.

Notice that the person who wrote this is directly contradicting 1 Tim. 2 in the most blatant, hubristic and outrageous manner!

“Let a woman learn in quietness in all subjection; but **I do not suffer a woman to teach nor to exercise authority over man, but to be in quietness;** for Adam was formed first, then Eve: and Adam was not deceived; but the woman, having been deceived, was in transgression.” (1 Tim. 2:11-14)

This prohibition of public teaching and of exercising of authority over man is based on two things: creation (man was created first), and secondly, deception in the fall. Yes, Adam did sin and was more responsible as the head of the woman (Eve) and as the head of the human race. What made his sin worse is that he was not “deceived” as Eve was. The second reason that woman is prohibited from occupying a public role in teaching and in exercising authority over man is precisely because she was the one who was thoroughly “deceived” by the devil. Because woman was created after man, and because she is shown to be more susceptible to satanic/demonic deception, she is therefore barred from taking leadership in public teaching or exercise of authority over man. Period! God hath spoken!

Yet the person who wrote the above comments is flatly contradicting what God declares. How shameful and how blind and how dangerous!

>>> 10. 1 Cor. 14: 34-35 does not say anything about women preachers. If Paul intended this verse as a general rule to bar all women from speaking in church, then they cannot teach Sunday School, testify, pray, prophesy, sing, or even get saved, and this would contradict the rest of the Bible (Acts 2:4; Acts 2:16-18).

Again, what “if”? 1 Cor. 14 (and 1 Tim. 2) DO IN FACT forbid such speaking in a public setting or role. There is no “if” about it! Read for yourself:

“Let [your] women be silent in the assemblies, for it is not permitted to them to speak; but to be in subjection, as the law also says. But if they wish to learn anything, let them ask their own men at home; for it is a shame for a woman to speak in assembly. Did the word of God go out from you, or did it come to you only? If any one thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him recognise the things that I write to you, that it is [the] Lord's commandment.” (1 Cor. 14:34-37)

This applies to all Christians, all churches, everywhere at all times. Nothing cultural about it (as some would say, to evade the Word of God; in which case, how would anyone know what is “cultural” or not? And who decides? The domino-effect is to negate the entire word of God as His inspired revelation for us. How sad and shameful!). 1 Cor. 1:1-2 is explicit too: “Paul, called an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, to the church of God sanctified in Christ Jesus that is in Corinth, called saints, **together with all those who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place,** their Lord and ours.”

Notice the absurdity of this person mixing in “singing” and “getting saved” . . . all in an effort to act to do what is right in one’s own eyes, to act in self-will, to avoid being in subjection to God and His Word, and to actually contradict and deny it. 1 Cor. 14 speaks directly and clearly about the public role that women should NOT take as obedient children of God. If they are not to publicly “speak” in such assembly settings, then they obviously cannot publicly teach or exercise authority over men. Any true “prophet” will acknowledge and bow to 1 Cor. 14 as “the Lord’s command.”

>>> *Paul was rather dealing with a particular problem in the church. Women were not educated as were the men in that day; therefore the women would talk back and forth to their husbands in church and ask questions concerning the sermon.*

Where is any of this said in the Bible??? It is made up entirely from thin air . . . again, to seek one’s own will and ways, and by-pass the authority of Scripture.

>>> 11. 1 Timothy 2:12 is not a blanket rule for all women of all churches.

Again, this person is flatly denying and contradicting the authority of the inspired scriptures. Read for yourself:

“Let a woman learn in quietness in all subjection; but **I do not suffer a woman to teach nor to exercise authority over man, but to be in quietness; for** Adam was formed first, then Eve: and Adam was not deceived; but the woman, having been deceived, was in transgression.” (1 Tim. 2:11-14)

Any exceptions for some women in some churches? How foolish and self-willed and deluded.

>>> *If it were, then the women could not speak at all, for the same verse that tells them not to teach also tells them to be silent.*

Again, what “if”? 1 Tim. 2 (and 1 Cor. 14) DO IN FACT forbid such speaking in a public setting or role. There is no “if” about it.

Two final observations before closing . One negative and one positive:

- 1) The same folks who outright deny, contradict and ignore the authority of the Word of God are often the same ones claiming they are specially blessed in performing miraculous signs from God! And they further act as if it were some show of spirituality (forgetting the Corinthians who had the most display of tongues and other sign-gifts were also the most carnal/unspiritual!)
- 2) Have you ever noticed that in Mary's worship of the Lord Jesus, where she poured the ointment of pure nard of great price on His head and feet and wiped them with her hair—which in type was the exercise of Christian priestly worship—that **she never spoke an audible word in that public act of worship?** The same may be said of the saved prostitute who rendered similar worship to the Saviour. There is a vital lesson here for believing women (besides other lessons for all of us). Did Mary or the other woman have to make sure their thoughts in worship were heard by the others with them? The same goes for women praying publicly (including, e.g., perhaps praying for a poor homeless man on the street).

James Ventilato

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ADDENDUM

Bruce Anstey:

“For Adam was first formed, then Eve.” [1 Timothy 3] (vs. 13) **God could have made the man and the woman at the same time, as He did with all of the other creatures, but He chose to make Adam first.** He did that to indicate that it was His intention, from the beginning, that the man should have the place of leadership in the creation. Men have not taken or seized that place (as some think); it was given to them by God, as indicated in His creatorial order. The fact that God made man the stronger gender (physically and emotionally) confirms that it was His mind from the beginning that the man should be the leader (1 Peter 3:7).

William Kelly:

There is a great difference between preaching the gospel and sharing the contentions of the gospel. Even a man might have laboured diligently and never have preached in his life; and there might be some striving every day in the gospel as diligently, or more so even, than those who preached it every day. There is beautiful choice in the language of the Holy Ghost. We all ought to know that the New Testament puts the Christian woman in the place of exceeding blessedness, removing every thought that would give her an inferior place in Christ; but it puts her also at the same time in the background, wherever it is a case of public action. Here officially, so to speak, the man is called to be uncovered, the woman to be veiled. She is thus, as it were, put behind the man; whereas, when you speak of our privileges in Christ, there is neither male nor female. It is of importance to see where there is no difference and where there is.

The first epistle to the Corinthians is most plain that the head of the woman is the man; and as Christ is the glory of the man, so the man is the glory of the woman. We find there the administrative difference between the man and the woman. When you come to the heavenly privileges we have in Christ, all these distinctions disappear. There is no public action that I know in the world or in the Church allotted to the Christian woman. As to private dealing with souls, the case is different. In their father's house, the four daughters of Philip may have prophesied. They were evidently highly gifted women; for it is not said of them that they laboured in the gospel, but that they prophesied — one of the highest forms of gift from Christ. At the same time the Holy Spirit, who tells us that a woman might and did prophesy as a fact, instructs us that it is forbidden to a woman to speak in the Church where prophesying properly had its course. But there a woman was forbidden to speak, not even allowed to ask a question, much less to give an answer. Yet as to the private scene, at

home, even with an Apollos, a woman might fitly act; that is, if she acted under and with her husband. Priscilla might be of more spiritual weight than Aquilla; but this very thing would lead her to be the more careful to take an unobtrusive lowly place. The yokefellow of the Apostle seems to have been somewhat timid of helping these women. The Apostle, accordingly, entreats him also as he had exhorted him. "Help those women in that they contended with me in the gospel." They were not putting themselves forward in an unseemly public sort, but they had shared the early trials of the gospel with the Apostle Paul.

At Corinth the women assumed much, and the Apostle manifests his sense of it by the reproachful demand, if the Word of God came out from them, or if it came to them only (1 Cor. 14:36). Thus, and not only thus, had they quite slipped aside from that which prevailed in the churches of the saints. No doubt they reasoned that, if women had gifts, why should they not exercise them in all places? But He who gives the gift is alone entitled to say when, how, and by whom it is to be exercised. At Philippi where there was an obedient spirit, there might have been too great reluctance to meddle with these otherwise estimable women who were estranged from each other. The Apostle bids Epaphroditus to render his help. "Help them who are such as contended with me in the gospel." He gives them special praise. They strove for and with him in the work. He joins himself with those persons whom his yokefellow may have been rather afraid of. He joins them also with Clement and other fellow labourers. What tenderness in touching the case! He encourages the fellowship in the service of the gospel not only with faithful men, but with women whose faithfulness was not forgotten because there were painful hindrances just now.

Bruce Anstey:

What is the House of God in Christianity? [1 Timothy 3]

We might ask, "What is God's house?" The simplest answer is: it is God's people. God's people are God's house in the Christian dispensation. In Old Testament times, the house of God was a literal building made of stones and timber and overlaid with gold (1 Kings 5-6). Since the house of God was a physical building in Old Testament times, some have thought that it is also something outward and physical — such as the meeting room, or the hall in which Christians meet for worship and ministry in Christianity — but this is not true. God's house today is not a literal building made with men's hands; it is "a spiritual house" composed of believers on the Lord Jesus Christ who are viewed as "living stones" in its construction (Heb. 3:6; 1 Peter 2:5). As mentioned, the house of God, in Christianity, is comprised of God's people. But since ruin would overtake the house very early in the history of the Christian testimony, and there would be a mixture of both true believing

people of God in the house as well as merely professing people, Scripture presents God's house in two aspects.

...

Believers are in the House at all Times

Being a part of the house of God, Christians are in it at all times — not just when they are assembled with other Christians in Bible meetings, as commonly thought. Since we are always in the house of God, we are responsible to represent God at all times. Therefore, the things that Paul insists on in this epistle, concerning doctrine and practice, apply to believers in all spheres of their public lives. This is done by announcing the gospel of the grace and glory of God to all whom we meet, and by maintaining His moral standards of conduct in our lives.

...

[1 Timoth 2] Vss. 11-12 — Next, the Apostle speaks of the subjection that should characterize the demeanor of the women. He says, "Let a woman learn in quietness in all subjection, but I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp [exercise] authority over the man, but to be in quietness." We can see from these verses that the fitting deportment of women in the house of God is that of a retiring and submissive spirit. They are not to take a leading (or teaching) role. Many have thought that Paul was referring to assembly meetings here, but the subject of the house of God is larger than the sphere of the assembly. It includes the assembly, but it is not restricted to it. (1 Corinthians 14:34-35 is narrower in scope, speaking specifically of the conduct of the women in the assembly meetings.) We have already mentioned that God's house is not the meeting room or the hall where Christians gather. Its order is not to be recognized only when believers are assembled for prayer, worship, and ministry, but at all times. Christians "are" the house of God and are, therefore, in it at all times (Heb. 3:6; 1 Peter 2:5). Whether we are assembled for prayer and worship, or whether we are at work, at school, running errands, etc. We are always in God's house and must conduct ourselves accordingly at all times. Hence, a woman should not assume the role of exercising authority over men in any sense, whether it is in the home or on the jobsite, or in any other place — including, of course, the assembly. It is not in keeping with the testimony that God would have to go forth from His house.

Knowing that this passage of Scripture is referring to a wider sphere than the assembly meetings helps us to understand why Paul said, "in quietness," and not "silence," as it is mistakenly translated in the KJV. If it were "silence," then it would mean that the women are never to speak in any situation of life — since we are in the house of God at all times! "In quietness," implies that they can speak, but not in a leading or teaching role in the

presence of men. It is significant, however, that the word “silence” is rightly translated, as such, in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, in connection with women desiring to speak in assembly meetings. The only woman in the New Testament who assumed a role of public teaching was Jezebel! (Rev. 2:20) Any woman who takes that role now is putting herself in company with the most outrageous woman in the Bible. Women are to teach in the house of God, but it should be those of their own gender (Titus 2:4-5), and children (2 Tim. 3:15; 2 John 4). This shows that sisters have a very valuable and useful ministry in God’s house. We should not think that because a woman’s ministry is exercised in private, in the domestic sphere, that it is any less important than that of the men.