

## WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

### INTRODUCTION

Many people have criticised and even left this group because we have the audacity to allow women to speak in our services. We should know better because the Bible says

1 Timothy 2:12 (GNB) I do not allow them (women) to teach or to have authority over men; they must keep quiet.

I am a human being who had the misfortune to be born into a body whose external characteristic lack a certain part that others have. It would appear that the lack of this bit somehow affects my ability to speak, think, reason, act, and apparently this happens only in church. Why is this so?

### HISTORICAL

For most of history women were not educated, had few inheritance rights, could not take a role in anything outside the house and were in total submission to males, not just their husband. Father, brother, uncle. It was assumed that women were incapable of managing their own affairs, just like their believed that children and animals don't feel.

Women of our generation are possibly more blessed than any other. We had the benefits of experiencing the end of this old world and so understanding that paradigm. But we are now experiencing the "new age" where attitudes and perceptions have changed dramatically. So we can understand both world-views.

Even in my day, the greatest or final aspiration of a woman was supposed to be to get married and have kids and run a house. One could work while one waited for this to happen but after marriage she was expected to be home devoting herself to the whims of her husband and children. In an age with increasing numbers of household appliances and better education, women soon became restless.

I do not denigrate at all at-home Mums in anyway. This really is the primary role of women but it is not the only role.

But the pendulum has swung too far away from the model where family time is priority in our lives. Many women work full time for many reason but the main ones are the perceived necessity for the financial support of their modern lifestyle of 4 bedroom, 2 bathrooms, travel and coffee. Children are now suffering because of the lack of "parenting" and there are tomes written on how to fit yet another job into a hectic lifestyle. Women have to work to provide the funds to do the activities they need to meet the parenting needs of the kids.

Those areas of my life are still my most precious achievement but in our youth, girls didn't go past Junior, girls didn't go to University, girls didn't

travel alone, girls didn't, girls didn't. Girls took the husband's name. Wives did not have their own bank accounts etc etc.

There was the underlying assumption that women were of less importance than men, even less able than men and needed a man to "support" them or "care for them". Even as a tertiary educated woman from two families with 150 year histories each, of such women, I experienced these barriers in the early stages of my career.

In some areas of the world women are still treated as the total possession of the men and the level of subjugation is amazing, especially so, as the women in these societies seem to embrace this apparent bondage..... but that is another story

But in our world, this situation no longer exists. Women are free to explore their talents and gifts and have made major contributions to the world in every aspect of human endeavour. Indeed the leaders of many countries, major corporations and government departments are now women. At one stage we had a woman Governor, a woman Prime Minister, a woman Governor General, a woman Head of Police and woman Head of the armed forces.

### **MODERN CHRISTIAN WOMAN**

As a Christian, I wanted to behave in a way that honoured God. We are instructed to use our gifts, both temporal and Spiritual, for God's glory and yet I must do this while remaining silent in Church and asking my husband at home if I had any questions.

Come on.

My husband is a good man but he is not a Christian and for a long period of our life has been actively antagonistic to any of my Christian activities. I cannot even let on that I have a spiritual issue as this will prove correct his position that Christianity is a fraud. There is still no way I can ask him for advice.

Is God so stupid that He doesn't realize that women can and will be in this position? And what about single women? What about widows, His most precious of charges after children? I have been told that if they must speak in church, they must speak through the deacons. In fact I once saw a woman give the most amazing sermon with the Pastor standing behind her to show that it was OK for her to speak.

Women make up more than 70% of most churches and have done so for a very long time. How can the few males, who meet the qualifications for deacons and who are willing to take on the load, possibly cope with all these stupid women who cannot think for themselves?

There must be something wrong here. This situation is not fair or even rational. It does not fit the overall picture of God and His relationship with Israel, nor that of Christ with His Church

## **SECOND CLASS CITIZENS.**

But in “The Church” I do find evidence to support this position of a lesser state for women. There is a totally confusing dichotomy.

### **OLD TESTAMENT**

In the Old Testament, women were treated as the possessions of their male relatives or husband and treated as of lesser value.

There seems to be some basis for this as in

Lev 12:2 Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, If a woman has conceived seed and has borne a male, then she shall be unclean seven days; as on the days of her menstrual impurity she shall be unclean.

But

Lev 12:5 But if she bears a female, then she shall be unclean two weeks, as in her menstruation. And she shall continue in the blood of her purifying sixty-six days.

We immediately have a distinction. A female child will taint the mother by a factor of 9. With modern science, I can understand logical reasons why some of God’s seemingly strange edicts are totally valid, like Unclean Meats, but I cannot think of a reason why this should be so.

- A female slave has half the value of a male slave.

Lev 27:3 And your judgment shall be of the male from twenty years old even to sixty years old, even your judgment shall be fifty shekels of silver, after the shekel of the sanctuary.

Lev 27:4 **And if it is a female, then your judgment shall be thirty shekels.**

Lev 27:5 And if from five years old to twenty years old, then your judgment shall **be of the male twenty shekels, and for the female ten shekels.**

Lev 27:6 And if from a month old to five years old, then your judgment shall be of **the male five shekels of silver, and for the female your judgment shall be three shekels of silver.**

Lev 27:7 And if from sixty years old and above, **if it is a male then your judgment shall be fifteen shekels, and for the female ten shekels.**

This could be linked to the level of productivity due to the levels of strength so that is understandable.

- Men could take concubines but women could not. Again the concubine was in a hierarchical system under the wife, in the same position of the slaves in the New Testament.

Gen 16:2 And Sarai said to Abram, Behold now, Jehovah has kept me from bearing. I pray you, go in to my slave woman. It may be that I may be built by her. And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai.

- Exodus 20:17, the last of the Ten Commandments, seems to link the wife on a lesser level than his house.

**Exo 20:17 You shall not covet your neighbour's house. You shall not covet your neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is your neighbour's.**

- Only men went up to the Feasts

Exo 23:17 Three times in the year all your males shall appear before the Lord God.

There are many other example of what our society would see as inequities; the laws of adultery, rape, female servants involved in “slavery”, virginity at marriage, not allowed to be priests, the awful incident of Lot offering his daughters to the Sodomites etc.

The inheritance linkage come through the male line and this has been so right up to our time. This is linked to the male's focus being more on protection and provision, while the woman's is linked to nature and support. Interestingly, the Jews now define one's right to be Jewish by virtue of the Jewishness of the mother. We can always know who a child's mother is but we may not be able to say with certainty who the father may be.

Even in this day, women cannot gain equal employment opportunities as men and there is a very simple reason for this. Whether we like it or not, women get pregnant and as so are vulnerable and do need protection. An employer has to factor in the cost of training her, only to risk losing that resource when a woman has the baby. There is also time off for the birth, pregnancy leave, paternal leave, maternal leave, extra demands for time off when there are issues at home with the children, etc etc. Then there is retraining when she comes back. These are major factors and any employer will choose a man over a woman of equal qualifications. It is just a business decision. I did.

So there is quite some basis for women being seen as “second class citizens”.

### **PAUL'S WRITINGS**

Then Paul's writings totally slam home this concept by stating that women must keep quiet, be in under the authority of men etc.

**1 Timothy 2:12 (GNB) I do not allow them (women) to teach or to have authority over men; they must keep quiet.**

**Tit 2:5 to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, subject to their own husbands, that the Word of God may not be blasphemed.**

**Eph 5:24 Therefore as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.**

Eph 5:22 Wives, submit yourselves to **your own husbands**, as to the Lord.

**1Pe 3:1 Likewise, wives, be in subjection to your own husbands**, so that if any do not obey the Word, they may also be won without the Word by the conduct of the wives,

**1 Peter 3:4 Likewise, wives, be in subjection to your own husbands**, so that if any do not obey the Word, they may also be won without the Word by the conduct of the wives,

**1Pe 3:5 For so once indeed the holy women hoping in God adorned themselves, being in subjection to their own husbands;**

**Co 11:3 But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.**

**And the King James version, which we all grew up with,**

**I Cor 14:34(KJV) Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but *they are commanded* to be under obedience, as also saith the law.**

**Col 3:18 Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as is becoming in the Lord.**

If we claim to be Bible believing how can we not hold this position?

### **ALL ONE IN CHRIST**

**But** I also knew that we are all one in Christ; there is no male and female etc.

**Gal 3:26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.**

**Gal 3:27 For as many as were baptized into Christ, you put on Christ.**

**Gal 3:28 There cannot be Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is no male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.**

**Gal 3:29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise.**

Christ raised the status of women to, then, dizzying heights during His time on earth and He went to great lengths to do this. So how can what Paul says seem so alien and in conflict with Christ's model.

### **BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE.**

But it was not all bad news.

Many of these regulations were put in place to protect more vulnerable women from the obvious physical dangers of these times. In our societies we live in a much safer world but if our society collapses, women encumbered by pregnancy and children, will need this protection again.

These regulations to protect women were one of the factors that separated God's people from the pagan world. Pagan treatment of their women was much harsher. But most importantly, people, particularly men, still had the choice as to whether they lived within these rules in love or in domination.

## **OLD TESTAMENT**

The Old Testament also supports the position of equality of both sexes

- They were created equal

**Gen 1:27 And God created man in His image; in the image of God He created him. He created them male and female.**

Though in Genesis 2:18, we see God's hierarchical system operating. The woman's role was as a helper, obviously a supportive role.

**Gen 2:18 And Jehovah God said, It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.**

- Women inherited land

Num 27:6 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Num 27:7 The daughters of Zelophehad speak right: thou shalt surely give them a possession of an inheritance among their father's brethren; and thou shalt cause the inheritance of their father to pass unto them.

Num 27:8 And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a man die, and have no son, then ye shall cause his inheritance to pass unto his daughter.

Num 36:8 And every daughter, that possesseth an inheritance in any tribe of the children of Israel, shall be wife unto one of the family of the tribe of her father, that the children of Israel may enjoy every man the inheritance of his fathers.

- They were able to make a vow, although this was subject to her father's or husband's overruling if he did not approve. If he does not act immediately and is slack in the matter or did not mind, her vow stands.

Num 30:3 If a woman also vow a vow unto the LORD, and bind herself by a bond, being in her father's house in her youth;

Num 30:4 and if her father hears her vow and her bond with which she has bound her soul, and if her father is silent as to her, then all her vows shall stand, and every bond with which she has bound her soul shall stand.

Num 30:5 But if her father does not allow her in the day that he hears, not any of her vows or of her bonds with which she has bound her soul shall stand. And Jehovah shall forgive her because her father did not allow her.

Num 30:6 And if she had a husband when she vowed, or if she said anything rash out of her lips with which she bound her soul,

Num 30:7 and if her husband heard and is silent as to her in the day that he heard, then her vows shall stand, and her bonds with which she bound her soul shall stand.

Num 30:8 But if her husband did not allow her on the day that he heard it, then he shall make her vow which she vowed, and that which she uttered with her lips, with which she bound her soul, of no effect. And Jehovah shall forgive her.

Num 30:9 But every vow of a widow and of her who is divorced, all which she has bound on her soul shall stand against her.

Num 30:10 And if she vowed in her husband's house, or bound her soul by a bond with an oath,

Num 30:11 and if her husband heard and is silent as to her, and did not forbid her, then all her vows shall stand, and every bond with which she bound her soul shall stand.

Num 30:12 But if her husband has certainly broken them on the day he heard, whatever comes out of her lips concerning her vows or concerning the bond of her soul, shall not stand. Her husband has broken them. And Jehovah shall forgive her.

Num 30:13 Every vow and every binding oath to afflict the soul, her husband may establish it, or her husband may break it.

Num 30:14 But if her husband is altogether silent as to her from day to day, then he establishes all her vows or all her bonds which are on her. He confirms them, because he was silent as to her in the day that he heard.

Num 30:15 But if he at all breaks them after he has heard, then he has borne her iniquity.

- **Deborah was a prophetess and led men into battle. In fact they wouldn't go UNLESS she went with them**

Jdg 4:4 And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, judged Israel at that time.

Jdg 4:5 And she lived under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in mount Ephraim. And the sons of Israel came up to her for judgment.

Jdg 4:6 And she sent and called for Barak the son of Abinoam out of Kedesh in Naphtali, and said to him, Has not Jehovah, the God of Israel commanded, saying, Go and draw toward mount Tabor, and take with you ten thousand men of the sons of Naphtali and of the sons of Zebulun?

Jdg 4:7 And I will draw Sisera to you, the captain of Jabin's army, at the river Kishon, together with his chariots and his multitude. And I will deliver him into your hands.

Jdg 4:8 And Barak said to her, If you will go with me, then I will go. But if you will not go with me, I will not go.

Jdg 4:9 And she said, I will surely go with you. But the journey that you take shall not be for your honor, for Jehovah shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman. And Deborah arose, and went with Barak to Kedesh.

- **And a woman killed Sisera**

Jdg 4:21 Then Jael, Heber's wife, took a peg of the tent and put a hammer in her hand, and went softly to him, and struck the peg into his temple, and beat it into the ground. For he was fast asleep and weary. So he died.

They were recognised as Prophets; Miriam, Deborah, Huldah, Noahdiah, Isaiah's wife.

They played major roles in the development of God's people, but within a hierarchical structure. Ruth, Ester, Miriam in Exodus, Sarah, Rahab are

classics. No one could say that these were humble and subservient, silent and submissive although they worked within the parameters of the society available to them.

Widows had exactly the same rights as men.

The Proverbs 31 woman is legendary in that she seems free to do whatever she wants.

- Pro 31:10 Who can find a woman of virtue? For her value is far above rubies.  
Pro 31:11 The heart of her husband trusts safely in her, so that he shall have no need of plunder.  
Pro 31:12 She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.  
Pro 31:13 She seeks wool and flax, and works willingly with her hands.  
Pro 31:14 She is like the merchants' ships; she brings her food from afar.  
Pro 31:15 She also rises while it is still night, and gives food to her household, and a share to her young women.  
Pro 31:16 She considers a field, and buys it; with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard.  
Pro 31:17 She binds her loins with strength, and makes her arms strong.  
Pro 31:18 She sees that her merchandise is good; her lamp does not go out by night.  
Pro 31:19 She lays her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff.  
Pro 31:20 She stretches out her hand to the poor; yea, she reaches forth her hands to the needy.  
Pro 31:21 She is not afraid of the snow for her household; for all her household are clothed with scarlet.  
Pro 31:22 She makes herself coverings; her clothing is silk and purple.  
Pro 31:23 Her husband is known in the gates, when he sits among the elders of the land.  
Pro 31:24 She makes fine linen and sells it, and delivers girdles to the merchants.  
Pro 31:25 Strength and honor are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come.  
Pro 31:26 She opens her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.  
Pro 31:27 She looks well to the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness.  
Pro 31:28 Her sons rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her.  
Pro 31:29 Many daughters have done well, but you excel them all.  
Pro 31:30 Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears Jehovah, she shall be praised.  
Pro 31:31 Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.

Her work load is similar to most of our modern women. In fact she seems to be doing it on her own. Her husband is off doing charity work. She is held up as the example to which modern Christian women should aspire. This tells us that it is fine to work outside the home, to carry the burden of income production, raise the children, do craft, buy the food, work for charity, do overnights, speak and teach.

All this, in silence, through a husband who isn't there?



## **ALL ONE IN CHRIST**

In the prophesy from Joel 2:28-29,

**(ASV) And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:**

**Joe 2:29 and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit.**

Women equal with men. Handmaids, the lowest of the low are equal to the old men, supposedly the wisest and most respected in the community.

Peter states this prophecy was fulfilled at Pentecost and this fulfilment is held up as THE MAJOR sign of the advent of the Messiah and the Kingdom.

**Act 2:14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:**

Act 2:15 For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.

Act 2:16 But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;

Act 2:17 And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:

Act 2:18 And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:

Act 2:36 "Therefore, let all the people of Israel understand beyond a doubt that God made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah!"

Anna the prophetess was free to speak in The Temple in Luke 2:36 without any interference.

Luk 2:36 And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity;

Luk 2:37 And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.

Luk 2:38 And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

How can anyone prophesy and still “remain silent”?

Then there were Mary and Martha, the other Maries, Pricilla, Lydia, Phillip’s prophetess daughters. Of the 33 people mentioned in Romans 16, 16 or half of them are women.

## ROLE OF WOMEN IN JESUS MINISTRY

Here is a quick summary of events which show how much women contributed to the Ministry of Jesus

EVENT	PERSON	REFERENCE
Women included in genealogy	Tamar, Ruth, Uriah's wife	Matthew 1:1-17
Genealogy of Mother	Mary	Luke 3:23-38
First to know THAT He was coming	Mary	Luke 1:26-38
Second to THAT He was coming	Elizabeth	Luke 1:30-45
First to know WHEN He was coming	Mary	Luke 3:1-7
Second to know WHEN He was coming	Elizabeth	Luke 1:39-45
First to ACKNOWLEDGE Him	Elizabeth	Luke 1:42-45
Second to ACKNOWLEDGE Him	Mary	Luke 1:46-55
First to know WHERE He was coming	Mary on way to Bethlehem	Luke 2:3-7
First to actually SEE Him	Midwife or Mary	Luke 2:7
Second to BLESS Him	Anna	Luke 2:36-38
First to see Him WORSHIPPED	Mary	Matthew 2:11
Only person to REBUKE Him	Mary	Luke 2:48
First MIRACLE was done for a woman	Mary	John 2:1-10
First SERMON started with a woman	Widow of Zarephath & Elijah	Luke 4:20-26
First GENTILE to acknowledge Him	Woman at the Well in Samarian	John 4:29
First MISSIONARY	Woman at the Well in Samaria	John 4:28-19, 39-42
Possibly first person HEALED (debate re sequencing)	Peter's mother-in-law	Luke 4:38-39
First RAISING FROM THE DEAD done FOR a woman	Widow of Nain	Luke 7:11-16
First people reported to support Him FINANCIALLY	Johanna, Susanna et al	Luke 8:1-3
First GENTILE to ask for HEALING	Canaanite woman	Matthew 15:21-28
First to ANTICIPATE His DEATH	Mary at Simon, the leper's house in Bethany	Matthew 26:6-13
Last person He took care of before His death.	Mary His mother	John 19:25-27
Last person He spoke to before His death		
Last people to STAY WITH Him at the Cross (with John)	The Three Marys	John 19:25-27 Matt 27:55, Mark 15:40-41,
They waited with the others till the bitter end		Luke 23:55
Stayed with Him after the others had left	The Three Marys and Salome	
First to be at the tomb after close of Sabbath	Mary Magdalene & The Other Mary	Matt 27:61
First to be at the tomb on Sunday morning	Mary Magdalene & The Other Mary	Mark 16:1, Matt 28:1
	Mary Magdalene & The Two Marys	Matt 28:2, Mar 16:2-3
	Mary Magdalene & The Other Mary	Luke 24:1-2, John 20:
First to know the body was gone		Luke 24:2-3

First to know that He had RISEN	Mary Magdalene & The	Matt 28:5-6, Mark 16:
First missionaries - tell others of the	Other Mary	Luke 24:5-6, John 20:
Risen Lord	Mary Magdalene., Johanna,	
First to SEE the Risen Lord	Mary, James' Mother	Luke 24:9-10, John 20:
	Mary Magdalene	John 20:11-17

## JESUS ATTITUDE

Jesus seemed to go out of His way to include them, honour them, use them as examples in parables and even make them some of His closest friends.

He used many devices challenge the status quo on this issue from

- Outright challenging of men for their treatment of the women caught in adultery (John 8:3-11),

Joh 8:3 But the scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery. After setting her before them,

Joh 8:4 they told him, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in the very act of adultery.

Joh 8:5 Now in the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such women to death. What do you say?"

Joh 8:6 They said this to test him, so that they might have a charge against him. But Jesus bent down and began to write on the ground with his finger.

Joh 8:7 When they persisted in questioning him, he straightened up and told them, "Let the person among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her."

Joh 8:8 Then he bent down again and continued writing on the ground.

Joh 8:9 When they heard this, they went away one by one, beginning with the oldest, and he was left alone with the woman standing there.

Joh 8:10 Then Jesus stood up and asked her, "Dear lady, where are your accusers? Hasn't anyone condemned you?"

Joh 8:11 "No one, sir," she replied. Then Jesus said, "I don't condemn you, either. Go home, and from now on do not sin any more."

- Having women in His intimate circle of friends. He travelled through cities and villages with all these disciples, both male and female allowing the women to support Him financially out of resources which they must have controlled.

Luk 8:1 After this, Jesus travelled from one city and village to another, preaching and spreading the good news about God's kingdom. The Twelve were with him,

Luk 8:2 as well as some women who had been healed of evil spirits and illnesses: Mary, also called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out;

Luk 8:3 Joanna, the wife of Herod's household manager Chuza; Susanna; and many others. **These women continued to support them out of their personal resources.**

- He saw them as His disciples or brethren as He stated in Matt 12:48-50.

**Mat 12:49 Then pointing with his hand at his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers, Mat 12:50 because whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."**

- **He defended the woman who washed His feet with Her hair**

Luk 7:36 Now one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to eat with him. So he went to the Pharisee's home and took his place at the table.

Luk 7:37 There was a woman who was a notorious sinner in that city. When she learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's home, she took an alabaster jar of perfume

Luk 7:38 and knelt at his feet behind him. She was crying and began to wash his feet with her tears and dry them with her hair. Then she kissed his feet over and over again, anointing them constantly with the perfume.

Luk 7:39 Now the Pharisee who had invited Jesus saw this and told himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who is touching him and what kind of woman she is. She's a sinner!"

Luk 7:40 Jesus told him, "Simon, I have something to ask you." "Teacher," he replied, "ask it."

Luk 7:41 "Two men were in debt to a moneylender. One owed him 500 denarii, and the other 50.

Luk 7:42 When they couldn't pay it back, he generously canceled the debts for both of them. Now which of them will love him more?"

Luk 7:43 Simon answered, "I suppose the one who had the larger debt cancelled." Jesus told him, "You have answered correctly."

Luk 7:44 Then, turning to the woman, he told Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You didn't give me any water for my feet, but this woman has washed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair.

Luk 7:45 You didn't give me a kiss, but this woman, from the moment I came in, has not stopped kissing my feet.

Luk 7:46 You didn't anoint my head with oil, but this woman has anointed my feet with perfume.

Luk 7:47 So I'm telling you that her sins, as many as they are, have been forgiven, and that's why she has shown such great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven loves little."

Luk 7:48 Then Jesus told the woman, "Your sins are forgiven!"

Luk 7:49 Those who were at the table with them began to say among themselves, "Who is this man who even forgives sins?"

Luk 7:50 But Jesus told the woman, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."

- **He defended the woman who anointed His head with the precious ointment before His death.**

Mat 26:6 And when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper,

Mat 26:7 a woman came to Him, having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on His head as He reclined.

Mat 26:8 But when His disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, To what purpose is this waste?

Mat 26:9 For this ointment might have been sold for very much and given to the poor.

Mat 26:10 When Jesus understood it, He said to them, Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a good work on Me.

Mat 26:11 For you have the poor with you always, but you do not always have Me.

Mat 26:12 For in putting ointment on My body, she did it for My burial.

- Indeed He held her up as an example of how He wanted His people to behave. She became a prophet and her actions have been quoted in countless sermons throughout history and the entire world. What do we learn from the actions of several of the lesser male disciples who are but names in the directory of the company Jesus incorporated?

**Mat 26:13 Truly I say to you, Wherever this gospel shall be proclaimed in the whole world, that which this woman has done shall be spoken of also, for a memorial of her.**

- He debated as an equal with the woman whose daughter had a demon. This Syro-phoenician woman was a Gentile and so considered unclean. The fact that her daughter had a demon was also proof that she was a sinner. Yet Jesus listened to her argument and accepted her reason and granted her wish. He was prepared to bend the “rules” for a mere woman who was able and willing to speak and not remain silent.

Mar 7:24 And He arose from there and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon. And He entered into a house and desired no one to know it. But He could not be hidden.

Mar 7:25 For a woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of Him and came and fell at His feet.

Mar 7:26 The woman was a Greek, a Syro-phoenician by race. And she begged Him that He would cast the demon out of her daughter.

Mar 7:27 But Jesus said to her, Let the children first be filled. For it is not right to take the children's loaves and to throw it to the dogs.

Mar 7:28 And she answered and said to Him, Yes, Lord, yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs.

Mar 7:29 And He said to her, For this saying go, the demon has gone out of your daughter.

Mar 7:30 And when she had come to her house, she found the demon had gone out, and her daughter lay on the couch.

## MARY AND MARTHA

### FRIENDS

It is well known that Jesus had a special relationship with a family who lived outside Bethlehem. Here, He felt at ease. The family was made up of two sisters, Martha and Mary and their brother Lazarus and Jesus loved them

Joh 11:5 And Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.

I can find no reference to Lazarus being the head of the household. Perhaps he was sickly but Martha is always portrayed as the leader. It was Martha who received Him into the house, HER house.

**Luk 10:38 And as they went, it happened that He entered into a certain village. And a certain woman named Martha received Him into her house.**

But Mary was the more spiritual one. It was she who anointed Jesus and washed His feet with her hair.

Joh 11:2 (And it was *that* Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.)

We all know how Jesus used the incident of Lazarus's death to prove His credentials as the Messiah by waiting the three days after Lazarus's death to raise him up.

**Joh 11:3 Then his sisters sent to Him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick.**

**Joh 11:4 When Jesus heard, He said, This sickness is not to death, but for the glory of God, so that the Son of God might be glorified by it.**

In this story the girls berate Jesus for not coming quickly enough. They talk to Him on a totally intimate level. Equals. Friends. Mates. These ladies were not subservient drones subject to the male in silence.

They were His mates.

### **WASHING UP BLUES**

But the most telling thing for us is in the classic Mary/Martha incident over the food preparation in Luke 10:38-42.

Luk 10:38 Now as they were traveling along, Jesus went into a village. A woman named Martha welcomed him into her home.

Luk 10:39 She had a sister named Mary, who sat down at the Lord's feet and kept listening to what he was saying.

Luk 10:40 But Martha was worrying about all the things she had to do, so she came to him and asked, "Lord, you do care that my sister has left me to do the work all by myself, don't you? Then tell her to help me."

Luk 10:41 The Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha! You worry and fuss about a lot of things.

Luk 10:42 But there's only one thing you need. Mary has chosen what is better, and it is not to be taken away from her."

Martha challenged Jesus directly that Mary was bludging and not helping her in the kitchen. Martha was free to be able to bitch to Jesus about sibling distribution of labour, just as any intimate friend would. She did not stay silent and use the intermediary of her brother, the only man in her life, to speak to Jesus. She went directly to Him with her problem which seems trivial to us but not to Martha. Many motives have been attributed to her but I think she was upset because she felt she had to put her duty as a hostess first and was missing out on the good stuff. You can do a whole sermon on this concept.

And what was Mary doing while she should have been in her rightful place in the kitchen?

**Luk 10:39 She had a sister named Mary, who sat down at the Lord's feet and kept listening to what he was saying.**

She was doing exactly what Paul did with Gamaliel

Act 22:3 "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia but raised in this city and **educated at the feet of Gamaliel** in the strict ways of our ancestral Law. I am as zealous for God as all of you are today.

Exactly the same phrase is used. "Sitting at a teacher's feet" is a term used for the teaching methods of the times and this was based on active, very active debate. Perhaps she was part of a study group, or maybe she was the only student, which would be even more telling. Whatever she was doing, she was doing the same as Paul did with Gamaliel.

When Martha challenged Him about Mary's bludging, Jesus did not take this perfect opportunity to show that the subservient position of women was how He wanted these social issues managed. He did not challenge Martha for not speaking through her "man" (Lazarus), nor did He send Mary scuttling back to the kitchen to her rightful place.

Instead He showed Martha, and us, a "better way".

**Luk 10:42 But one thing is needful, and Mary has chosen that better way, which shall not be taken away from her.**

## **SUBTLE CHANGE OF EMPHASIS CRUCIFIXION**

Perhaps the most telling and subtle examples of the status of women brought about by Jesus, can be seen in the two stories surrounding the death and resurrection of Christ at the end of Mark 15 and the beginning of 16.

Before the crucifixion the women are at the periphery of the story, sitting far off, and Joseph of Arimathea is in the lead seeking the body of Jesus. All the action at this time involves men, soldiers, Joseph, Pilot and the centurion. The women look on from afar in the shadow of the gathering dusk.

On the other side of the resurrection in Mark 16:1-8 the situation is reversed. It is the women who are seeking the body of Christ and the only "man" involved is the angel in the brilliant light of the resurrection.

As in everything in the story of God's Kingdom, the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus is the watershed, the pivot, the centre point of world history, of our lives, of everything.

## **ACTS**

All through Acts, we see many examples where women were involved in the ministry at exactly the same level as the men in baptisms, prayer etc., even in persecution.

A good case can be mounted that Pricilla played the leading role in the Pricilla/Aquila leadership duo. Her name is always mentioned first. Sapphira was given an opportunity to speak for herself in the unpleasant episode of the

proceeds from the sale of the land. She didn't have to speak through her husband.... Not that she could. She was responsible for her own outcomes.

Prior to Pentecost it is obvious that the women were involved in meetings and prayer

**Act 1:14 “With one mind all of them kept devoting themselves to prayer, along with the women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers”.**

But as Acts progresses, the mention of women increases. They were persecuted with the men, baptised, and mentioned by name.

By Antioch we meet Lydia, who, it appears, was the leader of the group that met at Thyatira.

**Act 16:13 On the Sabbath day we went out the city gate and walked along the river, where we thought there was a place of prayer. We sat down and began talking to the women who had gathered there.**

Act 16:14 A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a dealer in purple goods, was listening to us. She was a worshiper of God, and the Lord opened her heart to listen carefully to what was being said by Paul.

Act 16:15 When she and her family were baptized, she urged us, "If you are convinced that I am a believer in the Lord, come and stay at my home." And she continued to insist that we do so.

She and her family were baptised and took Paul into her house after his incident in prison in Acts 16. No husband is mentioned.

By Acts 17 the number of women involved seems to have increased substantially and they seem to be women of substance. With the much vaunted Bereans whom we are constantly encouraged to emulate, in Acts 17:12

**Act 17:12 Many of them believed, including a large number of prominent Greek women (listed first) and men.**

It would seem that, initially, the focus was still on men but as the movement grew women began to take an increasingly important role till they reached the place where they were in positions of leadership warranting special mention, such as Pricilla, Lydia, Phillip's prophetess daughters and all those mentioned in the Roman church in Romans 16. Of the 33 people mentioned there 16, just on half, are women.

## **LESSER BEINGS**

So, if women are supposed to be lesser beings, who must submit and bow down to and accept domination from men simply because of an accident of birth then God seems to be operating outside His paradigm, especially that shown through Jesus. This seems to me to be totally unlike a just and loving God. It really is totally unjust to give abilities and talents and then deny their use. It is tantamount to cruelty and that does not fit the model of the Man who died on the Cross for us all, even us women.



Please don't think I am trying to denigrate men. It is obvious that men have the major roles in Jesus ministry. All the disciples were men. The women **did fill** secondary roles. But the abilities and role of women, which Jesus obviously encouraged, has been overlooked for millennia and I am simply seeking a logical explanation and His better way.

## **BUT YOU CAN'T ARGUE WITH SCRIPTURE.**

You cannot argue with Scripture. In 1 Timothy 2:12, Paul says

**(ASV) But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to have dominion over A man, but to be in quietness.**

**(GNB) I do not allow them to teach or to have authority over men; they must keep quiet.**

It is the proof text. The bottom line. End of story. The one quoted all the time. The big stick about the head. This verse does not even carry the proviso "in church" and it has been taken to mean that a woman must not speak at all except through a man. I have had an employee tell me that as a Christian woman, I must do as he said because he was a man, rather than the other way. Bristling, I said, when you are my husband I will submit... not obey and until I stop paying you, will do as I say

## **MALE/FEMALE ROLES**

There are obvious differing roles for the two sexes. Liberated as they now may be, and are experts in nappy changing and developmental milestones, men cannot give birth or breast feed a baby.

But males are physically stronger than females. There seems a native aggression in all males in the animal kingdom to dominate the female. This can be traced back to The Fall when

**Gen 3:16 He told the woman, "I'll greatly increase the pain of your labour during childbirth; it will be painful for you to bear children. "Your trust turns toward your husband, yet he will dominate you."**

This verse seems to give the imprimatur of validity from God to this concept of domination or authority of the male over the female and in the extreme, men, over all women and men have used this proof text to totally suppress women. In some cultures, even today, women are still treated as of less value than animals, simply because of this accident of birth.

## **WOMEN NOW DOMINATE**

But, in our society, the pendulum has swung too far away from the loving central ground. Women are in leadership roles over men in all areas of life and this is actively pushed by the media, political correctness and affirmative action.

Women play all the roles of leadership in TV shows where they are the Directors of the police units, army units, companies, etc. issuing orders to whimperish men who then go out and be strongmen shooting up and killing the baddies. In real life, they hold rank over men in areas from Academia to Zoo Directors, brickies to the Governor General. Now they even commentate on the football!!!!

And this includes lust and carnality, too. Women are as decadent, if not more so, than men.

The term “house-husband”, coined in the last 20 years is, now, a very common occurrence. In fact 3% of our children are raised by men while the mothers work. There are times when the woman can get a “better” job in the workplace and the man takes over responsibility for the home area. This can, and does work well but the man need not be emasculated in this role as the two work as one. The exercising of abilities, gifts, and talents is part of God’s broader picture and role reversal need not abrogate the male concept of leadership in the family.

### **HEIRARCHY**

I totally embrace the concept of a hierarchy. There must be a chain of command to manage most human endeavours. Someone has to make the final decision and take the final responsibility, in any human enterprise and God chose the male for that role.

There is an important reason for this. God is male. God is Father. His Son is my Saviour. They are both male. This maleness is one of the most defining features of The One True God. The countless counterfeits in this world tend to favour the female side, like Astarte,, Aphrodite, Athena, Ceres, Diana, Ashera,( Asherah poles) ,Gaia (very much in ascendancy now) Hathor, Isis, Venus, , In Revelation apart from Christ, the main protagonists are women, the Whore of Babylon and the Bride of Christ.

But then God does not waste resources. He gave women abilities and talents that are different from those men have. He gave us all spiritual gifts and He expects us to use them.

### **LEADERSHIP IS MALE**

Yes but..... leadership is male.

Despite all the above, we cannot deny that Jesus chose no woman to be in the select inner core of disciples. No woman was ever a Priest or a King/Queen, except of course Ester but only as a wife. No woman was elected to the Council when Judas was replaced. There are no writings in the New Testament by a woman or even about a woman as there is in the Old Testament.

Leadership in God’s Church is male. God the Father is male. He is not female or unisex or even sexless or transgender as some are now saying Jesus was. God and His son are male, strong and righteous, and this is a defining feature

of His nature. But that does not make Him dictatorial, dominating or demanding. He is righteous, loving and protective.

But, Jesus, while obviously male, tends to emphasise the characteristics which we interpret as feminine, like love, succour, caring and compassion. But He is still male. Both He and God, the Father, are male. God is the boss. Boom. Boom. End of story.

### **BALANCE**

There can be a perfect balance here and we saw this in Christ's life on earth. In His humanness, He showed us the perfect balance. He manifested both of what we see as male and female aspects of mankind in His personality. At different times in His life, often juxtapositioned and changing in a second from the "masculine" to the "feminine" aspects of His personality, He always got the balance right. He showed Love and Law, Grace and Judgement. This is most obvious in the story of the woman caught in adultery. He savaged the men for their hypocrisy but in a quiet loving way, by pointing out their culpability as well as the fact that the man was not called as is required by the Law.

He was gentle and kind to the woman but chastised her as well by telling her to go and sin no more.

The perfect balance.

If we are His Body on earth, we have to be able to find that balance too. There must a middle ground that God has ordained where both sexes can live in harmony and honour Him and each other, celebrating our separate gifts and strengths, using them to make a healthy and happy whole. Neither needs to be in subjugation, suppression, or domination of the other.

The two can become one; separate but together, individuals but an entity, items but An Item, single but corporate, celebrating their differences yet working together.

### **BUT WOMEN MUST REMAIN SILENT AND IN SUBJECTION**

But Scripture says "Women must remain silent and not usurp a man". You can't argue with that. The Bible is God's word. After all, to paraphrase one site on the Internet, Balaam's ass was a female and that proves that God has no role for women apart from diapers and coffee, and they must wear a hat to show that position of subservience.....

But the proof text says

**1 Timothy 2:11 "Women must remain silent and not usurp a man" speaks generally**

**KJV: 1Ti 2:11 Let the woman<sup>G1135</sup> learn<sup>G3129</sup> in<sup>G1722</sup> silence<sup>G2271</sup> with<sup>G1722</sup> all<sup>G3956</sup> subjection.<sup>G5292</sup>**

**1Ti 2:12 But<sup>G1161</sup> I suffer<sup>G2010</sup> not<sup>G3756</sup> a woman<sup>G1135</sup> to teach,<sup>G1321</sup> nor<sup>G3761</sup> to usurp authority over<sup>G831</sup> the man,<sup>G435</sup> but<sup>G235</sup> to be<sup>G1511</sup> in<sup>G1722</sup> silence.<sup>G2271</sup>**

**BBE: 1Ti 2:11 Let a woman quietly take the place of a learner and be under authority.**

**1 Ti:12 In my opinion it is right for a woman not to be a teacher, or to have rule over a man, but to be quiet.**

**DRB: 1Ti 2:11 Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection.**

**Ti 2:12 But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to use authority over the man: but to be in silence.**

**GNB: 1Ti 2:11 Women should learn in silence and all humility.**

**1Ti 2:12 I do not allow them to teach or to have authority over men; they must keep quiet.**

**ISV: 1Ti 2:11 A woman must learn quietly with full submission.**

**1Ti 2:12 Moreover, I do not allow a woman to teach or to have authority over a man. Instead, she is to be quiet.**

There is no mention of “in Church”, “in THE Church”, in the family. Boom! Boom! Women are to be in all subjection to men. All women are to be in subjection to all men. And how men have used this for centuries. Not only are women to be in all subjection but she must do so in silence in all areas of life, but most especially the Church.

## **CONCLUSION**

But we are also supposed to be “all one in Christ”

So what is going on here?

Christ not only went to great lengths to return women to their rightful place in God’s order as opposed to the domination men had imposed on them. He raised them to much greater height so that they are equal to men in status. Christ’s people are all one, each responsible for working out their own salvation.

There are different roles. There must be a hierarchy or chain of command in all human communities and endeavours, but, in His Kingdom of Love, this does not involve domination of anyone.

In Part 2 we will look to see if there can be an explanation, preferably a simple explanation to untangle this confusion. A word study reveals that in the original Greek only one word is used to denote a person of the female sex. The word is “gune” but this is translated as “woman”, “women”, “wife” and “wives”. The same situation applies in the choice of the translation of the word used for the male gender.

The choice of which English word is used changes the meaning to us dramatically. But if we follow a consistent choice of word in translation, then the whole conundrum untangles into a beautiful loving balance.