

A WOMAN'S WORK IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

Lesson 23

I. INTRODUCTION.

A. We Must Avoid Two Extremes:

1. "Feminism" (or "Women's Liberation") where women take on the same roles that men have in the home and in the church.
2. Limit women to very little service at all (tell them to sit down and be quiet).
 - a) Men fear that woman might "run the church".
 - b) Envy and jealousy among women.
 - c) Women are too busy to work for the Lord.
 - d) No teaching or training program for women.

B. The Issue Over Women's Work in the Local Church Is Not One of Superiority or Equality. The Issue Is Authorized Function.

C. Women in the Local Church, What Are They Authorized to Do?

II. A WOMAN'S LIMITATIONS.

A. The Limitation of Occasion (1 Cor. 14:34-36).

1. A woman is forbidden to speak in the assemblies of the saints (the assembly is under discussion, vv. 23, 26). The kind of "speaking" that a woman is forbidden to do in the assembly is the kind of "speaking" that addresses the whole assembly of both men and women (vv. 26-36). Preaching would be forbidden, but commenting in a Bible class would not. A woman addressing a group of women would not be forbidden.
2. Her "silence" (Gr. *sigao*) means she is to hold her peace; be silent.

B. The Limitation of Attitude (1 Tim. 2:11-15).

1. A woman is not forbidden to teach at all. She is forbidden to do a certain kind of teaching – teaching (authoritatively) over a man. Paul is speaking of a certain kind of teaching (Acts 4:18). Her "silence" (Gr. *hesuchias*) here is not speechless, but quietness.
2. For this reason, a woman is not authorized by the NT to function as a preacher who exercises authority in preaching (Tit. 2:15), or function in any way that would cause her to exercise authority over a man.
3. Because she is a woman, and not a man, she is not authorized by the NT to be an elder (1 Tim.3:1-2) or a deacon (1 Tim. 3:12).

C. Question: Is There Anyone, Including Jesus (1 Cor.11:3), Who Is Not Limited In Some Way In God's Plan? No.

III. WHAT CAN A WOMAN DO?

A. Evangelism.

1. There were women in the NT local churches who could prophesy (Ac. 2:17-18; 21:9; 1 Cor. 11:4-16). Though the gift of prophecy does not exist today, this shows that God used women in NT local churches to teach others.
2. Woman in the local church can evangelize:
 - a) Directly — by explaining to someone the way of God more accurately, like a husband-wife teaching team situation (Acts 18:24-28).
 - b) Indirectly — by supporting and assisting gospel preachers (Rom. 16:3-6, 12-13; Phil. 4:2-3; Acts 16:13-15; Gal. 6:6; 3 Jn. 5-8). She can invite others to hear the gospel preached (Jn. 4:28-30), open her home for a place to assemble (Acts 12:12), distribute teaching materials (tracts), help with the bulletin, make contacts, etc.

B. Edification.

1. The passages that speak of edifying one another are addressed to all local church members, not just men (Eph. 4:16; 1 Thess. 5:14; etc.).
2. Women in a local church can edify:
 - a) A woman can be a teacher of young people (Tit. 2:3-5) — counsel, teach children's classes in and out of the church building, prepare and order teaching aids, etc.
 - b) A woman can be an example to her husband (1 Pet. 3:1-7) — she can help convert him to the Lord, she can help qualify and support her husband to be a preacher, elder, deacon, leader, teacher, etc. (1 Tim. 3:11).
 - c) A woman can be a teacher and guide to her own children (1 Tim. 5:14; 2 Tim. 1:5; 3:14-15).
 - d) A woman can be an encouragement to the saints (1 Thess. 5:14) — she can make visits, write cards, make calls, assistance with building maintenance or communion preparation, enthusiastically participate in singing (teaching in song; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16), prayers, Lord's supper, Bible study, contribution, confess her faith publicly (Rom. 10:9-10), avoid gossip that leads to disunity (1 Tim. 5:13), etc.

C. Benevolence.

1. There were woman in the NT who contributed to the physical needs of Jesus (Mt. 27:55-56, 61; Mk. 14:3-9; Lk. 8:1-3; 23:49, 55-56).

2. Women in a local church can be charitable - they can perform good works (1 Tim. 2:10, 5:9-10, 16; Acts 9:36-39), prepare food and clothing for needy saints, assist with house duties, visitation, transportation, etc.

IV. CONCLUSION.

- A. God Has a Place for Women in the Local Church. There Is Much Work That Women May Do Without Going Beyond the Scriptural Boundaries of God's Word.
- B. Woman Not Only Have the Right to Do Many Things, But the Responsibility Also. They May Do Many Things and They Should Do Them. More Women Are Needed to Do All That They Can Do.
- C. Ladies, Will the Lord Say of You, "She Hath Done What She Could" (Mk. 14:8)?

Lesson Twenty-Three Discussion

1. What two extremes must we avoid when trying to determine a woman's work in the local church?
2. What is, and is not, the issue over a woman's role in the local church?
3. Are there any limitations that God has placed upon what a woman can do in the local church?
4. What can a woman do, both directly and indirectly, to evangelize the lost?
5. How can a woman edify the saints and other people she is with?
6. What can a woman do to be benevolent and charitable to the needy?
7. Ladies, what will you do as a member of the local church to be more active in the work that the Lord has for you? Look over the scripture references again. Is there an example of a Christian woman doing something in the local church that you did not know could be done? What specifically will you begin to do today that you have not done before?