

## EMBRACING YOUR GOD GIVEN ROLE

Paul informs us that regardless of our sex or ethnic background we are equal in the site of God when it comes to being saved (Gal. 3:26-28). The Law of Moses was for the Jews but the Law of Christ is for everyone and those who choose to embrace it become heirs of God (Gal. 3:7). This equality does not mean that we all have the same role within the church. Paul teaches that even though we have many members in the one body, we do not have the same function (Rom. 12:5). He gives an illustration of this by comparing the function of the church to that of the human body in 1Cor. 12:12-27. For example, if everyone were an eye there would be no body or if everyone were an elder there would be no flock. In order for the church to function properly it takes both men and women embracing their God given roles (1Cor. 12:18). Unfortunately, many people in the religious world have allowed themselves to be influenced by society instead of the word of God. As a result, false doctrine has crept into the church and the roles of men and women have been redefined to match that of modern day society. Paul was aware that humans would do this very thing because he warned Timothy that people would turn away from the truth and find false teachers to teach them what they wanted to hear (1Tim. 4:2-4). In the last century there has been a great push for women to have the same rights as a man. There's nothing wrong with that and I am glad that women are being treated as equals in our society. However, today's society is influencing the church to allow women to take the same roles as that of the men. They will say *the Bible limited the role of women*

*because that's what the 1st century culture demanded.* This being the case, they claim that we can adapt how we worship God based on the culture we live in. Is any of this true? To find out, we need to explore what the Bible teaches about the role of men and women and if we are to adapt the word of God according to culture.

### The God given role of women

Many in our society will say that if women cannot function in the same capacity as a man in the church than she is not an equal. This simply is not true. When you look at the Godhead (Rom. 1:20) namely the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. Christians would agree that they are equal yet they served different roles. The Father was the planner, Jesus executed those plans, and the Holy Spirit was the organizer of those plans. Neither one of them took on the role of the other yet they were equal. The same is true when it comes to men and women. Men and women have different roles within the church yet they are still equal to one another. Women today should not try to focus on what they see as a limitation. Instead, they should embrace the role that God has given them and use it to glorify him. Before we examine these perceived limitations let's take a closer look at the roles of a women. First we will notice that women were created to be a helper (not a slave) and companion of man (Gen. 2:18). Women can glorify God by being submissive to their husbands (Eph. 5:22). Peter tells us that when women embrace this role they can win their unbelieving husband to the Lord by their conduct without ever saying a word (1Pet. 3:1-6). This shows how important it is for women to be a good example to those around them. Not only can she lead her

husband to Christ this way, she can lead others as well. She can also do this by how she manages her household (1Tim 5:14). Paul makes it clear that a woman should dress modestly and do good works because it will honor God (1Tim. 2:9-10). Paul commended the women for being such great helpers in the church (Rom. 16:1-4; Phi. 4:3). Women can help the church by encouraging other people, contributing their money, visiting the sick, and just helping out in general. Women are to worship God in spirit and in truth (Jn. 4:24) and sing praises unto God (Col. 3:16). Women should teach their children the word of God as Eunice and Lois did Timothy (2Tim. 1:5; 3:14-15). We have an example of a husband and wife working together to teach another man privately the word of God (Acts 18:24-36). However, this example does not inform us in what way the wife participated in this private setting. One role that seems to be overlooked these days is the older women sharing their wisdom with the younger women on how to become stronger Christians (Titus 2:3-5). As you can see there are many God given roles for a women to embrace.

Now lets examine what roles women are not to do according to scripture. Notice the following chart.

| 1 Corinthians 14   | 1 Timothy 2  |
|--|--|
| Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak (34) it is a shame for women to speak in the church (35)         | I permit not a woman to teach, nor to have dominion over a man but to be in quietness. (12)                                    |
| And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home (35)   | Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. (11)   |
| <i>They are commanded to be under obedience as also saith the law. (34) thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. (Gen. 3:16)</i> | For Adam was first formed, then Eve; And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. (13-14) |

In both of these accounts Paul is writing concerning the assembling of the saints (1Cor. 14:23,26; 1Tim 3:15). It's easy to see that women are not to teach or take a leading role over the man. When Paul states that the women are to be silent, this does not mean absolute silence. If it did, women could not so much as sneeze or cough in church. It simply means she is not to speak or teach in a way, which would violate her gender role in a mixed assembly. Such as being a public teacher or leading in someway over the men. Paul gives two reasons why women have not been given these roles. First of all there is the order of creation. Adam was formed first than Eve. In his letter to the Corinthians Paul points out that the head of Christ is God, the head of man is Christ and the head of woman is man (1Cor. 11:3). Second of all it was Eve who was deceived by the serpent and not Adam. To further show that God did not

purpose women to lead or speak over men in the church, Paul teaches that only men are qualified to be elders and deacons in the church (1Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 2:5-9). However, it is essential that these men serving as elders and deacons have wives that embrace their God given roles. It's also interesting to note that Jesus did not choose any women apostles and there are no examples of where a woman was permitted to teach or lead men in the church. In fact the word "preacher" and "evangelist" are never used in reference to a woman. The only two places we see the word "teach" or "teaching" used in reference to a woman was when they were forbidden to teach over a man (1Tim. 2:12) and when the older women are told to teach the younger women (Titus 2:3-4). The word of God is clear on this matter and women should rejoice in the role that has been given to them instead of fretting about the roles that have been given to the men.

### **Changing worship with culture**

Some in our society may agree with everything that I have stated so far. However, they have come up with a creative way to get around what was taught in the 1<sup>st</sup> century. They will say *that Paul's writings simply reflect what was sociably acceptable at the time and that he uses the word "I" indicating that he was making a personal judgment call. Since culture changes we as church need to change the way we think and incorporate what culture deems sociably acceptable.* This is very dangerous thinking because it takes away the authority of Bible and allows it to be changed based on culture. This opens the door to every sinful act that culture deems proper as being acceptable in the church today. John tells us not to love the world (1Jn.

2:15), yet that is exactly what we are doing when we change the word of God to harmonize with our culture. Going back to our chart when Paul said, "I do not..." he was not making a personal judgment instead he was stating a command from God. First of all we know that Paul spoke by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (1Cor. 2:13). Then Paul makes is crystal clear that the things that he had just spoken about in 1Cor.14, encompassing the women being silent, was the command of the Lord (1Cor. 14:37). We also know that Paul taught the same message in all the churches, not just one (1Cor. 4:17). Paul was very emphatic that everyone teach the same thing (1Cor. 1:10; Phi. 1:27, 2:2) and not to add or take away from the word of God (1Cor. 4:6; Gal. 1:8). Paul told the Thessalonians to hold fast to the tradition they were taught either through word or epistle (2Thess. 2:15) and to mark and withdraw from those who do not walk according to that tradition (2Thess. 3:6). Throughout the letters to Timothy Paul wanted to make sure that Timothy would guard the truth and not allow it to be compromised (1Tim. 1:3; 4:6,16; 6:14,20; 2Tim. 1:13; 3:10,14; 4:2-5). Finally Paul tells Timothy to take the things that he has learned and commit them to faithful men who will be able to teach others also (2Tim. 2:2). The word of God makes it clear that we are to live our Christian lives based off the pattern that is found in the Bible. The word of God in no way supports the idea of changing the roles of men and women because culture demands it.

### **The God given role of men**

Men have been given the responsibility of being the spiritual leader of the home (Eph. 5:23-31; Eph. 6:4) and of the church (1Tim.

3:1-13; Titus 2:5-9). Men need take to their God given role seriously. Perhaps the reason why so many women have been tempted to take the role of a man in the church is because there aren't enough men fulfilling their roles. Men have been influenced by society to step back and let the women do the work while they take it easy. I firmly believe that if more men will embrace their God given roles by being good examples as spiritual leaders of the home and church, then we won't have these conflicts with the role of men and women in the church. Obviously not every man is going to be preacher, elder, or deacon. However, every man should be the spiritual leader of his home. As we grow spiritually we will naturally take on more responsibility such as leading in prayer or serving on the Lord's Table.

In conclusion men and women in Christ need to fully embrace their God given roles. Different roles in the church do not make one person more important than another because we are all equal in site of God. We live our Christian lives based on what the word of God says and we do not compromise the truth because of culture. **Matthew 7:21 " Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.**

# Embracing Your God Given Role



**Should women preach and be in leadership roles in worship?**

**By Cougan Collins**