

What Does VFC Believe About The Role of Women In The Church?

We, Jeff and Beth, have worked together as a ministry-team since day one, much like Aquilla and Priscilla of the Book of Acts (Acts 16). It's a joy to work together side-by-side, complimenting one another. At VFC, you will find men and women working together to serve the Lord in a variety of roles and positions, both staff and non-staff. Women have a high profile, along with men, as they fulfill their God-given roles.

We understand that people have all kinds of ideas about the role of women in the church. Can women teach the Bible? Can women teach men? Can women hold leadership offices in the church? Can women serve as Pastors? Can women serve as Senior Pastors? Are women only allowed to teach other women? Aren't women supposed to be silent in the church?

Jeff taught a two-part series on this topic titled, "Putting Women In Their Proper Place - The Role of Women In The Church" and we recommend that you order this CD series to study this topic in more detail.

There are also numerous resources, written by men on this subject and we would recommend these as well.

"Getting Women In The Game" - CD by Bill Hybels

"The Woman Question" - Book by Kenneth E. Hagin

"Beyond Sex Roles" - Book by Gilbert Bilezikian

"Who Said Women Can't Teach" - Book By Charles Trombley

"10 Lies The Church Tells Women" - Book by J. Lee Grady

"25 Tough Questions About Women And The Church" - Book by J. Lee Grady

In addition, as a woman who has lived this topic, up-close and personally, Beth Jones has written a new Get a Grip Mini-book titled, "WOMEN: What's their role in the church?" This book, which will be released soon, is her personal story and a Scriptural discussion on this topic.

Here's a synopsis of what we believe at VFC. Let's ask a few questions to get you thinking as we launch into this subject.

Common Sense: Is God a good manager of His human resources?

If He wants the gospel preached to the ends of the earth, is He going to set aside 50% of his potential work force? Is He going to give the "go ye" instructions, but then tell all females "go ye, but let the man do all the talking", "go ye and teach and preach on the mission field, but not in the United States because they don't believe in women preachers there"? Is that what a wise CEO would do? It doesn't make any logical sense, but for some reason we have so overspiritualized this subject until thousands upon thousands of women that God

Almightly has called to teach and preach His Word have literally been paralyzed and rendered ineffective. Is this really God's plan?

Contradictory Bible Verses: Is the Bible confused on this subject?

What does the Bible teach us about the role of women in the church? Is the Bible contradicting itself when it says, ***“Women must keep silent in the church”***, and ***“women are not permitted to teach”*** and ***“In the last days I will pour out my Spirit and your sons and daughters will prophesy...”***?

Let's look at some of the classic Scriptures and see if we can rightly divide the Word of truth on this issue. How do we “rightly divide” the following verses?

These are the verses that are usually hand selected to support the notion that women must be silent and subservient in church. How do you rightly divide these Scriptures? The Apostle Paul wrote these words...

“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. And if they will learn anything let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.” 1 Corinthians 14:34-35

“Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.” 1 Timothy 2:11

So, it's clear isn't it? Women are not allowed to speak or teach or carry a leadership role over the man, right?

The only problem is...what about the verses listed below? If women are to be silent, not speak, teach, preach, lead and be subservient to men, how are the following verses explained?

In several verses listed below we see examples of God anointing women to prophesy, preach, proclaim and edify the church, which of course consists of both men and women.

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out 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: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.” Acts 2:17-18

“...Phillip the evangelist...had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy (which means to proclaim or give inspired utterances - speaking, preaching).”
Acts 21:8-9

“But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonorouh her head...” 1 Cor 11:5

What is prophesy? It is speaking, preaching, proclaiming, teaching God's Word and God's message. Listen to the definition as revealed in 1 Corinthians.

“He that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort...He that prophesieth edifieth the church...For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.” 1 Corinthians 14:3-4, 31

The Bible states as a matter of fact and common practice that women would prophesy - preach, teach and speak to men and to the church for the purpose of edification, exhortation and comfort. We don't have time in this article to address the cultural views of women at the time of Paul's writing and the norms in public meetings at that time, but suffice it to say women were not held in high esteem in the Jewish or secular culture of the day. Fortunately, when Jesus came on the scene He set everyone free - men and women!

Jesus' Example: What Did Jesus Say About Women Preachers?

Jesus Himself told a woman, Mary, to go preach the gospel to men. Did He disobey His own command? Jesus didn't seem to have a problem with women preaching – and specifically preaching to men! Jesus said, ***“...go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God and your God.”*** John 20:17 (Did Jesus violate His own command that women must be silent and not teach men?)

Jesus ministered to the woman at the well and she preached to all the men in her city... ***“left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, ‘Come see a man, which told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?’”*** John 4:28-29 Talk about a lady preacher? When this woman opened her mouth the entire city got saved!

These women are mentioned as church leaders in: Romans 16 - Phebe, Priscilla, Mary, Tryphena, Tryhosa, Persis, and Julia, Philippians 4:2 - Euodias and Syntyche.

Obviously, the Bible does not contradict itself. On one hand we see two verses that tell us that women must be silent in the church and they may not teach men. On the other hand, we see several verses that tell us that God would pour out

His Spirit and women would not be silent, and in fact Jesus had women preaching to men the moment after He arose from the dead!

These are just a few thoughts on this topic.

At VFC, we've seen God's favor, hand of blessing and confirmation on the women that work alongside the men in our church. You will find high profile men and women fulfilling their God-given roles and using their God-given gifts for the building of His Church!

If you'd like to know more about what we believe concerning the role of women in the church and specific things like:

What Did The Apostle Paul Say About Women In The Church?

Can A Woman Teach A Man?

Who Really Doesn't Want Women To Speak, Teach or Lead?

Feel free to check out any of the resources listed.