

The Woman Question

Should Women Serve in the Church?

Kelly McDonald, Jr.

The Woman Question

Should Women Serve in the Church?

Kelly McDonald, Jr.

Published by Hungry Hearts Ministries
PO Box 10334
Jackson TN 38308
hungryheartsmi@aol.com
All rights reserved.

Printing by Allegra Print and Imaging
1029 Old Hickory Blvd, Jackson TN 38305,
(731) 664-1676

First Edition Published March 2014

Special thanks to Freda Sims for proofreading this book

All Scripture notations, unless otherwise noted, come from the New International Version. International Bible Society, Zondervan Bible Publishers Grand Rapids, Michigan 46506 USA.

All language references, unless otherwise noted, come from Strong's Concordance. Strong, James. Published: Nashville: Abingdon, c1980.

Table of Contents

Introduction	6
The Bible is the Book of Women’s Rights	7
Marriage and the Family	11
Women in the Church	17
Other Hungry Hearts Resources	27
About Hungry Hearts Ministries	29
About the Author	30

Introduction

In the late 1700s into the 1800s, women began to take on traditional male roles in Western Society. To what extent women should be allowed to take on these roles became known as the Woman Question. Many works of literature were written to answer this question. We have had this same issue in the church. Should women be allowed to serve, preach, teach, prophesy, pastor, etc.? To what extent should women be allowed to do these things? Now, there are two extremes in this whole debate or issue: One side says that no women should be allowed to teach or preach or serve in any position of authority in the church. They do not even believe that a woman should teach a man. The other side says that the Bible is sexist against women. People with this view believe that the Bible does not give women the freedom they need. Still yet, others say that women should be allowed to serve in any role that a man can serve in. Other churches allow women to do some things, but not other types of service. This question is of great importance because it has to do with the place of women in the Body of Christ. How God views this issue is a reflection of His character. In this work, we will examine the role of women in the Bible as defined by the Bible.

Chapter 1

The Bible: The Book of Women's Rights

We must understand that the Bible is not a sexist book. Some people read it and think that women were in total bondage. This is not true. The term sexist is a relatively new word. It is a tremendous fallacy to take something from 21st century culture and view the Bible through such a lens. The Bible was obviously not written in recent times, so we must view the Bible from the perspective in which it was written.

Let's look at some examples from the Bible. In Deut. 22:28-29, God said, "28 If a man happens to meet a virgin who is not pledged to be married and rapes her and they are discovered, 29 he shall pay the girl's father fifty shekels of silver. He must marry the girl, for he has violated her. He can never divorce her as long as he lives." The Hebrew word translated as rape can mean seize a hold of, capture, take, or skillfully take. One of the leading causes of poverty in America today is single motherhood and fatherhood. Men have children with women, but then abandon the woman and child. This leaves both the mother and the child in bad shape. If we lived according to the Bible, then men would have to take responsibility for their actions and marry the woman that he has a child with.

In Deuteronomy 22:13-19, God explains that if a married man accuses his wife of being a harlot, but she is not, then he gets fined a 100 shekels of silver (2 ½ pounds of silver). He cannot divorce her as long as he lives. This ensures that a man cannot slander his wife just to get rid of her so he can get a new one. In Deuteronomy 25:5-10, the Bible explains a set of rules known as the Levirate Law. If a man's brother died without any children, he was expected to marry his brother's widow and have children for his brother through her. This also meant that he had to take care

of her needs. You must remember that in ancient times, there was no Social Security, Widows benefits, welfare, food stamps, etc. If you read the Bible in its entirety, God is providing a complete social net to protect women. There are probably more rules in the first five books of the Bible, also called the Torah, to protect women than men. Why is this?

Many Ancient societies did not treat women with any respect. Women were merely property in the Gentile nations and other cultures. They were often beaten and mistreated. In other cultures, if a man raped a woman, then there was no punishment for the male offender. If a man impregnated a woman, then there was usually no obligation on his part to take care of the mother or the child. If your brother's wife dies, then most societies did not afford her any sort of security. If a man got tired of his wife in other societies, he usually abandoned the first one to get another one. These examples left the woman with no way to support herself. Furthermore, in many ancient societies women were not allowed to be employed in the same manner as men. The Law of God gives a different perspective on this. We see from these examples that God is expecting His people to live on a different level! He wants us to have responsibility and commitment. These ideas are foreign to other ancient societies.

What about the women's liberation movement? They did not have to go out and start their own movement! All they had to do is read the Torah and return to the Word of God! Let's read yet another example from the Bible. Land was inherited by the sons in a clan, but there were exceptions to this. There was a man named Zelophahad in the Bible who died without any sons. Zelophahad had five daughters: Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. These women came to Moses when their father died and asked if their father's land could be given to them. God heard their case and He ruled that they should get the land. In Numbers 27:5-7, the Bible records, "The Lord said to him, 'What Zelphehad's daughters are staying is right. You must certainly give them property as an inheritance among their father's relatives and turn their father's in-

heritance over to them.’ ” In this example, the God of the Universe hears the plea of these five women and grants them their father’s estate.

There are many other examples of women being treated fairly and even being exalted in the Bible. Deborah was allowed to rule Israel in Judges 4:4-5. She was the chief ruling magistrate and spiritual authority in the land! God certainly did not have a problem with her ruling because he gave her victory in battles over the enemies of Israel. Miriam is credited alongside Aaron and Moses as having led the children of Israel out of Egypt (Micah 6:4). She even led the women of Israel in dance and worship of God once they crossed the Red Sea (Exodus 15:20-21). God used a woman (Rahab) to hide the spies in the days of Joshua. Because of her obedience, her entire family was allowed to be spared when the Israelites conquered Jericho.

In John 4:4-9, Jesus walked up to a Samaritan woman at a well and spoke to her about the gospel. It was against Jewish custom for Jesus, a Jewish man, especially a Rabbi, to talk to any Samaritan, especially a woman. In the first century, the Jewish people and the Samaritans hated each other. Jesus did not look down on her because she was a woman or a Samaritan, but He offered her the gracious gift of eternal life. He broke the social norms of His time in order to achieve God’s purpose and plan.

There are literally dozens of verses in the Bible describing God’s concern for widows. When you study these verses, you learn that God hears the prayers of widows, orphans, and the fatherless even more so than that of others. Our Creator recognizes that these individuals are left in a vulnerable situation and makes sure that their needs are met. There is even special judgment rendered to those who pervert justice for widows (Deut. 27:19). In some places God directly commands His people to take care of widows (Deut. 14:29, 24:19). The prophet Elijah was sent to a widow to assist her.

The image of God is male and female (Gen 1:27-28). The Bible also says that no Kingdom divided against itself shall stand (Matthew 12:25). God is not against women because He would be against Himself! The above examples show us that God is extremely concerned about the wellbeing of women, both financially, physically, and spiritually. He wants women to be free to seek Him. The True God is a promoter and supporter of women.

Chapter 2

Marriage and the Family

In this chapter, we are going to look at the Biblical view of women in marriage. I am going to stick to what the Bible says about marriage and the family, since I am not married (at the time this was written). However, Paul said, “The spiritual man makes judgments about all things” (I Cor. 2:15a). Just because I am not married does not mean I cannot receive revelation on the subject. My understanding will not be as deep as those who are married, but this is to be expected.

There is always the argument that Adam was created first. Some people use this to justify the mistreatment of women. Others use it to say that Eve was made inferior because of this. In the beginning, God created Adam. He made the male portion of mankind first before making the female portion. Why did God create Adam first? Right after Adam was created, God allowed him to name each animal and learn about the trees in the Garden before she was created. This was done to make Eve’s life easier when she was created. He was supposed to go before her and create an environment where she was free to pursue her God-given talents and abilities without fear. In turn, Eve was to support him in his endeavors to do this. They both were supposed to work together. The fact that man was made first does not mean that men are more important, but simply for function of the home life. There always has to be a leader. In the Bible, the one who leads will have greater responsibility than the others under them.

In I Corinthians 11:3, Paul wrote, “...the head of every man is Christ; the head of woman is man [or the head of the wife is her husband], and the head of Christ is God.” To some people, this may seem like a statement that suppresses women or gives men the right to mistreat women, but nothing could be farther from the

truth. In 21st century society, our view of leadership and authority is skewed. We think that someone in a position of leadership is better than someone else. There is also a tendency to think of more authority as having less work to do. In context of the Bible, rulership means service. Jesus said, "...the kings of the Gentiles Lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest and the one who rules like the one who serves" (Luke 22:25b-26). Once again, God is expecting us to live differently than the other nations and cultures of the world. In His Kingdom, the rulers are to be the ones who do the most serving. By making a husband the head of his wife, God placed man in a position of service to her. This does not make either one more important than the other. Again, it is a matter of functionality in the home.

The statement Paul makes In I Corinthians 11:3 also has to do with who will answer to who in terms of accountability. Christ will answer to God. Husbands will answer to Christ, and wives will answer to their husbands. Basically, every husband will give an account on judgment day for how he ruled his household in the same way that Christ is accountable to the Father for His actions. Christ is not going to come to the wife and ask her why things were not done a certain way. He is going to ask the husband. All humans will give account to God concerning their relationships with Him and the way they lived. God put the responsibility of rulership of the household on the husband, but also the responsibility of accountability. We think leadership means doing less, but leadership always entails more service in God's Kingdom. Woman was made from the rib of man. This means they were created for a side by side, symbiotic relationship. At the same time, all humans are formed in the womb of a woman. One is not independent of the other. We were created to be together.

In Isaiah 3, the Lord rebuked the Israelites for the sins of the nation. In verse 12, He said, "Youths oppress my people, women rule over them. O my people, your guides lead you astray; they turn you from the path." Many use this verse to say that women

should not serve in positions of authority in the church. The problem in Isaiah 3:12 is not that women were serving in positions of authority, but that men were **not** serving in positions of authority. Just like the body of Christ, Ancient Israel should be viewed as a body. They are called God's sanctuary in Numbers several times, just like believers are the Temple of God. The men were being lazy and not fulfilling their call to serve and rule. Part of the body was not fulfilling its role. When one part of the body does not fulfill its role, then other parts not suited for the empty role are forced to try and take its place. In other words, people who were not called to rule were ruling. One result was that youths were oppressing the people and women were running everything. Men were not ruling their households and it caused chaos. Such is the case in America today! When a man is absent from the home, we cannot get mad at women for trying to take care of babies and handle business! Someone has to keep everything going! If God had a problem with women having any sort of authority, then why did **God** choose Deborah to judge Israel? This will be addressed more in the next chapter.

Paul has some interesting things to say about marriage in his letters. There is speculation as to whether Paul was ever married or not. Some believe his wife died, while others believe he never married. We know he was not married at the time he wrote his letters to the churches. Though he may have never been married, he gives tremendous insight into marriage that normally would come from someone who was married. In Ephesians 5:21-33, Paul compares the relationship of married couple to that of Christ and the church. In this passage, he wrote, "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same

way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who lives his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church - for we are members of his body. 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.' This is a profound mystery, but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband." Paul wrote that women should submit to their husbands in everything. Many people have misinterpreted this passage to mean that wives should submit to everything their husbands demand, even if a husband is abusing his wife.

Let's look at these verses a little more closely. Paul wrote towards the end of this passage in verse 32 that he was talking about Christ and the church. However, if one wanted to take Paul's words literally, it has a much different meaning than you might think. He wrote that "Wives submit to your husbands as to the Lord...Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything." In other words, so long as the husband is acting in a Christ-like manner, she must submit to his authority as the church submits to Christ. What does this mean? We obey Christ because He sacrificed His life to provide for us salvation and a haven of rest. If we take this to the literal extreme, then husbands are supposed to sacrifice their lives for their wives so she can be provided for and be at rest. Christ sacrificed His life to present the Church blameless and holy. In the same way, husbands sacrifice themselves to present their wives holy and protected. With the literal application, then a woman only has to obey her husband as long as he acts like Christ! For those who want a more literal application, then that is a tremendous standard for husbands to meet! Context is crucial. Paul starts this section by saying, "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ." He says there should be submission to each other in marriage. In verse 33, he concludes by saying that, at the very least, men must love their wives as themselves and the wife must respect her husband's authority. There should be self-sacrifice by the husband, and respect or reverence by the wife. Both are to

submit to each other and work together. Christians who are married are both part of Christ's body.

In I Corinthians 7:10-15, Paul wrote to protect spouses in abusive situations. In these verses, he said that if an unbelieving spouse will not let the believing spouse worship God in peace, then the believing spouse is not bound. In the King James, it says if the unbelieving spouse is "not pleased to dwell" then the believer is not bound to stay. This includes abuse, whether physical, verbal, or mental. Paul even says in verse 15 that "God has called us to live in peace." If a married couple can still live together in peace and the believing spouse is allowed to freely serve God, then the believing spouse cannot leave the unbelieving spouse. There are some situations where the husband and wife are both Christians. Even in these situations, the abused does not have to stay. Women do not have to be a doormat.

Peter also made some important statements concerning men and women in his first letter. In I Peter 3:3-7, Peter wrote, "3 Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes. 4 Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. 5 For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to adorn themselves. They submitted themselves to their own husbands, 6 like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her lord. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear. 7 Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect **as the weaker partner** and as **heirs with you** of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers." Peter is not saying that women are the weaker vessel. Peter is commanding husbands to esteem or honor their wives **as if** she was the weaker vessel. Of course, he means this in a physical sense. Other cultures were harsh towards women, and the Body of Christ should be separate from this world. Peter is appealing with men to be gentle towards their wives. He is not saying that women are inferior or weaker, but that men should treat women a certain way. If

a husband does not honor his wife and treat her properly, then his prayers will be hindered. God cares enough about women that He will block the prayers of husbands who mistreat them! The reason why this is stated is because men and women are co-heirs with Christ and heirs together of the gift of eternal life. This obviously puts men and women on an even keel when it comes to the Body of Christ. This quells the idea that men are more important in the church than women.

Some have also used these verses and those from I Timothy 2:8-15 to teach against women wearing Jewelry. There is nothing wrong with wearing jewelry to church. Jesus talks about putting earrings and jewelry on His bride in Song of Solomon 1:10, and Abraham sent his servant out with bracelets and a nose ring to put on Rebekah when he was looking for a wife for Isaac. Much like Paul in I Timothy 2:8-15, Peter is referring to a woman putting too much focus on her outward adornment. A woman's satisfaction in life should not just come from her material possessions, but the works she possesses.

Taking the historical context of when Paul and Peter are writing, their statements are revolutionary. In their time, and for most of history, women have been mistreated. For Paul to say that men should love their lives as themselves and sacrifice their lives for her is a statement that they certainly did not hear in the pagan world. Part of the gospel is that Christ came to set the captives free. Women, for thousands of years, have been abused and subdued. In the Body of Christ, and certainly in the marriage relationship, women should be free to serve God and serve her mate as God intends. This means not in fear, but in freedom. For too long, the church has conformed to the world in the way that it treats women, subduing their gifts and potential in Christ to not much more than figurines. There has been a lack of balance in the Church of God because one-half of the body has been unable to fully participate. Nevertheless, we see today that more women than men make up congregations. Despite being held back in many churches, women remain faithful to attend God's house.

Chapter 3

Women Serving in the Church

When Greek thought invaded the Bible, this Greek idea of how women were treated also influenced our understanding of the Bible, so women became excluded. But, does the Bible teach this? Where does the view come from that women are not allowed to serve at all in the church? There are two main passages used to support this view: I Corinthians 14:33b-38 and I Timothy 2:8-15.

In I Corinthians 14:33b-38, Paul wrote, “As in all congregations of the saints, women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says. If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church. What? Did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only people it has reached? If anybody thinks he is a prophet or spiritually gifted, let him acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord’s command. If he ignores this, he himself will be ignored.” In this passage, Paul seems to be saying that the women in Corinth should not speak at all in church. Looking at the Greek language used and context, we find that these verses say something completely different.

First of all, we must realize that in the letter to the Corinthians, Paul frequently quotes arguments the Corinthians are using to justify their behavior. He then refutes their argument and corrects them with sound instruction. We learn from I Cor. 1:11 that Paul has been informed of their behavior from Chloe’s household. This is how he knew the arguments they were using. For instance, in I Corinthians 1:12-13, Paul says, “What I mean is this: One of you says, ‘I follow Paul’; another ‘I follow Cephas’; still another, ‘I follow Christ.’ Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized into the name of Paul?...” In these verses, we

see Paul 1) quote what the Corinthians are saying and 2) refute it in the verses that follow.

In I Corinthians 14:33b-36, we see certain things that let us know that these verses are a quotation from the Corinthian church to justify not allowing women to speak. First, Paul says that "... They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission as the Law says." The Law does not say that women are not allowed to speak in the congregation. Deborah, a woman, was allowed to rule and judge over Israel during the time when the Law was the civil and moral guide of the nation. She was certainly allowed to speak. In fact, she rebuked Barak because he did not want to go to battle without her. Miriam was a prophetess and a leading figure in Israel. She is attributed with helping lead the Israelites out of Egypt (Micah 6:4). Huldah the prophetess addressed men and instructed them in the way of God (2 Kings 22:8-14). Aquila and Priscilla instructed Apollos in Acts 18:24-26. Secondly, in the verses immediately following verse 35, Paul begins by saying "What?..." While this word is missing from the NIV translation, other versions, such as the King James Version, include it. In the Greek text, this is the word *e*, and it is used in this context as a disjunctive particle. This type of particle is used to disconnect what he just said from what he is about to say. In other words, Paul is about to make a statement that contradicts what was said in verses 33b-35. Paul then goes on to say "...Did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only people it has reached?" The Greek word used for "only people" which is sometimes translated as "only ones" is *monos*. It is used in the masculine plural, meaning that Paul is either addressing a group of men or the entire assembly. He is not just addressing women. Third, in I Corinthians 11, Paul said that it was permissible for women to pray and prophesy in the church. This means that they can obviously speak in church. He would not permit it in I Corinthians 11 and then negate it in I Corinthians 14! From these facts we understand that Paul is rebuking either a group in the church or just the men for not allowing women to speak in I Corinthians 14:33b-35. He accuses them of being gatekeepers of determining who God can or cannot use.

Another passage used to say that women are not allowed to serve in church is I Timothy 2:8-15. In this passage, Paul instructs Timothy in how to handle a specific situation in the church: “I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing. I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God. A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. But women will be saved through childbearing - if they continue in faith, love, and holiness with propriety.”

The first thing to point out in this passage is that Paul rebukes the men first. The men are arguing and fighting with violent passion about matters in the church. He commands them to start lifting their hands in prayer. He then moves on to talk about the women. He instructs them to dress modestly or orderly, not with expensive jewelry and accessories. In the Greek language, this does not mean expensive - it means extremely costly. The verse translated in the NIV as “...I do not permit a woman to teach or have authority over a man; she must be silent” is translated in the King James Version as “But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.” The Greek word used for “have authority over” in the NIV is *authenteo*. It literally means to unlawfully gain authority over or gain authority one’s self.

Something else important to remember is that Paul is writing to Timothy. At this time, Timothy was in the city of Ephesus. In Ancient Greece, each city served a specific god or goddess. In the city of Ephesus, they worshipped Artemis, a goddess. In the temple of a goddess, women were the main ones who served. Men did not. The women who served in the pagan temples dressed with gaudy clothes and jewelry to honor their goddess. There

were women in Ephesus getting saved and then coming to church with the attitude that women are always supposed to be above a man. They were manipulating people and unjustly taking authority over the men, and the men are all arguing about it instead of focusing on God.

Paul's argument to restore order in the church is by appealing to the story of Adam and Eve. He is trying to restore the order that was lost in the Garden of Eden. Adam was made first and then Eve. This is why he corrects the men first. He then says that Eve was deceived. Why was Eve deceived? She was deceived because Adam did not step up and say, "Serpent, get away from my woman!" He was out of his place. At the same time, Eve stepped out of her place. She did not go get Adam and say, "Honey, I do not know what to do about this." They both sinned. They did not hold each other responsible. They did not adhere to their responsibilities. Adam was supposed to be the head over woman and protect her. Eve did not encourage Adam to take his place. Adam was lazy, and Eve tried to take Adam's place. This is the same thing going on in the Ephesian church. Paul finishes by saying that women will be saved through childbearing. This means the women will be delivered or protected during child bearing. He is not making childbearing a requirement for eternal salvation, as some people have falsely interpreted. Paul is referring to the Garden when the Lord told Eve that she would bear children in pain (Gen. 3:16). He assures them that correct behavior will ensure safe delivery of children.

Is Paul saying that a woman cannot serve over a man? Absolutely not. He is saying that the women should not unjustly take authority. They must learn like everyone else. To have authority, we must learn to be under authority. These women had to be sanctified from their pagan understanding.

God does not have problems with women serving in positions of authority over men. As mentioned before, Deborah was the judge and prophet over the whole nation. She had authority over men such as Barak. In the Old Testament, there are other examples of

women serving. Women served at the tent of meeting (Exodus 38:8). As aforementioned, Miriam helped lead Israel out of Egypt (Micah 6:4). When she died, the water stopped flowing from the rock (Numbers 20:1-2). Her praise and worship kept the water flowing. Huldah the prophetess was sought after to give the King of Israel a word from God. She obviously was allowed to instruct a man in a higher position than herself about the way of God. In the Old Testament, women were allowed to have positions of authority over men and instruct them. We know that God does not change (Malachi 3:7, Hebrew 13:8). Did this view of women change in the New Testament?

The Bible was written from a Hebraic perspective. The problem is that Greek philosophy and Greek thought has invaded the Bible the past 2,000 years. Greek thought is linear, evolutionary. Hebraic thought is cyclical. As Solomon wrote, "...there is nothing new under the sun" (Eccl. 1:9). God does not change or evolve. When Greek thought invaded the Bible, this Greek idea of how women were treated also influenced our understanding of the Bible. For the most part, women have been excluded!

One of the first people that Christ was brought to see after His birth was Anna, a prophetess (Luke 2:36). Before Christ's death, a woman came to Him and washed His feet with expensive perfume. She was worshiping Him and honoring Him as the Messiah. He said, "I tell you the truth, wherever this gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her" (Mark 14:9). The actions of a woman will be told where ever the gospel is preached. Women were actually the first ones to take the gospel out after Christ's resurrection. Some women went to Christ's tomb and were told by Angels that He had resurrected. The women went to the tomb and saw that the Lord was gone. The men did not believe their testimony (**Luke 24:1-9**).

Earlier in this chapter, we went through I Timothy 2:8-15. Right after this passage of Scripture is an entire chapter on the qualifications for overseers and deacons. In I Timothy 3:8-13, Paul lists

the qualifications for a deacon: “8 Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; 9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. 10 And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. 11 Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. 12 Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. 13 For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus. (KJV)

Verses 1-7 of this chapter address the qualifications of an Overseer (sometimes translated as Bishop). Paul then states that the deacons must measure up to certain standards in the like manner as the elders. In verse 11, the King James Version translates the Greek word *gune* as wife. It should be noted that this Greek word can be translated as wife or as woman. The Greek word for man can also be translated as husband. This reflects God’s perfect intention that men and women be married. Why would Paul need to address the deacon’s wife?. An Overseer or Elder is a higher position in the church in terms of responsibility, and God does not say anything about an Elder’s wife in verses 1-7. If we rightly divide the Word, we will realize that Paul is not talking about wives here. He is talking about women who are deacons. He does mention that a deacon must be the husband of but one wife, but that is addressed to the men who are deacons. It was the custom of some cultures for men to have multiple wives. Since most ancient cultures did not promote multiple husbands for women, a statement concerning women being monogamous would be unnecessary for the reader.

In Romans 16:1, Paul wrote, “I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a **servant** of the church in Cenchræa. I ask you to receive her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints and to give her any help she may need from you, for she has been a great help to many people, including me.” The first person that Paul commends in his concluding chapter to the Romans is a woman, who is a servant in Rome. The word translated as servant in this verse,

diakonos, is translated as minister or deacon elsewhere. Here, in its feminine form, it should be translated as deaconess. Not only does Phoebe serve in the church, but Paul says that the Romans are to give her any help she may need. In other words, they are supposed to do whatever she says. Paul has placed authority in his deaconess in Rome. If women were not supposed to serve in God's church or have any authority, then why would Paul give her authority so that the Romans must supply any help she needs? These verses show us that women are listed as potential officers for the office of a deaconess.

Elsewhere in the New Testament, Paul says that Nympha, a woman, had a church that met in her house (Colossians 4:15). She was likely affiliated with the Laodicean believers and was an outstanding believer among them. In Acts 12:12, Mary, the mother of John-Mark, has a church in her home where they had been praying for Peter to be released from prison. In Acts 21:8-9, a man named Agabus had four daughters who prophesied. Aquila and Priscilla, a husband and wife duo in the New Testament, are mentioned several times as ministers of the gospel. In Acts 18:24-26, Priscilla and Aquila explained the word of God more clearly to Apollos. This husband/wife tandem is mentioned also by Paul in Romans 16:3-4 as a couple who risked their lives for him. He mentions their work again in I Corinthians 16:19-20 and 2 Timothy 4:19. Often Priscilla, the wife, is listed first when the two are mentioned. The most important thing, however, is that both of them are listed as ministers of the gospel and fellow workers with the others. If women were not supposed to explain the word of God to men, then why would both of them explained the word of God to Apollos, who was a well-known minister? Why would Priscilla be listed first in almost every mention of the couple? Why were each of these women used by God in mighty ways if women were not supposed to serve in the church?

In Romans 16, Paul lists several women who helped him in the gospel: "Greet Mary, who worked very hard for you" (verse 7). "Greet Andronicus and Junia, my relative who have been in prison with me. They are outstanding among the Apostles, and

they were in Christ before I was” (verse 8). “Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, those women who work hard in the Lord. Greet my dear friend Persis, another woman who has worked very hard in the Lord” (verse 12). Again, these women who served the Lord are commended by Paul and their service is placed in a positive light.

Jesus taught his twelve disciples about prayer by telling them the story of a widow woman (Luke 18:1-8). He also said that the Queen of Sheba will rise in the judgment against the generation of Jesus’ day. A woman’s faith in ancient times will allow her to testify against the lack of faith in both men and women in Jesus’ time. In I Corinthians 11, Paul said that women can prophesy and pray in public worship. The Samaritan woman that Jesus talked to at the well went back to the Samaritans and told them about Jesus (John 4:39-42). These men and women came to Jesus to learn more about Him! In Acts 16, Paul went to find a place of prayer on the Sabbath. He found a group of women praying. Where were the men at? These women were not condemned for their service, but encouraged in it. Women are mentioned in various roles throughout the Bible and are free to serve in the congregation.

In Galatians 3:28, Paul says that “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” When we are saved in Christ, it is not because we are male or female or Jew or Greek, but because we have faith in Jesus Christ and we have the Holy Spirit. Faith is something that transcends natural distinctions; it is not determined by a person’s biological distinction, but a decision of the heart. In the same way, service in the body of Christ comes, not by a person’s natural disposition, but because of one’s calling. God does not choose people to serve in the Body of Christ because they are male or female, but because their character has been harvested by God to perform a certain work. God does not give the Holy Spirit because someone is male or female, and in the same way service to God does not come as a result of being male or female, white or black, but because of the Holy Spirit.

Service to God is ‘gender-less’, meaning that God does not always call male or females to do certain tasks. God has chosen some people to do one kind of service and other people to do another kind of service. As Paul explains in I Corinthians 12, the service we receive from Christ comes as a result of the Holy Spirit. If the administration of the Holy Spirit manifests as prophesying, then it was a result of God’s calling and not as a result of a person’s gender. The gifts of the Spirit are not a matter of male or female. It has to do with the person’s calling in God’s Government.

When King Josiah became King of Israel and the book of the law was found, he sent a delegation to a prophetess named Huldah. This prophetess then told the delegation what was going to happen in the future, and God fulfilled it exactly as He spoke it through her. In this example, all the leading men of the Kingdom, including the King himself, sent to inquire of the Lord from a woman. If God did not give women authority or a voice in the Bible, then why did all of these men seek the word of the Lord from her? They sought the word of the Lord from her because she was called and chosen to deliver the word of the Lord. Her calling did not come because of her biological traits, but because she was chosen by God to prophecy (2 Chronicles 34:19-22 also records this event).

Just because the head of woman is man does not mean that women cannot serve in the church or have positions of authority. Women are co-heirs of eternal life with men and are free to serve in the Church. This includes preaching, teaching, prophesying, and holding offices in the church such as Prophet and deaconess. The past 1,900 years, women have been unnecessarily restricted and excluded from service in church. We should repent for excluding members of Christ’s body from serving. What person intentionally restricts his or her body from walking forward? No one except Christians!

In Isaiah 61:1-3, we learn the commission we have to carry the gospel out. Part of that commission is to bind up the broken-

hearted and proclaim freedom for the captives. Women have been held captive in other societies. The Body of Christ is supposed to be a place where women are free to serve God. The gospel of Jesus Christ aimed to set women free to serve God as co-workers with men. We do not understand the Kingdom of God like we should. The societies and governments of this world subject women and prevent them from being viewed for their full potential, but in the kingdom of God, we are equal before God!

There is one side issue that I want to explain at the end of this chapter. In I Corinthians 11, Paul explains how women must wear a covering over their head when they pray or prophesy in public. We have to understand the context of the passage to fully grasp its meaning. Paul is writing in this passage about women praying and prophesying in the Corinthian church. In ancient times, women served as temple prostitutes in pagan temples. Often they would shave their heads to keep from getting lice. The church had female prostitutes visiting church and getting saved. These recently converted women still did not have much hair. After being saved for some time, they were participating in church services by praying. Because they did not have much hair, this may have caused confusion to visitors or recent converts. They might start thinking that there are temple prostitutes in the church, which would be terrible! To this end, Paul tells the women to wear a covering over their head until their hair grew out. It is only a shame for a woman to pray with shorn or a shaved head. Her long hair is her glory, and Paul is explaining why women should have long hair to prevent confusion. After this section, Paul says that the church should decide for themselves whether or not a woman should have her head covered when she prays or prophesies. Clearly, Paul thinks it is permissible for women to publicly participate in worship services.

When it comes to the woman question, there is no question about it: women can serve in the church.

All books and sermon sets are gift for donation!

Order yours today, by mail, PO Box 10334, Jackson TN 38308;
email, hungryheartsmn@aol.com; or by phone (731) 736-1055.

Holy Time With God

Hungry Hearts Ministries' book on the Sabbath is now available. This new book will captivate your heart to serve God by obeying His Sabbath. Order yours today, and order for all of your friends. This will explain how God's Sabbath brings you into a closer relationship with Jesus.

Yours for a suggested donation of \$7

(The CD sermon set is yours for a suggested donation of \$20)

Freedom Under the Law of God

The Torah is the first five books of the Bible and is also called The Law. Some believe that God's law is bondage. This book explains how God's Law, or Torah, actually *encourages* freedom. Order *Freedom Under the Law of God* to learn how the Torah encourages us as Christians and human beings to live a life full of happiness, prosperity, and freedom.

Yours for a suggested donation of \$10

Teshuvah: Season of Repentance

The Season of *Teshuvah* is a special time of year. During this time, an anointing is poured out to really help us return to God with all of our being. The purpose of this anointing is to help us prepare for the fall Feast Days. Learn how to humble yourself before God during this time of the year so that you can experience the Fall Feast Days in their fullness!

Yours for a suggested donation of \$7

All books and sermon sets are gift for donation!

Order yours today by mail, PO Box 10334, Jackson TN 38308; email, hungryheartsmen@aol.com; or by phone (731) 736-1055.

US in Bible Prophecy

Many people wonder if countries such as the United States can be found in Bible Prophecy. If God mentions small countries like Ethiopia in end-time prophecies, then how could He miss out on the greatest country on earth, the United States? In this 5-CD sermon set, learn the identity of the United States in Bible Prophecy. Did you know that prophecies about the United States were first made in the book of Genesis? Did you know that the United States is actually one of the Northern "lost" tribes of Israel? Find out the Biblical evidence showing that the United States is one of the tribes of Israel and learn what will happen to the United States in these last days!

Yours for a suggested donation of \$25

Holy Spirit and Fire

There has always been a Holy Fire burning in the hearts of God's Holy people. It has burned down through the ages to our present time. It will give us strength today if we will let it. This fire is called the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, and it will quench the deepest longings of every human. This fire will produce spiritual fruit and activate spiritual gifts in our lives. It will set us apart to God Almighty. Learn about the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and how it will change your life!

Yours for a suggested donation of only \$9

HUNGRY HEARTS MINISTRIES

Is Your Heart Hungry For The Lord?

The purpose of Hungry Hearts Ministries is to teach Christians how to LIVE according to the way of life taught in the Law of God, and to BAPTIZE them in the Holy Spirit, so they can WORSHIP the Living God both in Spirit and in Truth. We accomplish this with a five point outreach: a local service, a Feast of Tabernacles Celebration, a weekly message ministry, books on our purpose, and missions overseas.

We are a Ministry dedicated to serve the God of Israel. Too many Christian organizations are focused around men. It takes men and women to serve God, we just need to change the focus from us to Him. Our purpose and our outreach is focused on bringing people to Him. That is, to God our Father and to His Son, (Yeshua) Jesus Christ. We live by His laws, because he told us to live that way. We accept His son as our Savior because, Jesus paid for our sins with His death on the cross. We want the fullness of His Spirit, because it is the power of God living in us. We want Him and all of Him that we can have. We worship God because it is the whole duty of mankind. We worship God because He has redeemed us to Himself. We worship God because we know Him.

We are a people who are hungry for more of God. We are sick and tired of man-made church. We want to feel His Spirit stir within us. We are focused on the real God to help us with our real needs in our real lives. We are hungry for His Presence, we are thirsty for His Spirit, and we are willing to offer Him our lives.

Meet the Author

Kelly McDonald Jr. is an ordained Evangelist at Hungry Hearts Ministries in Jackson, TN. For 21 years, Kelly attended Trinity Baptist Church in Bemis, TN, where he was saved in 1992. While at Trinity, a small independent Baptist church, Kelly learned boldness for the Kingdom of God and that being a Christian is an all or nothing experience. In June 2006, Kelly was called to his first ministry, going door to door in the Bemis community and inviting people to church. In September 2006, Kelly was called to begin a Christian men's group at his then college, Lambuth University. In February 2007, Kelly was called to preach. Less than a month later, he became introduced to Hungry Hearts Ministries.

Since becoming a member of Hungry Hearts, Kelly has taken on many roles to further the ministry's work, from going door-to-door to pass out booklets, preaching, administering the prison ministry, teaching Bible Studies, and starting churches. Due to his service in the ministry, he was ordained a Deacon during the Feast of Pentecost on May 31st, 2009. His spiritual growth and desire to serve God led to his ordination as an Evangelist during the Feast of Pentecost on May 25th, 2012.

Kelly has written for a local Christian magazine, *The Christian to Christian Connection*, and for the international Sabbatarian magazine, *The Sabbath Sentinel*. He currently writes for and serves as the Editor for the Ministry's magazine, *Pursuit*. Kelly has written five books on how to live a holy life. Kelly graduated *summa cum laude* from Lambuth University in Jackson, TN in 2009. He earned a Bachelor of Science with a double major in Political Science and Sociology with a minor in Legal Studies. As a Torah Observant/Spirit Filled minister, Kelly has spoken at several different congregations in four different states, and is available to speak at your church upon request.

For centuries there has been great debate as to the role of women in the church. Some say that women should not be allowed to serve in any capacity, whereas others say that they should be allowed to serve in any role that a man can serve in. Other churches allow women to do some things, but not other types of service. This question is of great importance because it has to do with the place of women in the Body of Christ. How God views this a reflection of His character. In this work, we will examine the role of women in the Bible.



Kelly McDonald, Jr. is an ordained Evangelist at Hungry Hearts Ministries in Jackson, TN. Kelly writes for the international Sabbatarian magazine, *The Sabbath Sentinel*. He also writes and serves as the Editor for the ministry's magazine, *Pursuit*. Kelly graduated *summa cum laude* from Lambuth University, where he earned a Bachelor of Science with a double major in Political Science and Sociology with a minor in Legal Studies. Kelly has been preaching for seven years and is available to speak at your church upon request.