

A Woman's Contribution to the Local Congregation

TEXT: Various

THESIS: Women play a vital role in the church.

INTRODUCTION:

1. When we look at women in the church, attention is often given to the limitations placed upon them in the assemblies of the church.
 - a. The Scripture Says, "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 any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church. What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only? If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord." (1 Cor. 14:34-37)
 - b. The Bible says, "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 Tim. 2:11-12)
 - i. Now this is not talking about a woman singing, teaching children or participating in Bible class.
 - ii. But, about the role of authority that is to be under the man.
 - c. Yet, the early church still greatly benefitted by the contributions of many women.
2. When looking at the church in Rome, we read:
 - a. That the service of Phoebe was of help to Paul and many others.
 - i. For, "I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea: That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also." (Rom. 16:1-2)
 - b. Then we read of Priscilla who helped even risking her life for the apostle Paul.
 - i. For, "Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles." (Rom. 16:3-4)
 - c. And, then we read of the twin sisters: Tryphena and Tryphosa and the beloved Persis.
 - i. For Paul said, "Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord." (Rom. 16:12)
 - d. Even today, the growth of many congregations is the result of the labors from women.
3. Yet, how can this be if women are limited in what they can do in the public assemblies?
 - a. Well, public assemblies are actually a very small part of the overall work of the church.

- i. I mean we worship for about 2 hours each Sunday and have 2 hours of Bible class a week based on 168 hours a week.
 - ii. Some congregations I know worship for about 5 hours with 7 hours of Bible class a week, but this is still a very small percentage of the week.
 - b. Thus, there is much work outside the assembly that must be done if a church is to grow.
 - i. And women are often in a position to provide much of this needed work.
- 4. So, what can a woman do? How can she contribute to the growth and success of a local church?
- 5. I would suggest that we notice the B.E.E.
 - a. Woman's contribution in benevolence
 - b. Woman's contribution in edification
 - c. Woman's contribution in evangelism

DISCUSSION:

- I. A WOMAN'S CONTRIBUTION IN BENEVOLENCE
 - A. Benevolence is an important work.
 - 1. It is a mark of pure religion.
 - a. For, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." (Jam. 1:27)
 - 2. Ministering to brethren is a service rendered to the Lord.
 - a. Open your Bibles to Matt. 25:34-40: "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."
 - 3. All Christians, which includes women and men equally, are to be involved in this work.
 - a. For, "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?" (Jam. 2:14-16)

- b. “But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?” (1 Jn. 3:17)
- B. Women are well suited for benevolence.
 - 1. They bring a grace and beauty of which men are not normally capable.
 - a. The unique attributes of femininity lend themselves well to this work.
 - b. Mercy and compassion are almost second nature to women.
 - 2. And women often possess skills through which benevolence can be rendered.
 - 3. Such as making clothes as Docras did for the needy widows.
 - a. “Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did. And it came to pass in those days, that she was sick, and died: whom when they had washed, they laid her in an upper chamber. And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring him that he would not delay to come to them. Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them.” (Acts 9:36-39)
 - b. Cooking, baby-sitting, ministrering to the sick, extending hospitality, etc. . .
 - 4. Indeed, women who might later be taken into the number were to be known or well reported for the good works she had done in the area.
 - a. For, “Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man, Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.” (1 Tim. 5:9-10)
 - 5. Thus, any work that a woman does in the area of benevolence is a powerful contribution to the work and reputation of the local church.

II. A WOMAN’S CONTRIBUTION IN EDIFICATION

- A. Edification involves building up the body of Christ, through the work of every member.
 - 1. “But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the

- body unto the edifying of itself in love.” (Eph. 4:15-16)
2. It entails following commands like:
 - a. “Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.” (Gal. 6:2)
 - b. And, “Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.” (1 Thess. 5:11)
 - c. And, “Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.” (1 Thess. 5:14)
 3. Some men were known for their work in this area like Barnabas (Acts 4:36-37)
- B. But, women can do much to edify the church.
1. Through formal teaching of others.
 2. The grandmothers and mothers can teach children as Lois and Eunice did with Timothy.
 - a. Paul said, “When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.” (2 Tim. 1:5)
 3. Older women can and should be teaching the younger women.
 - a. “The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.” (Tit. 2:3-5)
 - b. Now, this is not just about the adult women teaching girls, but that the older ladies teach the younger ladies so that they will learn.
 - c. Especially where there are people who come into the church without the benefit of godly mothers and grandmothers, in which Christian women can be surrogates.
 4. Through informal words of encouragement:
 - a. It has been said that men are natural producers and women are natural nurturers’.
 - b. With so many dysfunctional families and emotional problems today, the gift of encouragement and nurturing possessed by many women is essential.
 - c. Many teachers and preachers have been helped by godly women as they encourage them in their work.
 5. There is a special need for women to see themselves as teachers of young people and other women and as encouragers of men in their work of preaching the Gospel.
- C. For, where women are involved in the work of edification, their contribution to the work of the local church does not go unnoticed.

III. A WOMAN'S CONTRIBUTION IN EVANGELISM

- A. Evangelism is an imperative work.
1. It is the Great Commission given by the Lord.
 - a. He said, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen." (Matt. 28:19-20)
 2. The gospel is God's power to save and so it must be shared with everyone.
 - a. Paul said, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." (Rom. 1:16)
 - b. Jesus, "said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mk. 16:15-16)
 3. This is a work that can be done by everyone.
 - a. For as, "Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles. Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word." (Acts 8:1, 4)
- B. Women can do much in the area of evangelism.
1. For the spreading of the Gospel has never been limited to just men.
 2. They can help support those who preach the Gospel.
 - a. Notice Mary Magdalene, Joanna and Susanna of Lk. 8:1-3: "And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him, And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, And Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance."
 - b. Women can provide much needed hospitality as Lydia.
 - c. "And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us." (Acts 16:15)
- C. Women can tell others about Christ.
1. Consider the example of the Samaritan woman, who was instrumental in converting many people to Christ.
 - a. For, "The woman then 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? Then they went out of the city, and came unto him. In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat.” (Jn. 4:28-31)

- b. Later it is recorded, “many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did. So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days. And many more believed because of his own word; And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.” (Jn. 4:39-42)

2. Then there was Priscilla who with her husband.

- a. Who provided a place for Paul to stay during his ministry at Corinth.

(1) “After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth; And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them. And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers. And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.” (Acts. 18:1-4)

- b. And, she is equally responsible as her husband in converting Apollos at Ephesus.

(1) “And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, **they** took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.” (Acts 18:24-26)

- c. We read also of how Priscilla hosted a church at Ephesus in their home.

(1) For, “The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.” (1 Cor. 16:19)

- d. And, she also hosted a church at Rome in their home.

(1) “Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of

the Gentiles. Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Salute my wellbeloved Epaphroditus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ.” (Rom. 16:3-5)

3. Even without hardly a word, godly women can lead others to Christ including unbelieving husbands.
 - a. “Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear.” (1 Pet. 3:1-2)
 - b. There are countless examples where the wife would attend all services and be involved in the church only to see her husband come around 25 or 30 years later and obey the Gospel that she loves so dearly.
- D. Many souls have been saved and churches started through the evangelistic efforts of godly women!

CONCLUSION:

1. There is certainly much that a woman can contribute to the work of the local church.
 - a. The act of her praying is no small thing and helps the church greatly.
 - b. Beyond that, there is a wide range of activities women can engage in without going beyond the limitations placed on them in the public assemblies.
2. The true measure of a local church is not defined by what occurs in the assembly.
 - a. It includes what the members do day by day: in the home, at work and in the world.
 - b. It involves benevolence, edification and evangelism taking place on a daily, personal basis.
3. When Godly women are active in the service of the Lord, using the unique talents and opportunities given to them.
 - a. Souls are saved and strengthened in the Lord and cared for in times of need.
 - b. The Lord’s church is made stronger and the kingdom of God is expanded in the world.
4. May there always be a surplus of women in the Lord’s church like Mary Magdalene, Dorcas, Lydia, Priscilla, Lois, Eunice and of course, Phoebe.
 - a. For, “I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea: That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.” (Rom. 16:1-2)
 - b. May we never take for granted nor minimize the valuable service rendered by our sisters in Christ, but receive and encourage them in a way worthy of the saints!