

## Why I Believe God Uses Women in the Ministry

- I. Because God used women in the ministry during Old Testament times.
  - A. Miriam, Exodus 15:20.
    1. "Prophetess" is the feminine form of "prophet."
    2. Who selects humans to serve in the office of "prophet" or in any other office of the ministry? **Only God**, Hebrews 5:4.
    3. Micah 6:4 points out that God led Israel by the hand of Moses, Aaron, and **Miriam**.
  - B. Deborah, Judges 4 & 5.
    1. Judges 4:4,5 points out that Deborah served as both "prophetess" and "judge."
    2. As prophetess, Deborah enjoyed an anointing from God, the Holy Spirit.
    3. As judge, Deborah guided civil and spiritual affairs in Israel. She served in the office of "judge" as well as men like Gideon, Jephtha, and Samson.
  - C. Hulda, II Chronicles 34:22-28.
    1. In this story, King Josiah sent several of his aides to Hulda, the prophetess. These aides asked Hulda about God's plan for Judah.
    2. Verses 23-28 record the message she delivered for God to King Josiah.
    3. Notice that neither the King nor his cabinet members hesitated in asking a woman for spiritual guidance.
  - D. Isaiah's wife, Isaiah 8:3.
  - E. God's prediction of women in the ministry, Joel 2:28-29.
    1. This passage predicts the coming of the Holy Spirit upon born again believers. On the day of Pentecost, Peter quoted these verses in Acts 2:16-21.
    2. Please notice that God promised to pour out His Spirit upon both male and female.
    3. Both male and female humans will "prophesy."
  - F. Anna, Luke 1:36-38.
    1. Please remember that Old Testament rules and regulation remained in effect until Jesus' resurrection. Although the New Testament includes the four gospels, you must remember that the events in the gospels occurred during the Old Testament era. The New Testament age or age of grace, began at Jesus' resurrection. Anna lived during Old Testament times.
    2. Notice that Anna is called a "prophetess," Luke 2:36.

- G. The Old Testament prophetesses listed here only represent a small portion of the women God uses in achieving His purposes for planet earth. Some others we might mention are Ruth, Esther, Rahab, Abigail, and Hannah. It is plain that God used women in the ministry during Old Testament times.
- II. Because God used women in the ministry during New Testament times.
- A. Phillip's four daughters, Acts 21:9
- B. Phoebe, a deaconess, Romans 16:1,2.
1. In the King James Version, Phoebe is referred to as a "servant of the church."
  2. The Greek word for our English word "servant" is "diakonos." Our English words "deacon" and "deaconess" came from the Greek "diakonos."
  3. Romans 16:1-16 records a long list of Paul's friends and fellow ministers. Notice that his list begins with a deaconess.
- C. Priscilla
1. Acts 18:1-3 introduces us to a husband-wife team names Aquila and Priscilla.
  2. The New Testament frequently refers to this couple and the ministry God gave them.
  3. Notice how the New Testament record refers to this couple; three times Aquila is mentioned first (Acts 18:2&26; I Corinthians 16:19) and three times, Priscilla is mentioned first (Acts 18:18; Romans 16:3; II Timothy 4:19). This arrangement of names indicates that Priscilla's ministry is equal to that of her husband's.
- D. Various women, Romans 16 (The first fifteen verses of this chapter list Paul's helpers in the ministry who lived in Rome.).
1. Phoebe, verse 1.
  2. Priscilla, verse 3.
  3. Mary, verse 6.
  4. Tryphena and Tryphosa, verse 12.
  5. Julia, verse 15.
- E. Euodia and Syntyche, Philippians 4:2-3.
1. Here Paul encouraged these two ladies to "agree with each other in the Lord."
  2. Then he asked another minister in Philippi "to help these women who have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel." In other words, these ladies were ministers.
  3. Then Paul refers to these ladies and other Philippian friends as "fellow workers," clearly proving that these ladies held offices in the ministry.
- III. What the New Testament *doesn't* say about women.
- A. "Women aren't allowed to speak in the church."

1. This *incorrect* belief is based on misunderstanding, I Corinthians 14:33-35.
  2. Paul wrote I Corinthians 14 as a guide for orderly church meetings. For example, several Corinthian Christians attempted to deliver messages in tongues or prophecy simultaneously. Paul corrected this confusion by directing believers to deliver prophecies, messages in tongues or interpretation of tongues one at a time, I Corinthians 14:27-32.
  3. In verses 34 and 35, Paul corrected ladies who interrupted meetings by asking their husbands to explain the preacher's or teacher's comments.
    - a. Women and men, including husbands and wives, sat on opposite sides of public meeting places.
    - b. When a wife needed clarification of the speaker's comments, she interrupted by asking her husband who sat or stood on the opposite side of the room.
    - c. Paul directed the ladies to save their questions for later. He said, "If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home" (Verse 35, NIV).
  4. These verses do not forbid a woman from preaching, teaching, or prophesying. They only forbid a woman from interrupting a service with unnecessary talking.
  5. Obviously, this same regulation applies to men who disturb services with needless chatter.
- B. Women can't preach or teach unless they preach to or teach in ladies groups.
1. This *incorrect* belief is based on misunderstanding the overall Bible teaching about women in ministry. Since God used women in the ministry in Bible times, who are we to refuse their ministry in modern times.
  2. Please read I Timothy 2:12.
    - a. Some people believe this verse proves that God refuses to use women in the ministry.
    - b. Such a belief requires us to totally disregard the rest of the Bible. Were Miriam, Deborah, Hulda, Phillip's four daughters, Phoebe, and other women in the ministry out of God's will?
    - c. I Timothy 2:12 *doesn't* forbid women ministers. This verse simply states that women ministers must submit their ministry to the watchful care and authority of men who are in the ministry.
  3. Please read I Timothy 2:13-14.

- a. After Adam and Eve sinned, God appointed the man as head of the woman. In Genesis 3:16, God told the woman that the man, “shall rule over you.”
- b. I Timothy 2:13&14 merely point out God’s reason for appointing the man as head of the woman.
  - (1) God created Adam first.
  - (2) The woman sinned first
- c. These verses are not intended to embarrass or humiliate women. Adam’s transgression was just as great as Eve’s. In fact, we could blame her sin upon deception. We must blame Adam’s sin on outright rebellion.

C. “Christian women can’t wear jewelry or nice clothing.”

- 1. This *incorrect* belief is based upon misunderstanding I Timothy 2:9.
- 2. This verse does not forbid the wearing of jewelry or nice clothing. It forbids *excessive* use of ornaments or expensive clothing.
- 3. The next four paragraphs are quoted from Dake’s Annotated Bible, page 236, column 2 in the New Testament. This article is entitled “Ancient Headdress,” and explains why New Testament writers commanded moderation in ladies adornment.

“Gr. **Plegma**: anything twined or plated; a net; wreaths; chaplets. Only here this is not the Gr. Word for hair (trichos) trans. Hair 14 times. It could refer to hair here, but it could also refer to some part of the headdress, the horn, for instance. Women wore a hollow silver or gold tube or horn 18-20 inches long on the forehead adorned with all kinds of precious stones, having strong cords suspended from it to the back which reached to the knees, and had tassles of red silk weighted with lead. These kept the horn from toppling in front. The whole thing was rendered firm by a network of cords, which supported it, and by a strong band fastened tightly under the jaws.

A veil was worn over the horn in such a manner as to leave its lower half uncovered in front. The veil could be drawn over the face at will, to cover all the face but one eye.

Regarding the hair, which may be the reference here, it was worn in the back in braids – from 1 to a record of 110 braids. In each braid would be woven silk cords with gold coins at irregular distances and reaching down to the knees, glittering at every movement of the wearer. Sometimes hair was made into temples, and other fanciful figures with the aid of gum.

Sometimes caps completely covered coins or frontlets ornamented with diamonds were worn. Oriental women were fond of excessive decking with jewelry, not only on their heads, but other parts of the body as well. Earrings, nose-jewels, chains, rings, bracelets, ankle-rings, rings of real pearls and money, necklaces, and many other ornaments were worn, some even by men (Genesis 24:47; Exodus 32:2; 35:22; Judges 8:24; Isaiah 3:16-24; Job 42:11).

IV. Neither male nor female.

Please read Galatians 3:26-29.

- A. These verses point out that both Jew and Gentile, slave and free are equally God's children and entitled to His blessings.
- B. In Christ, Paul affirmed that there is neither male nor female.
- C. God blesses humans with ministries regardless of their sex!
- D. Below please find a paragraph from Dake's Annotated Bible, page 149, column 1 in the New Testament. "God has used a rod (Exodus 4:2,17); ass (Numbers 22:28); ram's horn (Joshua 6:5); ox goad, nail, barley cake, pitchers, jawbone, millstone (Judges 3:31; 4:21; 7:13,20; 9:53; 15:15-19); mantle (II Kings 2:8) ditches (II Kings 3:16); empty vessels (II Kings 4:3); cruise of oil, ravens (I Kings 17:4,16); worm, wind, fish, goad (Jonah 1:4,17; 4:6-7); cock (Mk. 14:72); and many other weak things to confound the mighty (I Corinthians 1:18-21). Is it not possible then that He can use a woman?"