

**XXVII. WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS
LESSON TWENTY-SEVEN**

... ABOUT THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this lesson is to clear up some of the confusion concerning the role of women in the local church by carefully looking at the Scriptures concerning the order of authority and sub-mission in the family and in the church, and the Scriptures which seem to say that women are to be silent, not to even speak, or teach in the church and a Scripture which has been interpreted to say there is total equality between men and women concerning authority in the local church.

ORDER OF AUTHORITY AND SUBMISSION

1. IN THE FAMILY

According to the following Scriptures passages what is the general and basic principle concerning the relationship of husbands and wives in the area of authority and submission?

Ephesians 5:22,23

Colossians 3:18

1 Timothy 2:12,13

2. IN THE CHURCH

The Bible establish for us God's Divine order of authority and submission in the family. This order holds true also in the local church which is the family of God. According to the following Scriptures what is that order?

Isaiah 9:6

Colossians 1:18

Ephesians 4:11

Ephesians 4:8

Acts 14:23

Acts 20:17,28

Titus 1:5

Titus 1:6

1 Timothy 3:2

Acts 6:2,3

1 Timothy 3:12

Hebrews 13:17

Read 1 Corinthians 11:3-15. According to verse 3 what is the order of authority and submission in the church?

Determine from verse 10 what women need?

According to verse 15, what is symbolic of the woman's covering?

Conclusions: We would note from the above Scriptures that God's order in the relationship of men and women concerning authority and submission both in the family and in the local church is women need the covering of their husbands in the home and the Elders in the Church. There-fore they are to be in submission to and under there respective coverings provided by God.

Does this mean that women are created inferior or lower than men? No, it does not! In the God-head, the Son is in no way inferior to the Father (John 5:18, Philippians 2:6), yet He is subject to Him. In marriage, a husband and wife are of equal importance (Galatians 3:28), but the wife's role is to be subject to the husband as Christ is to God. Thus in God's order it is fitting for a wife to subordinate herself voluntarily to her husband. This subordinate role of women to the elders in the local church is also to be the rule for women to follow in the church.

This subordinate role of the woman in her relationship with her husband or her subordinate relationship in the church does not in any way make her inferior to her husband or the elders in the church.

WHERE DO WOMEN FIT IN THE ACTIVITIES OF THE CHURCH?

The following Scriptures have led to a confusion and conflict as to what women are to do and not do in the church?

1 Timothy 2:11,12

Is the Scripture saying that women are not to speak in church and that they are not permitted to teach? NO! To understand what Paul is saying, we need to understand from the Greek, the words in the KJV which are translated SILENCE, SUFFER, and USURP.

- **Silence** - The Greek word translated silence in this passage literally means to have an inward quietness, or peace.
- **Suffer** - The Greek word translated suffer literally means to turn to, entrust to, leave to, give a license to (appoint, anoint or give formal permission).

- **Usurp Authority** - The Greek word translated usurp literally means to exercise authority on one's own account - to act of oneself.

Applying these meanings to 1 Timothy 2:11-12, what is Paul actually saying?

1 Corinthians 14:34-35

Applying the above meanings to silence and permit (suffer) in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, what could Paul be saying in this passage in light of the above 1 Timothy 2:11-12?

Galatians 3:28

Is this saying, there is no distinction between men and women in the Church? Or in the physical realm? What is this Scripture saying?

Conclusions:

1. Women have no self authority in the local church, thus of their own accord they are not to exercise or hold positions of authority in the church. However, they can be given authority by the elders of the church and exercise that authority under the covering of the elders.
2. Since, the offices of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, teacher, elder, and deacon are positions of authority, women may not be placed in these positions. Note: For more detail and clarity concerning point 2, refer to the paper entitled "Can women be called to the Fivefold Ministry Offices?" (Page 92)
3. All the ministries of the local body, with the exception of those mentioned above, are open to women as well as to men - the gifts of the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12:8-11.