

The Christian Woman In The Church

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1. The single Scriptural principle which governs the position of a woman in the church is the same as that which governs her position in the family, society, etc., namely, the position of submission to man which God established by the order of creation of man and woman. (1 Ti 2:11,13; 1 Co 14:34b; 1 Co 11:3,8-9)
2. In the church this submission of the woman means that she will be silent rather than say or do anything which would involve her in exercising authority over a man. (1 Ti 2:12, 1 Co 14: 34a, 35)
3. Absolute silence is not what Scripture commands for a woman in church. Paul speaks of women who pray and prophesy (1 Co 11:5) in the same breath as he speaks of men who pray and prophesy (1 Co 11:4). Paul also speaks of women whom he urges to serve as teachers (Tit 2:3-5) and women who were active workers in the cause of the Gospel (Phm. 4:3, Ro 16:1-2,12). All of these were women whose praying, prophesying or working for the Gospel never led to a situation where they exercised authority over man otherwise to be consistent the inspired apostle would have censured rather than commended them. Likewise today Christian women who have talents which they are asked to use in the service of the church (e.g. evangelism, organist, choir director) will always be concerned about observing God's will as they render such service to their Lord and the church. They will never act in a domineering spirit but always in a spirit of helpfulness and humility.
4. The incident of Deborah in the OT does not establish any principle. When the Jews cited the divorce proceedings prescribed by Moses, Jesus reminded them that this was an exception that came about only because of the people's hard hearts. It was not to be used to overthrow or alter the principle. Just so Deborah stands (to the shame of Israel) as an exception and will not be used by Christians to challenge or alter the clear principle which God's Word states.
5. The fact that we do not require women to worship with covered heads as Paul commended the Corinthian women to do does not argue for the overthrow of God's principle either. This passage (1 Co 11) deals with the custom among the Greeks of covering the head which gave expression to the principle of the subordination of woman to man. Since the latter is a Biblical principle, Paul teaches that in their situation to refuse the custom could only be understood to be a denial also of the Biblical principle. Where there was no such custom which expressed this Biblical principle, there Paul also clearly states that the observance of women worshipping with a covered head was not necessary either (1 Co 11:16).
6. Sometimes the question is raised whether it is permissible for women to vote in a church meeting if the matter has no spiritual ramifications but is only a matter of church decoration or decorum etc. The fallacy in drawing such a line would be to say that it is only in spiritual matters that the woman is not to exercise authority over man. Scripture, however, draws no such line.
7. Christian women who heed the apostle's exhortation for us to humble ourselves under God's will in the same way that our Savior humbled himself to the very death on the cross (Phm 2:5ff.) will not seek ways to obviate the order of creation and what it means. They will not seek ways to satisfy their Old Adams which resent God's will and chafes in a position of submission; rather, led by the Spirit they seek to serve their Savior in the church in ways which do not conflict with God's will. They will do so with a willing spirit which knows that humble service in God's kingdom is not debasing but that here the greatest is the one who is servant of all (Mk 9:35). Being the subordinate of a loving, caring, self-sacrificing head can be a most happy and blessed position as God's Word also emphasizes by comparing the position of the woman to the position of the church in its relationship to Christ (1 Co 11:3).
8. Just because he is in the position of headship does not mean that man will treat woman as a slave nor ignore her welfare. To the contrary, it places on man the solemn obligation to act as a head with the same love that Christ showered on his church. This also has obvious and far-reaching ramifications for the men of a

congregation. The welfare and happiness of the women of the congregation will also be one of their foremost considerations.