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Do the Scriptures Support Women Ministers?

This is an age-old question I hope to shed some light on. I know from experience the battle, without and within, that a woman goes through when she is called by God to the ministry.

The Apostle Paul is often called a woman-hater, so let us turn to Romans 16 and see what he has to say. He starts off the chapter commending, introducing, Phebe to the Roman Church. She is called a sister who is a servant of the church at Cenchrea. In Romans 16:2, she is said to be a succourer of many including Paul. In checking the Greek meaning of the words, a picture develops. The word servant is diakonos meaning a minister. The word succourer is prostatis which is the feminine of proistemi, meaning a patroness. Proistemi means to stand before, i.e. (in rank) to preside, or (by implication) to practice -maintain be over, rule. Could Paul possibly be saying that Phebe is a minister and leader of the church in Cenchrea?

In Romans 16:3, he greets Priscilla and her husband Aquila, his helpers in Christ Jesus. The Greek for helpers is co-labourer, companion in labor, and labourer together with. As we have previously read in Acts 18:26, Priscilla and Aquila were ministers together of the gospel of Jesus Christ. And Paul acknowledges that.

In Romans 16:6 is a greeting to Mary who laboured much. He speaks of Tryphena, Tryphosa and Persis in Romans 16:12 and in Romans 16:15, he speaks of Julia. These are women who had "laboured in the Lord." This indicates that they labored in the ministry of the Word.

Let's look at other sections of the Bible, and see what God says about women preachers. In the gospels, we read of several women messengers who proclaimed the "good news" (Matthew 28:1-10; Luke 24:9-11; John 4:28-31, John 20:16-18).

In Acts 2:1-21 and Joel 2:28-31, God predicted and promised that He Himself would pour out His Spirit upon women and they would prophesy. To prophesy means to "speak to men to edification, exhortation and comfort" (1 Corinthians 14:3). "He that prophesieth edifieth the church" (1 Corinthians 14:4). Prophecy is for the church and general public. (1 Corinthians 14:1-6, 1 Corinthians 14:12, 1 Corinthians 14:24-26, 1 Corinthians 14:29-33).

In Acts 21:8-9, it is clear that Philip's four daughters were prophetesses; that is, they were evangelists like their father. In Philippians 4:2, Euodias and Syntyche are mentioned as being leaders of the church at Philippi.

The Corinthian women prophesied and prayed in church (1 Corinthians 11:4-5), so the scripture in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, that is used to condemn women preachers does not refer to preaching, but to disturbance in church services, i.e. asking or talking out to their husbands in church, as stated in 1 Corinthians 14:35. Even so with 1 Timothy 2:11-15, Paul is not condemning women preachers as long as they do not "usurp authority over the man." Both men and women at Corinth were permitted to pray and prophesy, but were regulated by fixed laws in doing so (1 Corinthians 14:24-32).

Many scriptures stated that women should not usurp authority over the man, this refers to the wife over the husband. In checking the Greek words translated men and women and/or wife and husband, the same word is used. These words, then, must be judged by the-context of the scripture. As an example, being a married woman, my authority is my husband, not all men, so it would be wrong to exercise power or take authority over him. If my husband is a believer, that extends to all facets of my relationship with him. If he is an unbeliever, he is my authority in secular things, but in my walk with the Lord, what God says must take precedence over what my husband says. An example of that would be if an unbelieving husband tells his believing wife to do something that is legal and socially acceptable, but is against the Word of God, she should obey God. It goes without saying that she should obey God concerning illegal matters. If the Word of God tells the believing wife to do something, and the unbelieving husband tells her not to, she should obey God.

If a woman feels the Lord is calling her to the ministry, she should make sure she is under the proper authority. If she is married, she should go to her husband and share with him what she feels the Lord has shown her. Sometimes, the husband has not received the same message from the Lord and he says no. Women, don't balk and argue with your husband, obey him and go pray. Ask the Lord to, first, show you in a way you can understand, if you really have a calling and anointing for the ministry. Then, if you do, ask the Lord to show your husband. Continue to pray, giving the Lord time to work and leave it in the hands of the Lord. God can and will do the impossible.

If you are unmarried, go share with your father, if he is a Spirit-filled Christian and if he is not, go to the authority in your church. The above listed steps still hold true.

But, if your authority, husband, if married, or father or minister, if single, agree that God has called you to the ministry, then step out in it. But trust and obey your authority to guide you in the ministry you are called to (Hebrews 13:7).

Most women do not like to look at the reason God puts them under a man's authority. In 1 Timothy 2:14, the Lord tells us that women can be deceived. Unfortunately, this is true. Women think first with their emotions and, therefore, are more open spiritually than men, who think first logically. Unfortunately, because women are more open, they could be open to the wrong spirits and fall into error. Historically, most of the cult religions were started by women who were not under the proper authority, i.e. Seventh-Day Adventist's, Christian Science, etc. For this reason we are given the guidance we need through our spiritual authority, be it husband, father or

minister. This should not be considered a burden or an insult, but a sign of God's love for us. He is showing His love by providing the protection we need to keep us from error.

It is a great blessing to walk in the anointing of the Holy Spirit for His ministry and is fully supported by scripture. Read your Bible carefully and follow the steps outlined for walking in the ministry you are called to and you will bring forth fruit and bring honor and glory to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Ann Eutsler

Note: This teaching was written by my wife when it became apparent that it was needed. I had prayed about doing it myself, but after reflection, I realized that it would be better for women, to receive it from a woman's perspective. I am in full agreement with this teaching and believe that it is worthy of all acceptance.

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Scripture References

Romans	16:2-3
Acts	18:26
Romans	16:12
Romans	16:15
Matthew	28:1-10
Luke	24:9-11
John	4:28-31
John	20:16-18
Acts	2:1-21
Joel	2:28-31
1 Corinthians	14:1-6
1 Corinthians	14:12
1 Corinthians	14:24-26
1 Corinthians	14:29-33
Acts	21:8-9
Philippians	4:2
1 Corinthians	11:4-5
1 Corinthians	14:34-35
1 Timothy	2:11-15
1 Corinthians	14:24-32
Hebrews	13:7