

Keeping Order In Worship – The Role of Women

When we assemble to worship God, we always want to be sure that our worship is offered to Him “in spirit and in truth.” (John 4:24). To that end, we must participate from our hearts (Hebrews 10:22) in acts that are authorized in the New Testament (Colossians 3:17).

From the time that we sit down to begin our worship together until we are dismissed, God’s New Testament pattern for worship must be observed. We sing (Ephesians 5:19), pray (II Thessalonians 3:1), hear God’s Word proclaimed (Acts 20:7ff) and on the first day of the week we contribute of our means (I Corinthians 16:1-2) and partake of the Lord’s Supper (Acts 20:7). When we “come together in the church” (I Corinthians 11:18), these acts are participated in by all but are led by the men of the congregation. (I Timothy 4:8). Searching throughout the New Testament, one finds no other acceptable acts of worship nor does one find any other acceptable leaders of these acts than faithful brethren. While the beloved Christian women participate vocally in song, they do so under the direction of one of the male members. Other than their singing (and confession of faith in Christ for those who wish to obey the Gospel), the ladies are to be silent during the worship assembly.

Such a concept is an affront to our modern society. In many circles little regard is given to passages such as I Corinthians 14:34-35 and I Timothy 4:11-12. Even some who claim to be members of the Lord’s church and yet who desire to “be like all the nations” (I Samuel 8:20) are now advocating the use of women in leading prayer, passing the trays during the Lord’s Supper, etc. Were society our standard then we would be wrong in speaking out against such practices. But because society is ever-changing and God’s Word is NEVER-changing, we must appeal to His standard rather than the standards of the world in which we live. The ladies are to be silent during the worship assembly.

In so saying, are we suggesting that Christian ladies are somehow inferior to Christian men? Certainly not. Again, if we get caught up in society’s standards then we will fall victim to the false notion that men and women are exactly alike and that their roles are not to differ one iota. Such is not only foolishness but is an obvious error. Men and women are different. They are different physically. They are different in their emotional makeup. It seems rather ridiculous to have to point this out but in our day it is more and more common for people to try to erase the line of demarcation that separates men from women. Among the differences in roles is the fact that God’s New Testament authorizes only men to lead in worship. There is not one example of a woman leading when men were present. The ladies are to be silent during the worship assembly.

There are many great Christian sisters. The good works that they do are innumerable. They care for the sick, teach children’s Bible classes, help train the young ladies, and support their spouses. There are so many who in their daily lives portray the character of the virtuous woman in Proverbs 31. No man could hope to accomplish the deeds that so many of the ladies have accomplished in fulfilling their service to God in the roles that He has given them in His Word. Still, when the church is assembled for worship, other than singing, the ladies of the congregation are to be silent. There should be no “amens” offered by the ladies, no “good mornings” or “good evenings” in response to the brother in the pulpit, no speaking up should the brother in the pulpit have a temporary lapse and ask a person in the audience for a response to a question. Such is not appropriate and is without the authority of God’s Word. The ladies are to be silent during the worship assembly.

Let each of us be busy in “proving what is acceptable unto the Lord” (Ephesians 5:10), serving and worshipping Him in the manner He has mandated in His Word. This will bring us closer to God individually as a congregation and will have a profound influence for good on those outside the body of Christ who observe our actions.

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