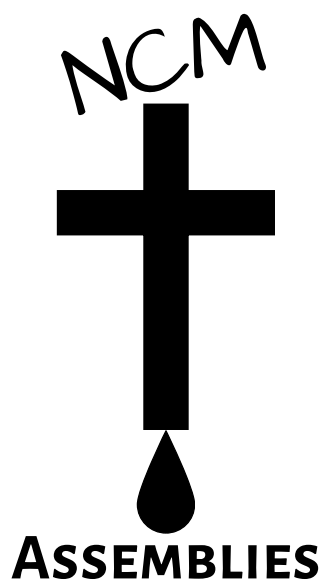


THIS IS

A Woman's Place!



This is a product of



In the early morning light, a group of women were making their way towards a series of tombs to perform a solemn duty. It was Sunday, April 5th, 33AD. Only three days before, Jesus of Nazareth had been executed by crucifixion, and these women - some of his followers - were on their way to anoint his body.

However, when they arrived, they would find something peculiar and spectacular. The stone door of the tomb of Jesus would be rolled aside, the interior empty. They had come to prepare Jesus' body, but it was no longer there! Little did they know that they were about to be witnesses of the greatest miracle in history. Jesus had been resurrected! And he was about to reveal himself to them, making these faithful women the first to find out.

Jesus' decision to have his women followers be the first to see his resurrected form has a lasting impact on the assembly. This choice by our savior revealed a special place for women in the congregation. To this day, women continue to hold this special position, however, not many places talk openly about it. In this booklet, we

set out to discuss the topic of women in the assembly, and our special role in Christ's congregation.

CREATED WITH A PURPOSE

When Yahweh God created mankind, He did so with purpose and intent. Adam - the first man - was the take care of the earth and all the living creatures thereupon as an act of service to his Creator. Yet Adam wasn't created alone. God also created Eve.

In older English translations, the bible refers to Eve as Adam's "helpmeet". What does that mean? The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines the term "helpmeet" to mean "a helper; one who is a companion" (Merriam-Webster). We can read the bible and get a closer idea of what God intended for Eve upon her creation.

In the Genesis account of creation, it reads that Yahweh saw that Adam was lonely. Of all the living creatures Yahweh had created, there were none like Adam. That was why He created Eve: to be Adam's companion.

When Yahweh God created mankind, He did so with purpose and intent. Adam - the first man - was to take care of the earth and all the living creatures thereupon as an act of service to his Creator. Yet Adam wasn't created alone. God also created Eve.

In older English translations, the bible refers to Eve as Adam's "helpmeet". What does that mean? The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines the term "helpmeet" to mean "a helper; one who is a companion" (Merriam-Webster). We can read the bible and get a closer idea of what God intended for Eve upon her creation.

In the Genesis account of creation, it reads that Yahweh saw that Adam was lonely. Of all the living creatures Yahweh had created, there were none like Adam. That was why He created Eve: to be Adam's companion. She is also described as a helper. Why? What "help" did she give Adam?

It is no secret that men and women are very different. But did you know that those differences come down to our brain chemistry?

Research in the last 15 years suggests that women and men's brains are "wired differently" (Goldman, 2017). Differences in cognitive abilities begin developing as young as 2-3 years of age! Women and men *think* different, and this causes us to *behave* differently.

What are these differences? Women have better memory retention, especially in connection to emotional events. Men's brains tend to hone more on the left hemisphere, the logical center of the brain, while women's brains use both hemispheres equally (Goldman, 2017). That is not to say that women are not logical; rather, women tend to be more empathetic in their logical processes.

Why did God create such differences between men and women? He created us with a stated purpose, and it goes without saying that our differences help us fulfill our purpose *together*.

God designed women with unique brains that give us the ability to understand the intricate links between emotions and logic. On the whole, women are better able to handle the

the finer details while men's brains tend to look at the bigger picture. This perspective, distinctive to women, shows our special place in creation! Now let us look more closely at what scripture reveals of God's view of women.

GOD'S VIEW OF WOMEN

For many years, God's view of women has been distorted by man. Yet in the laws that He creates and the Word that He has provided, Yahweh reveals a deep love and affection for women. While the history of mankind is not always kind to women, the bible shows that our Creator does *not* hold the same inclinations as man.

What are some things that the bible reveals about God's view on women? First, the bible reveals that God loves women just the same as He loves men. Secondly, we can see that God views women as invaluable to mankind, the world, and even His ministry!

Let's start with our first point. Many times in the history of God's way, women have been treated as second class. How can we say that God loves

women the same as He loves men? When Yahweh established His law with Moses, He included women as equal to men in many respects. Women were able to receive the same education opportunities as the men (Deuteronomy 31:12). Just as sons were to take up in inheritance from their fathers, daughters could as well (Numbers 27:1-11). When instructing children to obey and revere their parents, Yahweh placed equal importance on obedience and respect to mothers as He did to fathers (Exodus 20:12, Leviticus 19:3).

Another way we know that Yahweh viewed men and women as equally worthy of respect is in His description of creation. Genesis 1:27 shows us that men *and* women were both created in God's image (**Read: Genesis 1:27**). Although there are physiological distinctions between the genders, Yahweh clearly viewed women as equally deserving as men of His love.

Yet the bible reveals a deeper love for women than just equal love. Yahweh made sure to emphasize in His word how receptive to the gospel truth women are.

When Mary became pregnant with Jesus by way of Holy Spirit, it would have been easy for her to become confused and scared. Yet on the night that Gabriel the angel visited her, Mary wasn't either of those things. In fact, once she was informed of what was going to happen to her, Mary was eager to fulfill her special role as mother of the Messiah (Luke 1:38)!

Later, when Jesus was traveling for his ministry, a sinful woman came to anoint Jesus' feet while he was having dinner with a Pharisee. The Pharisee was quick to rebuke Jesus for allowing a prostitute to touch him, but Jesus defended the sinful woman, saying, "I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much." (**Read: Luke 7:36-50**). Remember, the Pharisees were the religious leaders at the time! Yet Jesus was putting this woman above them in terms of faith.

When Jesus was put to the death, it was a group of women who followed him throughout his ordeal. They stayed by his side while he slowly died on the cross, showing their love and support for the Messiah at his lowest point.

Later, they were rewarded for their faith by being the first women to see the resurrected Jesus. Our Messiah certainly made a bold statement about the importance of women to our Father by giving women the privilege of reporting to the disciples that he had returned!

A NOBLE WOMAN

Knowing how much God loves and valued women inspires us to return that love and respect back to Yahweh. One of the most important ways we can show God that we love Him is by honoring His Name. We honor our God by becoming living witnesses to the power of His Word.

There are many places in the bible where God shows us how we can improve our character. For women, God gives us a special chapter to guide us on the right path. This is, of course, the proverb of the Noble Woman.

In this proverb, a noble woman is described as charitable, trustworthy, and hardworking (**Read: Proverbs 31:10-31**). Notice how in the verses she is described as having wages and making

the financial decision to own property. This again highlights that Yahweh included women in propriety with the men. Most important of this woman, however, is her fear of Yahweh and how it influences her to make wise, proactive decisions. When the bible uses the word “fear” in this sense, it is pertaining to reverence and respect. Out of faith, the noble woman in Proverbs 31 takes steps to bring her family onto the way.

While women should certainly meditate on the Proverbs 31 woman, this is by far not the only instruction Yahweh has for women. Just like men should, women are called to fear (or respect) Yahweh (1 Chronicles 16:11), walk in spirit (Galatians 5:16), and to support and spread the gospel (Titus 2:11). Likewise, the bible particularly calls out older women to be sober-minded at all times (Titus 2:3-5).

A WOMAN’S ASSEMBLY

Once we understand how important women are to Yahweh, we can likewise see how important women are to Yahweh’s assembly. There is much confusion in today’s world on the role

women play in congregation leadership. Some churches do not believe women should speak *at all* in church, let alone to hold any position of authority. At the same time there are churches that have women priests who run the churches!

When it comes to a woman's place in the assembly, the only resource that matters is the bible. While it is true that some verses in the New Testament make it seem like women do not have a place in congregation service, it is important to look at the whole picture. Often, these verses are taken out of context historically, linguistically, and literally.

Take, for instance, 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, which says, "The women should keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission, as the Law also says. If there is anything they desire to learn, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church." Out of context, it would seem as if Paul is instructing women to stay silent at all times in church. However, context matters. In this verse, Paul is writing to the assembly in Corinth. At

that time, there was a major problem with the Corinth congregation. A pagan form of pre-Wicca was rampant in Corinth. In this practice, women only were able to be priests (Stiefel, 1995). Many of these women had converted to Christianity; yet they were raucous and quarrelsome during congregation meetings. Paul's instructions were for these former priestesses to remain silent during the meeting, giving the speaker appropriate respect to deliver sermon messages.

How can we be sure that Paul was *not* saying that all women needed to remain silent during all meetings? In that same letter to the Corinthians, Paul mentions women praying and prophesying at these meetings. Clearly, these women weren't called to just "remain silent". In fact, they had elevated positions in the assembly!

Yahweh God was rebuking apostates who entered congregation meetings and loudly interrupted the sermons. In his first letter, to Timothy (another apostle), Paul reiterated this stance. Just as with the verse in 1 Corinthians,

Paul was referring to pagan witches who would interrupt meetings, *not* telling every woman everywhere to be silent (Stiefel, 1995).

Even though women are not instructed to be completely silent in meetings, women are still called to obey the headship of men (1 Corinthians 11:3). Why? This pagan pre-Wiccan religion was not the only religious group to favor women leadership. Since paganism first reared its ugly head, Yahweh has always made to set His people apart from the world (James 4:4). That is why He included instructions in the form of clean vs unclean animals, circumcision of the heart, and His Holy Days. Because of women leadership in pagan religions of the time, Yahweh instructed that *men* be given leadership in His assembly*. This was His way of setting apart His people from the World that they may be more easily identified.

What does this mean for women's place in the assembly? What it means is that unless there is no man available to lead the assembly, women

- It ought to be noted that not every pagan religion at the time was woman-lead. Just major and contentious ones in this area.

are not allowed to teach as pastors or elders over men. Women *can*, however, hold positions of authority over other women and children.

The bible gives many examples of women in leadership positions. The woman Phoebe was a deaconess who delivered Paul's message to the congregation in Rome and served with the congregation in Cenchreae. As a woman, she read Paul's letter to a congregation of men and women. In the book of Acts, Paul speaks of a woman named Lydia, who lead her household onto the way and began a home-congregation (a group that worships out of someone's house). Paul describes many women serving as prophetesses during this time.

At the gifting of the Holy Spirit in Pentecost 33AD, Yahweh anointed both men and women as Elect. Women such as Priscilla and Aquila were able to clarify Paul's stance outside of congregation meetings, giving him the respect he was granted as an apostle, but also teaching him in God's ways. Lastly but of least importance, Junea was a woman who was said to have become an apostle! What a special and

important role given to her! God clearly did not limit women in their worth nor diminish the respect they are owed.

THIS IS A WOMAN'S PLACE!

Despite the numerous issues women face the world over, God makes it clear that there is no room for discrimination in His assembly! He demonstrates in His Word that women are to be valued, respected, and treated with equal love and care. Perhaps most important of all, we should all know that women are of equal inheritance of the Kingdom, and nothing of this world can take that away from them (**Read: Galatians 3:28**).

WORKS CITED

Goldman, B. (2017, May 22). Two Minds: The cognitive differences between men and women. Stanford Medicine. <https://stanmed.stanford.edu/how-mens-and-womens-brains-are-different/>

Hamilton, D. J. (2000). Should Women Keep Silent? . In *Why Not Women: A Fresh Look at Scripture on Women in Missions, Ministry, and Leadership* (pp. 13–17). essay, YWAM.

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Helpmeet. Merriam-Webster.com. Retrieved April 17, 2024, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/helpmeet>.

Schaber, A. N. (2020). *From worn to worthy: How god views the women the world dares to limit*. Westbow Press.

Stiefel, J. H. (1995). Women deacons in 1 timothy: A linguistic and literary look at 'women likewise...' (1 tim 3.11). *New Testament Studies*, 41(3), 442–457. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0028688500021585>

