

The Worthy Woman

The role of women in the local congregation is vital to the future of that church. There are a few limitations placed on women compared to the large number of works in which she can be involved. Each congregation would find it difficult to function effectively without the input of the women. Their work is valuable and important, but it is different in some ways than men's work.

Examples In The New Testament Of Women's Work

In Romans 16:1-2, it reads "I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea, that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you; for indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also." Phoebe's work as a servant was highly regarded by Paul. It even impacted the congregation in Rome. She had assisted Paul in preaching the gospel. She was more concerned with furthering the kingdom than in following her own desires. She was also called a "helper." Vine defines it as: "A word of dignity indicates high esteem with which she was regarded." Thayer says it was one who cares "for the affairs of others" and "aids them with her resources." A remarkable woman!

In Acts 9:36-42, Luke tells us, "At Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas. This woman was full of good works and charitable deeds which she did. But it happened in those days that she became sick and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in an upper room. And since Lydda was near Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent two men to him, imploring him not to delay in coming to them. Then Peter arose and went with them. When he had come, they brought him to the upper room. And all the widows stood by him weeping, showing the tunics and garments which Dorcas had made while she was with them. But Peter put them all out, and knelt down and prayed. And turning to the body he said, 'Tabitha, arise.' And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. Then he gave her his hand and lifted her up; and when he had called the saints and widows, he presented her alive. And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed on the Lord." She used what she had to help and serve others. She had used her sewing talent for good as well. She brought glory to God and was well-thought of among the brethren. May we all strive to do the same.

In Romans 16:3-5a, Paul writes, "Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. Likewise greet the church that is in their house." Recall that both had been involved with instructing Apollos in the way of the Lord more accurately. Paul referred to them here as fellow workers. Both were actively involved in the Lord's work. They had risked their lives for Paul as well as opening up their home so the church could meet there.

Ways Women May Serve Their Lord

First, in the home. Titus 2:1-5 reads, “But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience; the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things — that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.”

Second, as a wife. She is to love her husband (seek what is best for him, what is in his best interest) and be in subjection to her husband. First Peter 3:1 says, “Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives.” Respect his God-given leadership role. When you do this, you are serving Christ. It is not demeaning — it is God pleasing (Proverbs 12:4).

Third, as a mother. She needs to love her children (have their best welfare at heart). This is an unselfish work, often very tiring, and not very glamorous! Caring for her children’s physical concerns is time-consuming and exhausting. But all of us are indebted to our mothers for the great care given to us through the years. Ralph Waldo Emerson said, “Men are what their mothers made them.” Women are equipped with special abilities. They are much better caregivers and nurturers than are men.

C. R. Nichol, in *God’s Woman*, wrote, “It is to her we turn and depend when the heart is sore, the body racked with pain, the soul filled with sorrow, and the spirit broken by bitterness. We long for the touch of her hand, the soothing music of her voice, the light of her smiles, and the healing counsel coming from her union with Jehovah.”

Along with this, she is to be a homemaker, a good manager of the household, a diligent worker in this area. This is also a God-given role for her. Think about Proverbs 31:15, 27-28: “She also rises while it is yet night, And provides food for her household, And a portion for her maidservants ... She watches over the ways of her household And does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and call her blesses; Her husband also, and he praise her” A great blessing that comes with being a mother is the opportunity of teaching her children the ways of the Lord, especially during their younger years. Recall the words of 2 Timothy 1:5, which said, “When I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also.” And 2 Timothy 3:14-15, in which Paul writes, “But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” Timothy’s mother and grandmother filled a very important role, especially since the father had no part in his spiritual training. This role cannot be over-emphasized!

Fourth, as a teacher. Older women are to teach younger ones (see again Titus 2:4). Teach them to be good wives and mothers. Teach women's classes where just women are present. Teach children's classes. Women are well-adapted in this area. They excel and exert immense influence which will last for eternity.

Fifth, as a personal worker. She can teach one-on-one studies, but no situations where she exerts authority over a man. Recall the woman at the well (John 4), Priscilla (Acts 18), and those who were scattered in Acts 8. Also in Philippians 4:3, it reads, "And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life." She can send and grade correspondence courses, hand out tracts, and send mailers or flyers to the community. Women can be very effective in benevolence, including sending cards, visiting the sick, gathering and sorting clothes for the poor, and organizing meals for families in the event of illnesses and funerals, because of their wonderful sympathy and understanding.

The above is just the tip of the iceberg. Women contribute to all areas of vital importance to the local church. They contribute immeasurable to the work of the Lord's church. We all have work to do. Are you doing yours?

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