Helpers: The Role Of Godly Women In The Church

Prepared By Nathan L Morrison For Sunday September 18th, 2022

Text: II Timothy 2:24-26

# Intro

1. The Scriptures say that as Christians, we are *servants* of the Lord (II Timothy 2:24-26).
2. As servants of the Lord, there is work to be done – it is a dedication to a life of service (to God and to others)!
3. Many people don’t think of “greatness” when they think of a “servant.”
4. Jesus says in His Kingdom, if you want to be great then you must be a servant!
	1. John 13:2-17: Jesus washed the apostles’ feet.
	2. He is Lord, Son of God, Master, Teacher, Prophet, Priest and King, and yet Jesus showed by example that He is a Servant-Leader.
5. Moses was a great leader but he was a servant-leader
	1. Moses, the man who defied a king and led a nation out of Egypt, did so as a "servant" of and by the power of God
	2. Moses is identified as "the servant of the Lord" 16 times in the book of Joshua
	3. Moses was a great man because he was a "servant of the Lord" (Heb. 3:5)
6. Women Christians know they are not to be a leader of men in the church (I Corinthians 14:34-35; I Timothy 2:11-15; 3:15) so they often ask, “What can I do?” “What is my role in the church?”
	1. Angels (Jude 6) and men (II John 9) who abandon their proper role are sinful.
	2. If we remember that all saints are servants, and most of our service takes place outside the assembly, then it becomes a question of need.
	3. Look for a need among the people of God and use what you have been given to fill that need.
	4. Women have always been important to God and have been servants in His kingdom to His glory.
7. To be great in the Lord’s kingdom, one must be a servant to God and to all saints!
8. Women Are Helpers
	1. Genesis 2:18-20: God showed Adam that there was no one else created like him! He saw all the animals had mates but there was no “helper suitable for him.”
		1. God took care of that. From the first man God created woman (Genesis 2:23; I Corinthians 11:8-9).
		2. From the beginning God ordained marriage for a husband and a wife (Genesis 2:24; Mark 10:6-9)
		3. The Hebrew word for “helper” is *H5828 ezer (ay-zer)* and means: “help” or “one who helps.”
		4. Sixteen out of twenty-one times in the OT it is used in reference to God as a Helper.
		5. There is nothing passive, submissive, or domestic implied in the Hebrew word *ezer* (“helper”).
	2. Let’s notice how women in the OT and NT served God and others as a “Helper!”

### 7 Ways Women Can Serve in the Lord’s church

#### **Edifying Teachers**

1. II Timothy 2:24-26: The bond-servant of the Lord (ALL Christians) are to be “able to teach.” That means the individual is “skillful in teaching” (Vines); “apt to teach,” “instructive” *(G1317 didaktikos).*
2. In order to be “skillful in teaching” or “able to teach” one must know what one is teaching.
3. To know what to teach, one must study (II Timothy 2:15).
4. **Miriam:**
	1. Miriam, the prophetess, the sister of Moses and Aaron taught the women to sing of the deliverance of God and the victory over the Egyptian army when saved them by the parting of the Red Sea (Exodus 15:20-21).
5. **Mary:**
	1. Mary sings a beautiful song in Luke 1:46–55 that has become a source of constant encouragement and teaching for the church.
	2. She sings of God as her Savior, and refers to herself and all Israel as God’s servant.
6. **Anna:**
	1. In Luke 2:38, Anna the prophetess, a widow, is introduced as a woman who served the Lord by staying in the temple and worshiping God.
	2. She would also teach the people, and “to speak of Him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.”
7. **Lois and Eunice:**
	1. Timothy received training from his godly grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice to have a sincere faith (II Timothy 1:5).
	2. We know this at least meant instruction in “the sacred writings” which made him “wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus” (II Timothy 3:15).
8. **Priscilla:**
	1. Priscilla, along with her husband Aquila, were servants of God and helped an influential preacher like Apollos by taking him aside privately and taught him “the way of God more accurately” (Acts 18:26).
9. **Mature women:**
	1. Titus 2:3-5 says, “Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored.”
	2. Older women are to be “teachers of what is good” and to teach younger women to love their husbands and children and be homemakers.
10. **You:**
	1. Through study you can be teachers of children’s Bible classes and ladies’ classes!

#### **Hard Workers**

1. **Mary, Tryphaena (Troo'-fahee-nah), Tryphosa (Troo-fo'-sah), and Persis (Per-sece)**
	1. Several men worked diligently with Paul, but many women did too.
	2. They are “workers in the Lord” such as Mary, Tryphaena, Tryphosa, and Persis “who has worked hard in the Lord” (Romans 16:6, 12).
2. **Priscilla**
	1. Going a step further, Priscilla and Aquila were essential partners of Paul, left behind in Ephesus to maintain the church when Paul departed for a different city (Acts 18:18-19).
	2. It was while they were there in Ephesus that they taught Apollos (Acts 18:24-28)

#### **Teachers of the Gospel** (Teachers of the gospel: an evangelist is a Herald of Good News)

1. It is the role of every Christian to teach the gospel (II Timothy 2:24-26: to save the lost).
2. **Euodia (Yoo-od-ee'-ah) and Syntyche (Soon-too'-khay)**
	1. Even though Philippians 4:2–3 is an admonition, Paul is clear that both Euodia and Syntyche “labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers.”
	2. This was an evangelistic (preaching) effort, and one that bore fruit through the faithfulness of these women!
	3. He says their names, along with Clément’s “are in the book of life.”
3. **The Woman at the Well and Lydia**
	1. The woman at the well who spoke to Jesus in John 4 and even Lydia (Acts 16:14-15, 40) are among the first to bring the gospel to their own family and towns!
4. **Mary Magdalene**
	1. One of the most profound examples is Mary Magdalene, whom Jesus chose to be the first to witness his resurrection.
	2. She was entrusted by Jesus Himself with bringing the good news (gospel) to the apostles that first day of the week when Jesus broke the power of the devil and sin and death by raising from the dead (John 20:18)!
5. **You**
	1. You can teach the gospel (the good news of Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection) to your family and friends! (I Corinthians 15:3-4)

#### **Generous Patrons**

1. For centuries, wealthy people have sponsored artists so they can focus on their masterpiece instead of trying to pay the bills.
2. Godly women of means have been great support and help to godly men!
3. **The Shunammite Woman**
4. In II Kings 4:8-37 we are introduced to an unnamed Shunammite woman who was a “prominent woman,” which means she was important to the city of Shunem.
5. As often as Elisha passed through the city she invited him in and showed him hospitality.
6. She even asked her husband and they built a little “upper chamber” for the prophet, a permanent dwelling place for Elisha and his servant to turn into to be refreshed every time he passed through Shunem.
7. Through the prophet Elisha she and her house were richly blessed!
8. **Mary Magdalene, Joanna and Susanna & many others**
	1. In Luke 8:1–3, we learn that Jesus and His apostles had patrons (benefactors), and they were often wealthy women.
	2. Luke tells us Mary Magdalene, Joanna and Susanna were among “many others” who “provided for them out of their private means” (Luke 8:3).
9. **Phoebe**
10. Similarly, Paul’s ministry was financed by women (Romans 16:1-2).
11. Phoebe, a servant of the church at Cenchrea is identified as Paul’s “helper” (NASU), “patron” (ESV), or “benefactor” (NIV), a term that literally means defender or protector.
12. She also used her money and influence to be a “helper of many.”
13. **Priscilla and Lydia**
14. Priscilla and her husband Aquila (Romans 16:5) and Lydia (Acts 16:14) volunteered their homes for the church to meet in!
15. These remarkable and brave sisters are rarely mentioned.
16. **You**
	1. It’s clear that God entrusts wealth to women, and they can joyfully utilize it in support of the gospel (I Timothy 6:17-19: Use riches to share with others and to support the gospel)

#### **Courageous Partners**

1. **Priscilla**
2. Romans 16:3–4 mentions Priscilla and Aquila again, this time as “fellow workers” who “risked their necks” for the gospel.
3. **Junia**
4. This is followed by a commendation of Junia in Romans 16:7, who worked so closely with Paul that she suffered as a “fellow prisoner.”
5. That’s extreme commitment, and it proves that Paul didn’t mind having women at his side during a dangerous mission for the gospel.
6. He ends Romans with warm and personal greetings, deeply thankful for the service and sacrifice of the women who worked with him.
7. **Preachers’, Deacons’ and Elders’ Wives**
	1. Paul said the wives of the apostles and the Lord’s brothers traveled with them as did Peter’s (Cephas) wife in I Corinthians 9:5.
	2. Preachers’ wives are partners with their husbands in all that they do and what befalls them.
	3. Deacons’ and Elders’ wives have certain characteristics that the brethren look at as well as their husbands in the appointment process in I Timothy 3:11.

#### **Good Works**

1. **Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome, others**
	1. Jesus was often in the company of women who “followed Him and ministered to Him” including Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome (Mark 15:40–41).
	2. Women comprised His ministry support structure.
	3. Some of these women appear again in Mark 16 when they arrive to serve the Lord by anointing His body after the crucifixion.
	4. At the end of Romans, we also read about Rufus, a man with a remarkable mother (and father, Simon the Cyrene since he was possibly the one who carried Jesus’ cross – Mark 15:21).
	5. Paul says she was like his adoptive mother in the faith (Romans 16:13).
2. **Tabitha (Hebrew) / Dorcas (Greek)**
	1. Tabitha in Acts 9:36-43 was the same kind of woman, “full of good works and acts of charity” (Acts 9:36).
	2. When she died and they called for Peter to come to Joppa, the widows showed him all things she had made for them. He was moved with compassion and prayed to God and his prayer was answered and Tabitha was raised from the dead.
	3. Her good works and resurrection caused many to become believers in Jesus!

#### **Worthy Examples**

1. **Proverbs 31 Woman**
	1. The godly woman from Proverbs 31 speaks of a woman, a wife, whose value is far above jewels.
	2. She takes care of her family and servants, and through her influence her husband is highly respected and honored: he sits in the gate of the city (judgment).
	3. Her husband and children praise her. He says, “Other women are OK, but, Baby, you’re the best!”
2. **Widows**
	1. I Timothy 5:3-16 contains instructions for widows and the care of widows.
	2. If a widow has been a faithful example of raising children and showing hospitality and doer of good works then the church can take care of her.
	3. Widows are also charged with helping other widows, and perhaps to even teach and help younger widows to get married and be fruitful to their husbands and the church.
3. **You**
	1. Teach girls and women how to prepare the Lord’s Supper
	2. Teach girls and women how to teach children’s classes and ladies’ classes
	3. Teach the unmarried how to become the godly wife of Proverbs 31
	4. Teach them how to be a preacher’s wife (I Corinthians 9:5) and later, a deacon’s and an elder’s wife (I Timothy 3:11)
	5. Mothers, teach your children! (Proverbs 1:8; II Timothy 1:5; 3:15)
	6. Teach girls and women to look for ways to do “good works” (Ephesians 2:10; I Timothy 2:10)
	7. Visit the sick or injured
	8. Prepare meals for the sick and shut-in or for those who have been injured
	9. Be greeters! Greet visitors at the door: You can make sure they feel welcome, have a bulletin, Visitor’s Card and pen.

#### Women must never underestimate the value of demonstrating godly character.

#### The Lord’s church deliberately teaches the next generation, and women play an important role in that goal!

## Conclusion

1. Both men and women are to be bond-servants of Jesus, that is to be owned by Jesus, but they have different roles and equal value! (I Peter 3:7: Husbands and wives are “fellow heir[s] of the grace of life”)
2. God has always been glorified through the service of women. Women are of great value to the Lord’s church – Look for ways you can serve God and all the saints!
3. If you have not obeyed the gospel, ***NOW’s*** the chance. You are a servant, but not the Lord’s. Serving Self is serving Satan. Repent of your sins and be baptized and serve the Lord!
4. If a Christian who has wandered your own path, ***NOW’s*** the time to come home. Repent!
5. Whatever your requests, come forward ***NOW*** while we stand and sing!