

## What can a woman do in the church?

By Viki Rife

*A question that sometimes seems baffling is: What can women do in the church? While for some women it is no big deal, for others who have certain spiritual gifts it's a struggle to figure out how to use them appropriately.*

*Sometimes it seems that whenever one consults with theology experts for answers, they end up being told what women cannot do. There is much, much less clarity on what they can do. Opinions fall all over the place and change each time the church leadership changes. Sometimes it has felt like the surest way to find out what the boundaries are is to try something and see if you get your hands slapped.*



*Recently several WGUSA directors were invited to talk about equipping women in the church at a Grace Seminary class. The young men in the class were future pastors, some already involved as youth pastors in a church.*

*One of the exercises involved a case study of a situation a woman might find herself in. We asked them to determine how it might affect her future involvement in church life and the Great Commission. I was in a group with three of the seminary students. We were to examine the case of Amanda and Don:*

*“Amanda and Don are very active in their youth group. When they graduate high school, Don is approached by the pastor, who says he sees a lot of leadership potential in him. The pastor begins meeting with Don regularly and giving him opportunities to take leadership in various church ministries. He tells Don he’s excited about his potential and offers for the church to help fund further training in ministry.*

*“Amanda and Don marry and go into church planting. Amanda finds herself having to take on responsibilities she feels ill-prepared for. She wonders why no one in her church invested in her the way they invested in Don. She wonders whether she’s just imagining that she really has potential.”*

*I was impressed with how seriously these young men took this scenario. Two who were married shared a concern that this was the situation with their wives. One even teared up as he shared with the group his efforts to affirm and encourage his wife as she battles feelings of inadequacy for the role she finds herself in.*

*Their concern was touching. How can we, as women, lovingly help the men in our lives, in our churches, understand how to help us use the spiritual gifts God provided for the good of His Church? How can we communicate with them as loved brothers, co-laborers for the kingdom of Christ?*

*Then they posed the question, “Why didn’t an older woman in the church reach out to help Amanda develop her potential?”*

*Long after the class was over, I was found myself riddled with questions. What keeps us women, as part of the church of Christ, from responding to the mandate of Titus 2:3-5? Why aren’t our older women in some of our churches being taught to train the younger women?*

I loved Ken Gangel's definition of leadership we used in the class: "Spiritual leadership is the use of one's spiritual gifts under the call of God to serve a certain group of people in achieving the goals God has given them toward the end of glorifying Christ." Don't we all have spiritual gifts? One of the greatest services we women can do for the future of the kingdom of God is to invest in helping the young women who have the potential of being wise influencers wherever they go. How are we using the gifts God has given us to prepare them to make disciples?

Unless women step up to their part in actively fulfilling the Great Commission and making disciples, the church won't be firing on all cylinders. The next generation of women will have little idea how to fully use their gifts and abilities for God's glory. We have such a high calling! It was a joy to be able to share with the men in the class that we are offering leadership classes for women that help prepare them to "rightly divide the Word of God" and to invest in discipling younger women and helping them discover how to use their gifts. It was encouraging to see the interest and excitement on their faces as we explained about the classes. They saw potential. They saw hope. They saw the Church working together to make disciples.