

# Women Preachers

## 1 Corinthians 14:35

But if [your women] desire to learn anything,  
let them question their husbands at home;  
for it is a shame for a woman  
to speak in an assembly.

**(or even women speaking in church at all!)**

Why would it be a shame for a woman to speak in a worship assembly of the saints?

First of all, let us notice that a woman's *presence* is not shameful. Nor is woman shameful because she *speaks*. It is only a shame for a woman to speak 'in *church*' (and 'church' just means assembly).

Paul had just greatly reduced *overall participation* from the norm in the Corinthian worship service. They had been having a veritable 'variety show' :

1 Cor 14:26 Then what is it, brothers?  
When you come together, each one of you  
has a psalm, he has a teaching, he has a lan-

guage, he has a revelation, he has an interpretation. Let all things be for building up.

Paul does not cite this as normative *nor* as acceptable. What ensues in his directions brings about the *curtailing* of the Corinthian 'variety show':

1 Cor 14:27 If one speaks in a language, *let it be* by two, or at the most three, and in succession. And let one interpret.

1 Cor 14:29 And *if there are* two or three prophets, let them speak, and let the others judge.

From their original 'free-for-all', Paul's 'censorship' reduced participation to a maximum of SIX- three tongues-speakers, and three prophets (teachers).

"But what if the Holy Spirit tells me to say something after the sixth person has spoken?"

Then He is testing you to see if you are obedient or self-willed. Obviously, the Holy Spirit is not going to contradict Himself, and He is not going to rewrite Scriptures to allow seven speakers. Paul indicated that **two** was a preferable number for each category. From what he said in the rest of the chapter, **one** prophet ex-

plaining Scriptures would be fine for a whole service.

Anyway, the point is this: was anyone but a prophet or tongue-speaker allowed to speak? No. Therefore, *any* other speaker would have been shameful. So a woman was only *one* category of shameful speakers in church. Paul was merely adding the instruction about women after saying essentially the same thing about most other categories of people. There are only a limited group of people whom God has gifted to lead in worship, to instruct His people publicly.

The Corinthians were a group who were very confident in their spirituality (5:2), though in reality they were only babies (3:1). Paul knew that the arrogant spirit in some of them would question his new dictates. Therefore he precludes any debate by saying,

1 Cor 14:36 - 38 What? Was it from you that the word of God went out? Or did it come to you alone? If any man thinks himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him recognize the things which I write to you, that they are the commandment of the Lord. But if anyone is ignorant, let him be ignorant.

The Corinthians acted as though they were the new definition of a real church. Paul says, "Really? It all started with you, eh?"

Many churches are the same today. They have read 1 Corinthians, and they have left it as ignorant as they came. They are confident the Lord is pleased with their worship. What more can be said to them?