

Clarity Regarding Biblical Men's and Women's Ministries

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"Let all things be done for edification" I Corinthians 14:26

Some people say that the modern church is like a circus, afflicted with a multitude of side shows to keep everyone entertained. One of the worst examples I've ever heard comes from a pastor friend of mine who recently lost a church member because that member visited a large vibrant church nearby. During the announcement time in the morning service, the people had fun bouncing a large beach ball around the auditorium. He left my friends church because he thought this was "cool."

To it's detriment, the modern church is in search of "cool" and "relevance" and "excellence", creating a something resembling a circus rather than a family/building/body/pillar.

But, just how should ministry to men and women be conducted in the local church?

What we find in the Bible is surprisingly simple. If we believe the Bible is sufficient, then we would do well to follow the simplicity that we find there.

Ministry to men:

First, personal Bible study. Men are to be taught by the Word as they personally "long for the pure milk of the Word" (1 Pet. 2:2). Like the Bereans, they search the scriptures to discern truth (Acts 17:11).

Second, they are to be taught by qualified elders who "preach the Word" (2 Tim. 4:2). The primary task of elders/pastors/bishops/shepherds (these terms are synonyms in the New Testament) is to bring the ministry of the Word to the men of the church. Titus 1:9.

Third, they teach one another in the context of church meetings. No, men are not to be silent in churches. They are to be the kind of men who live their lives in such a way, to that they are ready to give truth to their brothers and sisters. This is a far cry from the often silent man who speaks of his sports and work but has nothing to share regarding the Word. The flagship passage of scripture for this activity is I Cor. 14:26-33:

"Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation.. Let all things be done for edification".

Here, the church is edified by the men of the church as they articulate truth as it related to their particular situations.

So, the ways that men are equipped are fairly simple. They study the Word on their own; they come under the ministry of pastors who "preach the Word in season and out of season,"; and, they are taught via the instruction of godly men as they bring the Word into the church meeting.

Men were not designed by God to sit in church meetings like bumps on logs – they were meant to contribute. And the teaching they receive from it should create in them a passion for the ministries of equipping, evangelism, missions and church planting.

Ministry to women:

The Biblical order for the edification of women is threefold:

First, by their own study (see 2 Tim. 3:14-15).

Second, by their own husbands (I Cor 14:34-35). Perhaps the most neglected method of teaching the women in our churches is husbands teaching their wives. In our egalitarian, feminist culture, there are only a few women who would open themselves to this, and their husbands are terrified to do it for fear of the reaction. But, God has been abundantly clear that the order and authority in the church flows from men to their families - men who have been taught by the Word and by the godly men in the church are now ready to teach their own wives. They have something to say, and they say it.

Third, by godly older women. I Timothy 5:9-16, Titus 2:3-5. At this time in history which has been influenced by the evil trinity of feminism, egalitarianism and materialism, we have a dearth of "Titus two" women. Here we see the effects of women working outside the home. By encouraging so many women to give their lives in the workforce, we have created a dearth of women, without time to minister to younger women. These three forces have effectively wiped out an entire generation of Titus two women.

This problem is not just a "working woman's" problem. It is a characteristic of most in the older generation. Sadly, the older generation in America has largely chosen motor homes and Florida and retirement homes over the nurture of the children and grandchildren of the younger generation.

Clarity and simplicity characterize the programs and activities of the early church. The Bible does not provide novel strategies to stimulate hyper growth and continuous momentum in our men's and women's ministries. It does provide a sensible, long term approach that involves personal study, qualified leaders explaining scripture, spiritually minded husbands who take initiative to teach their wives and Biblically focused senior citizens.