

Women in Worship

A Growing Error in churches of Christ

Women in Worship – The title of an inserted page in the Westminister Church of Christ bulletin dated September 25, 2005, written by Gary Pearson, the minister at that time, from which his quotes are taken.

Under the heading “Women Serving Communion” by Gary Pearson

Pearson – “1Cor 11:20 and 21 makes it clear that, in the early church, the Lord’s Supper was one part of a real meal that we would today call a fellowship meal. Fellowship meals in the early church were a part of the worship assembly.”

Not True

Paul says that he cannot praise them in their observance of the Lord's Supper as a "fellowship meal. 1Co 11:20-22 When you come together, it is not the Lord's supper that you eat. (21) For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal. One goes hungry, another gets drunk. (22) What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not.

Common meals were to be eaten at home as Paul reinforces in 1Co 11.32.

1Co 11:33-34 So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another— (34) if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home—so that when you come together it will not be for judgment. About the other things I will give directions when I come.

God, through Paul, does not tell them (and us) to share, but to eat at home!

Pearson continues, “No doubt the women were primarily the servers as women have been the primary cooks and servers all down through the centuries.”

Not in the church!

In fact, Acts 6:3, seven men were to be chosen to carry out this task. In the home, women did serve, e.g. Martha Lk 10:40

Act 6:2-3 And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, “It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. (3) Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty.

For tasks in the church men were always chosen. Act

1:21 So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,

2Co 8:18 With him we are sending the brother who is famous among all the churches for his preaching of the gospel.

1Ti 3:2 Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,

1Ti 3:12 Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well.

Why?

In the church 1Tim 3:14-15, men are to lead
1Tim 2:8 as opposed to v 9 1Tim 2:13-15

Under Women Speaking in Church
Pearson says, “The principle of the Law of
Moses that Paul refers to is that God has
reserved the formal exercise of authority
among his people to men.”

Which is true.

And then he says, “We can also know that women publicly spoke in tongues and prophesied on the day called Pentecost when the church first began. A group of 120 disciples, both male and female (Acts 1:14-15), are referred to in Acts 2:1 when Luke writes that ‘they were all together in one place.’”

This is the same false reasoning the Pentecostals make.

The 120 of Acts 1.15 did not receive the gift of speaking in tongues, but it was the 12 apostles!

The “Modern English Handbook” tells us “a noun expression immediately before a relative pronoun tends to be its antecedent.” The noun closest to the pronoun “they” in 2:1 is “apostles” in 1:26.

Act 1:26 And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles. Act 2:1 When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place.

The 120 do not perform miracles nor speak, but the apostles do and non one else until they lay hands on the 7 in Acts 6:6.

Act 2:7 And they were amazed and astonished, saying, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?... But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. ... 43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles.

Act 3:6 But Peter said, “I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!”

Act 4:16 saying, “What shall we do with these men? For that a notable sign has been performed through them is evident to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it.

Act 5:12 Now many signs and wonders were regularly done among the people by the hands of the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon's Portico.

The 12 were Galileans (Acts 1:11) and but that is not said of the 120.

Pearson continues, “So Christ’s church began in it’s very first assembly with women publicly speaking. The principle of males doing the authoritative teaching is also seen in Acts 2:14 when it is Peter, standing with the other apostles, who preaches the church’s first sermon.”

These two sentences contradict each other. If the women were preaching – prophesying– in the first assembly (church service) it would have contradicted the principle!

Again Pearson says, “We can also know that women publicly prophesied in the assemblies of the early church. Women prophets are referred to in Acts 21:9 and 1Cor. 11. Paul writes in 1Cor 14:4 that “those who prophesy build up the church. If women were given the gift of prophecy and if the purpose of prophecy is to build up the church then obviously women were allowed to share their prophecies with the church when it assembled.”

If women did preach (prophecy publicly) in the church, **it would contradict the instruction** Paul gives in 1Tim 2:11-15 and in 1Cor 14:34-35. 1Cor 14:34-35 clearly teaches that there were no women prophesying in the assembly at Corinth since they were told to ask their questions of their husbands at home and they were **not** to speak in church.

Where did the women of Acts 21:9 and 1Co 11:4
prophecy?

It must have been in private as to do otherwise
would clearly contradict
1Co 14:34-35 the women should keep silent in the
churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but
should be in submission, as the Law also says. (35)
If there is anything they desire to learn, let them
ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a
woman to speak in church..

What about women as deacons. 1Tim 3:12 says men are to be deacons and the question arises about who the women are in 1Tim 3:11. The NIV correctly says, “their wives” as does the KJV while the ASV and the NASV translate it “women” and the NASV adds in the side notes, wives or deaconesses.

No qualifications for women are given equivalent to those for men who are to be deacons, thus the implication is wives.

What about Phoebe, Euodia and Syntyche (Php 4.2)?

The word translated deacon (Gr *diakonos*) in 1Ti 3:8 is used of household servants in Jn 2:5 and is most often translated “minister.”

Gr *diakonos* used 30 times in the NT, 20 times translated minister, 6 times as servant, 3 as deacon.

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The word translated deacons at 1Ti 3:10 and 13 is used of Simon’s mother-in-law and Martha Jn 12:2 among others.

The question must be whether it refers to an official position held in the church or is used of anyone serving. The answer Paul gives is that these men (1Ti 3:10, 12) must meet not only the qualification of gender but of godliness.

Pearson – “The particular kind of women’s speaking that we will be allowing, the reading of the Bible, is already being done and has been done in almost all of our churches throughout my lifetime in our adult Sunday School classes. If a woman is not exercising authority over men by reading aloud from the Bible in a Sunday School class, then she is not exercising authority over men by doing the exact same thing the next hour in the worship assembly. ... The early church certainly studied the Bible together in their assemblies so biblically the adult Sunday School class is an assembly of the church”

Pearson misunderstands the word “church” and uses it as a denomination. The assembly is the church. The assembly is not “the Bible Class hour.” Wednesday night is not church! We are told to assemble not for a common meal, but for the Lord’s Supper 1Co 11:20 *When you come together, it is not the Lord's supper that you eat.* It should have been but it wasn’t!

The church came together on the first day of the week “to break bread” (Acts 20:7), not to break into small groups of Bible Study.

This charge about classes being “church” has been made by “no class” brethren for years.

The charge is incorrect.

Study the Greek word *ekklesia* which is translated church in the NT except in Acts 19:30, 32, 33, 39 and 41, where it refers to a riotous mob and then the lawful assembly. (see last week’s lesson)

Christians are all members of Jesus' church (Mt 16:18) all the time, but the local assembly of the Lord is when they have come together to celebrate the Lord's Supper 1Co 11:20.

class vs church
different assemblies for different purposes.

“If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.”

2Ti 2:15 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.

Have you become a worker for the Lord?

Mat 12:30 Whoever is not with me is against me,
and whoever does not gather with me scatters.

Why not honor God by entering His service?

Act 2:38 And Peter said to them, “Repent and be
baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus
Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will
receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.