

# The Role & Ministry of Women in the Church

by Stephen Kaung

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*The sermon explores the biblical understanding of the role and ministry of women in the church, emphasizing equality and divine order in relationships.*

**Duration:** 1:38:44

**Scripture:** Genesis 1:27, Genesis 2:18, Matthew 6:33, Galatians 3:28

**Topics:** "Church Ministry", "Biblical Submission"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the principle of Jesus Christ's submission to the will of his Father. Jesus willingly took on the role of the body, honoring his head, which is God. The relationship between the head and the body is crucial, as the head plans and decides while the body receives and performs those plans. The speaker also discusses the importance of balancing the focus on family and the church, highlighting the need to not neglect one for the other.

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## Transcript

Well, we gathered here this morning to consider together this matter of the place and ministry of the sisters in the church. Now, we know that there are many voices, many different ideas concerning this matter, and we do not want to add to the confusion. So, our desire is that we may go back to the Word of God, the truth, and trust the Holy Spirit to enable us to understand the truth.

And the truth shall set us free. Now, when you consider this matter of the sisters' place and ministry in the church, you have to go back to the very beginning, because that, this is where it starts. Our brother already mentioned that verse in Genesis chapter 1, verse 27, God created man in his own image.

Male and female created he them. And again, you'll find in Genesis chapter 2, verse 18, Lord God said it is not good for man to be alone. I will make him a helpmate, his like.

So, brothers and sisters, when you consider these two verses, you can see clearly two things. One is, man in his fullest thought is a composite being. It is composed of a male and a female.

They share the same life, but they are made differently, and they have their specific and distinctions, distinctive functions. God's thought is a cooperation. The working together of two parts, distinct, and yet with the same life.

And by bringing together the two into one, God's will shall be done. So, brothers and sisters, we find there is a fundamental principle we need to understand. Man and woman are created equal.

They share the same life. There is no inferior or superior, either in a man or in a woman. So far as life is concerned, the same life.

They are equal. And yet, when God created, there was a difference. When God created Adam, he formed the red earth into a body.

And into that body, he breathed the breath of life. And man became a living soul. But in creating a woman, God put Adam to sleep.

And out of his sight, God took out something. In the original, it is not a rib. It is something out of him.

And with that something out of Adam, God made the woman. So, you find in the process of the making of the man and the woman, there is a difference. And the difference is not only in the physical makeup.

The difference is also in the psychological makeup. It is God's will that this should be this way. Because God is aimed at a cooperation.

A working together. Each supplying the specific function. In order that man may be completed, not only in their lives together, but in the work that God has entrusted to man.

Our brother also mentioned that verse, that after God created man, male and female, created him, them, then he gave them dominion. Now, why did God give man dominion? It is to rule for God. To subdue all things and bring all things back to the feet of God.

Now, this is a tremendous task God has entrusted to man. And this task cannot be accomplished without the working together in harmony of man and woman. So, brothers and sisters, this is what we find in the very beginning of the creation of man.

Now, of course, in modern times, we find there are very many different ideas. And I think it is because men do not know God and do not know his way, his purpose. Let us remember that so far as we are created, we are created equal, equal in life.

There is no reason why man should be more spiritual than woman, or woman should be more spiritual than man. God's grace to man and woman are exactly the same. He is not partial in any way.

So, I do hope that we who are the Lord, he is returning us to the original thought. So, whatever the world may think about man and woman, we as God's people, in the redemption of our Lord Jesus, he is returning us to the beginning. So, we shouldn't have any idea that man and woman are unequal before God.

We are equal in life, equal in grace. God is not partial in any way. But that doesn't mean that because we are equal, therefore, our ministry, our place in the family, in the family of God, are exactly the same.

We are equal and yet, in God's creation, we are made differently. There is a purpose there. We cannot go against nature.

Nature is what God has created. So, you find in 1 Corinthians chapter 11, it mentions this word nature there, according to nature, because God has made it that way. And if you function according to the nature that God has created, then you get the best result.

You get the satisfaction and the fulfillment. If you work against the nature that God has put in us, then we are against God and against his way. And you will find that in that situation, there will be failure, unfulfillment.

So, in 1 Corinthians chapter 11, verse 3, it shows us that there is a divine order. Now, brothers and sisters, order is for the development of life and also for the accomplishment of work. If there is no order, life cannot develop properly.

God is a God of order. In 1 Corinthians chapter 11, it says that God is not a God of disorder, but of peace. In other words, our God is a God of order and he sets order in the universe.

And this is the government of God. Without government, without order, life cannot grow properly. Now, we live in this country, a democratic country.

We are all created equal, but we still need a government, do we? We still need a president. Why? If we are equal, why should there be such order? Well, the reason is, without such order, without such government, we cannot live our life peacefully, happily, and successfully. Everything will be chaotic.

And without order, there can be no coordination, no cooperation, no working together. Each will go according to his or her idea. And under that kind of chaotic situation, life is separate.

You cannot grow. Even when you are driving, there is order. There is authority.

It doesn't mean that a policeman has a bigger life than you are. It doesn't mean that a policeman has a better education than you are. You are equal, but you have to obey the policeman or you suffer punishment.

Because order is for life. Life grows with order. Otherwise, it grows wild and non-normal.

But more than that, you find order is for work. In order to do a work together as one, there has to be an order there. And it is for this reason you find in 1 Corinthians chapter 11, verse 3, it gave us the divine order.

Christ is the head of every man. Man is the head of woman. And God is the head of Christ.

Now this order is based upon God himself. It begins in God. God is the head of Christ.

Now let us remember, so far as the Father and the Son are concerned, they are equal. Our Lord Jesus said, I and the Father are one. They share the same life.

Same amount of life. Nothing more, nothing less. Whatever the Father is, the Son is.

Whatever the Father has, the Son has. Everything is equal between the Father and the Son. And in Philippians chapter 3 it says, our Lord is equal with God and it is not something to be grasped at.

He does not need to fight for it, to strive for it, to get into that place. No. It is His, by right.

So the Father and the Son are one in life. But for the sake of a work that God is doing, God sets an order, even in the Godhead. And that order comes out of love.

It is not the Father that forces the Son to take a lower place in the work. Nor the Son was forced to do that. But you see, this order comes out of love.

Out of the very life of God. Love wants to do something. Love wants to accomplish something.

And out of that love, the Father wants to give everything to the Son as the heir of all things. He wants to give man as a special gift to his Son, to be his helpmate, his light. And in order to have this work to be done, in order to defeat the enemy that is trying to frustrate God's purpose, the Son willingly, out of His love for His Father, says, Father, I will take the place of the body.

And you take the place of the head. With the cooperation of the head and the body, that work of redemption shall be done. So, brothers and sisters, we need to see the beauty of order.

Order is for the sake of work. Order is an expression of love. Order is for the growth of life.

Do not be afraid of order. It comes from God, and it happens even in the Godhead. So, in other words, you find that Christ set an example for us.

He emptied Himself. He empties Himself of His glory, of His honor, that accompanied Him as God. Of course, He could not empty His deity, because that's what He is.

His life. But He emptied all these things that surround His deity. And the reason why He had to empty these things is that He could take a lower place.

So, the Bible tells us that He took up the form of a bond slave. Formerly, He had the form of God. Now, the form here is not the outward appearance.

The form here in the original is the inward quality, character. It's an inherent character, not an acquired state. So, here it proves that our Lord Jesus, He was the Son of God.

He was equal with the Father, nothing to be grasped at. He is God, and yet He willingly took up the form of a bond slave. In other words, when Christ was born, outwardly He took up the fashion of a man, but inwardly, in His heart, He took the form of a bond slave.

Because that's where man should be. Man should be the bond slave of God. Love slave, not forced slave.

But man had lost it. So, our Lord Jesus, when He came to become a man, in His heart, He is a bond slave unto God. He has no right of His own.

He gave up everything. He does not claim anything like a slave, a bond slave. He handed everything over to His Father.

So, you find that throughout His life as man, there is one principle that governs Him. Everything He does, even what He says, He is governed by one principle, My Father's will. He refused to be head of Himself.

Why? Because He has taken the place of the body. He honored His head, and He is fully prepared and willing to be the body. You know the head plans, decides, and the body receives, and work it out, perform it.

You know, whatever the head decides, it is done by the body. Without the body, whatever the head plans, it cannot be done. That is the relationship between the head and the body.

And that's why there has to be one life. If there are two lives, then you'll find it just couldn't work. They share the same life, with the same love.

Nothing forced, but everything is harmonious. The body is willing to do whatever the head has decided, even unto death, and the death of the cross. And brothers and sisters, it is because of this, the work of salvation is done.

God's work is done on that very principle. And this principle of order is carried into family. So you'll find that when God created man, and in the full thought of man, God has the family in view.

And they share the same life, equal, but they have different functions. They complement each other, not compete with each other. You know, unfortunately, you'll find in modern society, man and woman, husband and wife in a family, they compete with each other, instead of complement each other.

God has assigned to each, his or her place. And if each would take his or her place, and could work together harmoniously in love, the family is blessed by the Lord. And according to the order, divine order, in the family, man is the head of the family, representing Christ.

And woman is the body of the family, representing the church. Beautiful. So the Bible tells us, so far as the divine order is concerned, he says, Christ is the head of every man.

And every man there is in contrast with the woman. So in other words, you'll find in the divine order, Christ is the head of every man. Do not think that the man, they are the head at all times.

No. So far as divine order is concerned, Christ is the head of every man. The relationship between the man and Christ is the relationship of the body to the head.

So before Christ, man is the body. That means man is to carry out the will of the head, Christ Jesus. Man is not to be his own head.

Unfortunately, sometimes men forget, thinking that because God has made him head in the family, therefore he is the head. No. He is first the body, and then representing Christ as the head.

So when you think of divine order, do not think that, you know, man are superior. Not at all. Man are under also.

So you'll find that the Sanctuarian, you know, our Lord Jesus said, his faith is great because he said, I'm under authority. Because he's under authority, he has authority over his soldiers. Otherwise, he has no authority.

His authority is derived, is delegated, not inherent. So we do hope that in the family, if man could take their place under the headship of Christ, knowing the will of Christ, before any decision is made, man will never exercise his headship by himself. But man shall humble himself before Christ in fear and trembling, lest he makes himself head instead of Christ.

He is to bring the headship of Christ into the family. And at the same time, you'll find the woman. The Bible said, the woman's head is man.

In the family, the head of the family is the man. And the woman is to take her place as the body. You know, you cannot have two heads in the family.

There can only be one head. Why? Because with two heads, nothing can be done. The husband has his idea, the wife has her own idea, and each has her own way to do.

You know, it is just like in the Book of Judges. There was no king. Everyone did according to what he thought was good.

And what he thought or what she thought was good may not be good. Now, I remember many years ago, when we first began, you know. Now, I don't know if any one of you were here at that time.

Jerry was here. I wonder about the others. When the Lord first began to gather us together as an expression, you know, we actually, when we first began, you know, it began really with the sisters.

And oftentimes, that's the case. In the beginning, there were three sisters that really took responsibility when I visited Richmond. So, I spoke in one sister's home, and most of those that came were sisters.

While you're good, I was there. And almost no men. Well, one or two.

Yeah, one or two. But gradually, the Lord began to bring some young brothers into our midst, and Jerry at that time was a young brother. He's a grandfather now.

And so, that's how we began. And we met irregularly, only when I visited, and once a month for a weekend. But later on, the Lord began to give us the desire that there should be a testimony to the headship of Christ and the unity of the body of Christ.

So, we began to be burdened with that, and we pray about that. But we felt that, you know, when you want to have something more concrete, more permanent, you need to work according to the divine order. So, at that time, we share with the sisters and with some brothers.

At that time, there were some young brothers in our midst, and we pray about it. And until the sisters, the three sisters said, well, we are willing to take the supporting part and ask these brothers to take the leading part. So far as the age is concerned, they were older, more experienced.

I'm not a judge of spirituality, but I will say they were more spiritual than the brothers. And yet, they are willing to follow, obey the order of God. So, they took, they stood back and asked the brothers to stand forward.

And thank God, God gave these brothers not only the humility, but also the willingness to bear the burden. So, that's how we first began. And even after we have met for a number of years, I never once openly speak on head covering.

Not because I do not want, I do not believe in head covering, or I shy away from the full counsel of God. But I was waiting, because divine order is not forced at all. It has to come out of love.

It has to come out of willingness. It has to come out of understanding. Otherwise, it would be a law.

And law binds, only love builds. So, I was waiting for the time. And you know what happened? The sisters, at that time, they began to study this matter of family.

And as they studied the matter of family, a question was raised. In the family, should bear be a head? Of course, Christ is the head of the family, no doubt. But according to the word of God, according to God's creation, according to God's order.

Now, who is to be the head of the family, humanly speaking, representatively speaking? Now, they realize their husband should be head. But all over the world, I think it is the same. You know, some people say Chinese women are very strong.

But when I come to the West, I find the same thing here. So, these sisters were strong sisters. They used to rule the families.

Their husband listened to them. If their husband did not listen, their family would be disrupted. No, you know, it is a cooperation.

If one is too strong, the other has to be a little weak. You know, otherwise, there will be clash. Well, some sisters said, but my husband is weak.

And because he is weak spiritually and weak even psychologically, now I have to take over. Otherwise, how can the family run? Well, there is a solution. So, the sisters began to realize we have to make our husband take the leading part in the family.

We should take our place as the body of the family. You know, a family is built mostly by women, by wives, not by the husbands. The husband may lead and supply, but it is the wife who builds the family.

Think about that. So, at that time, the sisters, they began to think, well, by the grace of God, we are willing to step back. Instead of making decisions for the family, we will ask our husband to make the decision.

We will support them, pray for them, that they may take their place in the family. Thank God, this is how it began. And when this thing was happening, they came to me and asked me about head covering.

And that's the time that I spoke with them on head covering. Now, brothers and sisters, let me tell you how I feel. Now, you can judge by yourself.

I believe in head covering. I do not consider this as a Corinthian custom. I accept it as the Word of God.

It is nothing in itself. But it is related to God's divine order. And that's a big thing.

I think very few things are bigger than divine order. And that's the way I look at it. Head covering is not a law to be enforced outwardly.

You know, this time, Dora and I were in Paris, and we had a strange experience. The group that we were with were all people coming from a certain city in China. That city was Wenqiao.

And that city is considered now as the Jerusalem of China. Because there were so, there are so many believers there. God did a marvelous work there.

And they were the gypsies of China. They went everywhere throughout the world. You go to Europe, and you'll find them everywhere.

Very successful business people. Shop, tea. And that group in Paris, they all came from that little city.

And they came from the same background as I was when I was in China. And they kept very strictly the old tradition. But they loved the Lord.

For instance, in their worship time, two hours, unceasing prayers. Everybody prayed. Brothers and sisters, when I experienced that, I feel ashamed.

And yet, they kept very strictly old traditions. Because when we were in China, we believed in head covering. So every woman had head covering.

And when we entered into the meeting, I was going to speak, you know. So they want me to sit at the front. So I went to the front, and Dora usually followed me.

But while she was following me, suddenly she was snatched away. Why? Because the sister has to sit on a certain side, and the brother is on the other side. That's our custom in China.

Before, not now. And not only that, during the meeting, Dora put on a white covering. But everybody else is black.

So some sister came and changed it. Now, I don't believe in such thing. I believe head covering is not a law.

It is an expression coming out from within. When you see divine order, it is an honor, a glory to have head covering. Otherwise, it means nothing.

Head covering does not have the same position in the Bible as baptism or the Lord's table. But it does have a place, a rightful place, in the Word of God. Christ has his head covered before God.

But because he is head to every man, the sign of covering cannot be on his head. But that doesn't mean that he is not covered before God. When he exercises headship, he is under the covering of God, never by himself.

The same thing should be true with man. Christ is the head of every man. Man should have their head covered before Christ.

But because they are to be the head of the woman in the family, so the sign cannot fall upon them, unfortunately. But thank God this blessing is given to woman. God graced the woman to have that sign of authority on their head.

It not only reminds them where they stand in the order of God, it reminds the brothers they should have their head covered before Christ. So every time you see a sister with head covering, it reminds me I should be covered before Christ. There is a testimony in 1 Corinthians 11 that even goes to the angels.

For the sake of the angels, the rebellious angels, Lucifer did not cover his head before God. Rebel against God's order. Try to rob the place of the Son of God to be equal with God.

And here you'll find on earth there is this sign of authority. It put Lucifer, the rebellious angel, to shame. What a testimony.

So we do not force any sisters to put on head covering. It is something that you have to go to the Lord. And if the Lord show you, do it.

If the Lord does not show you, don't do it because others are doing it. So brothers and sisters, it is just a matter of divine order. Now in a family, for the sake of the welfare of the family, it is God's will, His order to have the man to be the head and the woman to be the body.

But it is not separate, separated. In other words, when the man functions at the head, he does not arbitrarily give orders. That's not the way.

You know, he is not only under the edge of Christ, but his wife being his helpmate, his light. They should pray together, seek the Lord together, get the feel of the body before any decision is made. But the decision should be made by the husband.

And the same way with the wives, the women. She is to build the family, rule the family, rule the children, but not without the husband with her. So they work together.

And it is a cooperation of love. Nothing forced, nothing rebellious. Love, work together as one.

Now that's how you find a family, blessed by the Lord. Now the family is just the type of the church. You remember Ephesians chapter 5? Paul was speaking of the family.

And he said, well, you look at the family. The husband represents Christ. As Christ loved the church and gave himself for her, so the husband should love the wife and give himself for the wife.

To nourish it, to cherish it, to treat her as his own body. As Christ loved the church. And the woman represents the church.

As the church obeys Christ in all things, so the wife submits to the husband and supports the in all things, and work together. So brothers and sisters, I feel that there's a problem here. If you allow me to share with you, because today I'm not preaching, I'm sharing.

You know, in China, we had, among God's people, I mean, we made a mistake. Because the Lord has shown us what the church is. So we gave ourselves to the church, to such an extent, we neglect our family.

We have meetings every night, almost. When I was working, I usually left home at seven, and will not arrive home at seven. But if there's meeting, I go straight to the meeting.

I mean, no time for the family. Now, fortunately, in China, we have maids and servants, so that's how the family was taken care of. Otherwise, I don't know how.

But when I came to this country, I saw the opposite among God's people. Now, not among, in the world. Thank God, it's a good sign that among God's people, you'll find that Christians really pay much attention to their families.

I thank God for that, but I discover one thing. You know, that's what man is, and woman too. We always go to extreme.

Today, with God's people, family became the thing in their life. My family, that is all. That's wrong.

Family is not the ultimate end. Family is a means to an end. God raised a family for the church.

That's why you'll find Joshua said, as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord. That's it. Do not make your family the goal of your Christian life.

We cannot make our spirituality the goal of our Christian life. We need to be, we need to grow, we need to pursue, we need to be spiritual. But why? Not that you may be a monument, standing up for everybody to admire.

That's not God's purpose. Why is it that God wants us to be spiritual? We should be spiritual. We must be spiritual.

Why? Because this is a step to the building of the church. Otherwise, how can Christ build his church? No material. So, brothers and sisters, if our own spiritual welfare is not the end of our spiritual life, then the same thing is true with our family.

We need to rule the family, build up the family, according to the will of God. The stronger, the better. But it is not the end.

It is for the church. Every family is for the church. The husband, the wife, the children.

So, brothers and sisters, I feel this is something that we hear in the West. On the one hand, I'm thankful for what happened. On the other hand, I am worried.

And it is because our whole effort is focused on our families, we neglect the building of the church. We have to find a balance somewhere. We should not neglect our families.

We should be with our children. We should help our children to love the Lord, to serve the Lord. But that's for the church, for the building of the church.

Because God's eternal purpose towards us is the church. Not you, not your family, but the church. So, may the Lord give us wisdom, how to balance it.

Not to neglect the family, no. Because that is where it begins. But it is not where it ends.

So, it should end in the right end. Now, when you come to this matter of the sister's place and ministry, now after all this time, finally we come to where we are. You know, you need a foundation.

Because without foundation, how can you build? Now, we do not want to just, when you have a headache, that take aspirin or Tylenol. And when you have something else, you take another medicine. We won't go to the root of things.

So, what is the place of the sisters in the church? Do you remember that verse in Galatians chapter 3, verse 28? Yes, it's 28. In verse 28 it says, There is no Jew nor Greek. There is no bondman or freeman.

There is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. Wonderful verse. In Christ Jesus, there is no Jew nor Gentile.

In Christ Jesus, there is no bondman or freeman. There is no social distinction, no racial distinction. And thank God, in Christ Jesus, no male or female, no gender distinction.

Are you glad to hear this verse? In Christ Jesus, He is all. He is our life. And because of this, there is no gender distinction.

So, I do hope that brothers and sisters, you all remember that in Christ Jesus, we are equal, same, no difference. And that's the reason why you find that we who are washed by the blood, God has made us a kingdom, priests unto God. We are all priests unto God.

No difference. In Christ Jesus, not only our life is the same, but so far as our ministry is concerned, it is the same ministry but with distinctive character. It is not because, you know, in the Old Testament time, you cannot be a priest if you are a woman.

But even in the Old Testament time, you have prophetess, woman. But in the New Testament, in Christ Jesus, there is neither male nor female. We are all priests unto God.

And being priests unto God, we all can serve Him. It is not because you are a sister, therefore you are deprived of service unto the Lord. And exactly the same, we are all priests unto God.

At the time of the Lord's table, Christ is the head of the table, and we are all invited by Him to come. And as priests unto God, we are all equal before Christ. We can worship, we can pray, we can praise, we can sing unto Him.

Not because you are a sister, therefore you cannot pray. You know, in the exclusive brotherly meeting, the sisters cannot pray. They not only cannot teach, they cannot pray.

I visited them in this country when I first came. I went to their meetings, and sure enough, you find that when they studied the Bible, only the men shared. The women were all silent.

And in prayer meeting, only the men prayed. And because of that, they had to invent an ingenious way. They started a meeting together in the prayer meeting.

That is in the open brotherly. And when they prayed, the sisters go on to another place and pray by themselves. But we do not believe that.

We believe we are all priests. Before Christ, we are all equal. Therefore, in the worship time, sisters feel free to pray.

In the prayer meeting, we are priests. We do not have intermediary class to pray for us, like in the Old Testament time. So, feel free to pray, because you are priests unto God.

In the Bible study, we study the Bible together. Share what the Lord has shown you. Preaching the gospel, the women declare the glad tidings.

Brothers and sisters, do not think that because you are sisters, so you are hammed in, you are forbidden to do this, to do that. You know, I remember once a sister said, now, what's our ministry in the church? What's our service in the church? In the kitchen? Nothing else. That's not true.

That's not true. You are needed in the kitchen, and you are needed in the meeting of other kinds too. You are very, very much needed.

So, I do hope the sisters do not have that kind of feeling, being oppressed, suppressed, and inferiority complex, and so forth. Thank God in Christ, we are all equal. Free.

Free in Christ Jesus. You know, freedom is in the Spirit. If you are not in the Spirit, nothing is free.

Don't feel free in anything, if you are not in the Spirit. But in the Spirit, it is free. But that doesn't mean because of this, in the church there is no order.

In Christ Jesus, it is exactly the same. But in the church, because it is a work of God, there is a divine order there. And this you find, I mean, in the Word of God.

You find that in the church, the man as the husband in the family, their responsibility is to lead and to supply. That's their responsibility. And the sisters, as wives in the homes, their responsibility is to support and to build.

You know, lots of actual building in the family are done by the sisters, not by the husband, by the wives. I mean, this is evident. The same thing is true.

In the building of the church, the sisters actually bear the greater responsibility. They do the work. If the sisters do not function faithful in their ministry, the church cannot be built.

There are areas that God gives especially to the sisters to minister. For instance, the children. In a family, who really trains the children? Not the father.

It's the mother. Because the mother stays with them. The mother knows them.

And the mother is always there, available. The same thing is true in the church. The sisters, they are close to the younger ones, the children.

There's a special sphere of ministry. Now, it doesn't mean that a man should not do it. The man has his part too.

But mostly, you'll find in the children's work, the sisters bear the greater responsibility. That's the area. God made it that way.

They have the love. They have the affection. And they have that something that man does not have.

The Bible says sympathy. You know, in Romans 12, sympathy does it in sincerity. Now, in the matter of sympathy, seeing the need, ministering to the need, praying, helping the need.

Mostly, this work is done by women, by sisters. If the sisters do not minister, that area will be lacking. And you know, in our midst, that is a great lack.

People will come and go. Nobody notices. Nobody goes after them.

Nobody asks about them. Nobody visits them. Very spiritual.

Very unreal. The church cannot be built that way. Sisters, you have a great responsibility.

I do not try to exempt the man, the brothers, but sisters, this is a ministry especially suitable to you. Of course, not to be gossipers. Pray.

Prayer ministry. Prayer ministry is a special ministry for the sisters. So, some sisters say, we have nothing to do in the church.

But sisters, you have much more than you can handle. But again, I will go back and say, there is a distinction. So, that's why you'll find in the church, in the church meetings, usually the brothers will take the lead.

Now, it doesn't mean because they take the lead, therefore they take it all. They take the lead for the sisters to fill in. That's a cooperation, working together.

No, it is not in any sense that the brothers are more spiritual than the sisters. Oftentimes, it's just the reverse. But, that's the divine order.

And if we keep the divine order, the growth will be natural, supernaturally natural. So, sisters, I just mentioned on principles, there are many things that you can do. Now, the tricky part.

Can the sister teach? Can the sister preach? Can the sister minister the word of God? Why not? In 1 Corinthians chapter 11, it says, if a woman prays or prophesies, let her have her head. God gave gifts to the sisters, teaching gifts, not to all, but to some. So, there's no reason why if God gave gifts and you cannot exercise it, you can.

I often think of 1 Corinthians 14. 1 Corinthians 14 said, I do not allow a woman to speak, but be silent. But, do you know 1 Corinthians is a letter of correction? Paul was with the Corinthian believers for 18 months.

That's not a short time for Paul. But, during those 18 months, he was with the believers, meeting with them all the time. He never once told the sisters, you should be silent in the meeting.

You should not preach. You should not teach. He never did.

If he did, he didn't need to write 1 Corinthians 14. Why? There's a reason. When God's people first come together, they are more like a family.

And, in the family atmosphere, there is great freedom. The husband, the wife, the children, the older children, the younger children, all can talk, all can share. And, that is for the growth of life.

Because, in the beginning, you put a law. It stifles the growth of life. So, Paul, being a wise foreman, he knew.

So, he never told the Corinthian believers how they should meet, whether the sisters could teach or not. He never did. And, evidently, in Corinth, a number of sisters were gifted.

They could teach. And, because they could teach, they threatened the man. And, gradually, they began to take over the teaching ministry.

But, thank God, as the church began to grow, God raised up brothers who were also gifted with teaching. And, when that happened, life has grown to a certain point. Order has to come in.

You know, order comes in with life. It is something from within, not outward, forced thing. Divine order always comes from life.

So, as life began to grow, then the church is to follow God's order. So, that's the time when you have elders, you have deacons, deaconesses, you have leaders in the church. And, you see, Paul said, let the man take the lead.

And, let the sisters support it. Isn't it beautiful? So, it doesn't mean that the sister cannot teach. You know, it's just that in the church, let the man take the lead.

And, the sisters support them. I think that should be enough of this thing. And, let it go.

Now, finally, sisters' meetings. What about sisters' meetings? Do you find in the Bible sisters' meetings? I do. Paul went to, where? Philippi.

And, he went to a sisters' meeting. Well, of course, the man all disappeared because they were not faithful to God. So, only the sisters were there praying.

And, Paul went to a sisters' meeting. Now, it is true that in the Bible, so far as the church is concerned, God does not specify what kind of meetings we should have. The Bible does not even tell us how should we meet.

Why? Because it is an organic body. And, the Holy Spirit is there. So, the Holy Spirit will teach us in all things, according to our need, according to the stage of growth.

So, brothers and sisters, remember, it is true in the Bible you don't have a sister meeting. You don't have a children's meeting. You don't have a young people's meeting.

But, can we have a sister meeting? Of course, we can, if there is a need for it. You know, God is not bound. There is the liberty of the Spirit.

So, if the sisters really feel there is need for them to come together, to encourage one another, thank God for that. The sister may feel they have a special need, know that the whole church should not be involved or cannot be involved. Why? Have a sisters' time together.

Nothing wrong with that. But, remember, whether it is a sisters' meeting, or a brothers' meeting, or young people's meeting, or children's meeting, it is not separated from the church. It is not something apart from the church.

It is a part of the church. And, this is something we need to remember. So, in other words, the sisters' meeting should not go independently without the support and the understanding and the guidance of the church.

So is the young people's meeting. So is the children's meeting. You know, all these have to be related to the church.

So, if the sisters feel they have a special need, and they pray together and feel the need of it, they should talk to the responsible brothers in the church, and share their burden with them, and get their understanding and help. So, you'll find that the sisters' meeting will not be a separate thing, isolated by itself. You need head covering.

Now, what are you going to do in a sisters' meeting? It depends on your need. So, there is no rule or regulation. If you feel at one time you need to come together, pray.

Thank God for that. The church needs lots of prayer. If you feel you come together to share your problems, your experience, to help one another in practical things, fine.

If you feel you want to come together to study the Word of God, fine. You know, or if you want to come together and try to arrange how you can go out and help, praise God for that. Lots of things you can do, but never be independent.

I think I have shared with you all that is in my heart, and can we have some prayer together? This is the sisters' time. We have ten minutes to go. So, ten minutes.

Prophesying, you know, in the Old Testament time, the prophets or the prophetess, they prophesied. But, even though the emphasis is slightly on foretelling, but still, if you read the Old Testament prophecy very carefully, it is more foretelling than foretelling. In other words, prophesying is when you are moved by the Spirit of God, and God gives you an insight into God's mind concerning His people or concerning His work.

Then you prophesy, you tell forth as you are moved by the Spirit of God. So, the Bible says that no prophesying is by man himself, but the holy men of God as they are moved by the Spirit of God. That's prophesying.

So, prophesying is more inspirational in nature. Of course, it should never contradict with the written Word. Now, teaching is more according to the Word of God.

So, it's more instructional than inspirational. That's the difference. Now, in the New Testament time, we find that prophesying, the foretelling part is very, very minor, if any.

But, the foretelling part is more prominent. So, that's what you find in the New Testament time. Now, unfortunately, you find that in the charismatic movements.

Now, I do thank the Lord for the charismatic movement. I feel everyone should have a touch of it. But, I feel it is disastrous if you plunge too deeply into it.

But, anyway, you'll find, unfortunately, according to the charismatic movement, they make prophesying as going back to the Old Testament time, and even make predicting people's personal life as more prominent. That is very dangerous. For a woman to prophesy, and if you want to use the modern word, to prophesy is preaching.

You know, because preaching actually is to telling forth the mind of God. Now, if a woman is to prophesy, the best place is in the sisters' meeting. And, when you have a church meeting, as you find in 1 Corinthians 14, when the whole assembly gathering together.

Now, because there is a divine order there, so it is better that it is not being done. But, again, I want to take back a little bit. We know that there are some sisters who are very gifted in preaching and in teaching.

We are not talking about the Old Testament prophesying. And, you know, it is strange because even in the New Testament time, you'll find that in the beginning, you know, Agampus, he was a prophet, and he really predicted. And, also, you'll find Philip's four daughters, they are all prophetesses.

But the Bible never tells us where do they prophesy, or how do they prophesy. They never tell us, you know. And, so, you have to put the whole Bible together trying to find the proper place, the right functioning, you know.

So, I think what you need is, if you have a basic understanding, then there should be no problem. But, sometimes, God does raise up some sisters who are so gifted with teaching and preaching. And, for that

reason, we feel if a proper order can be maintained, they can exercise their function to all the brothers and sisters.

Now, let me tell you, when I first began to serve the Lord, we have some sisters who are much older, much more experienced, gifted. And, because they submit to the order of God. You know, they used to travel in China and lead meetings.

But, when they began to see God's divine order, they refused to be so public. And, they only ministered to the sisters. So, while they were ministering to the sisters, I, as one of the other many brothers, we sat behind the wall.

It's a wooden wall, and there are some holes there. We sat behind all the stairways and listened. That's what we did.

But, then God, later on, he released us. Because, we feel that if one, I mean, in the church meeting, you have to keep the order. But, there are meetings that are not church meetings.

It's ministry. Ministry is exercising gifts. And, if God gives, give her the gifts.

Let her exercise. So, we usually will call a meeting, let a brother chair the meeting, like this morning, and then ask the sister to share. The reason is, in case there are disorder, in case there is confusion, the brother will take charge.

Because, you have to exercise authority. She wants to know... Yeah, I think different people seem to read differently into the Word of God. Some people say, because the Bible says, the woman should have long hair.

And, it is their glory. You know? And, the hair is in lieu of the covering. So, some people feel, well, if you have long hair, that's the covering.

But, if you read very carefully, 1 Corinthians chapter 11, you will find it is not so. In other words, the long hair is God-given head covering. And, your head covering is a response to God's order.

In other words, God has already naturally given you this sign. And, in submission to God's order, you put a sign on your head. So, that's why it says now, if you do not have the head covering, then you should shave your hair.

You have none. Either both or none. Well, the head covering, as you read in 1 Corinthians 11, this is a sign of authority on your head.

And, the sign of authority, the immediate authority, of course, is the husband. But, you find that as you trace up, it is Christ. It is God.

And, at the same time, there is another meaning to it. And, it is for the enemy. To put the enemy to shame.

That man who is created lower than an angel, and yet they can submit to God, not like the angels rebelled against God. Yeah, sure, sure.

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