

WOMEN ARE ALLOWED TO SPEAK IN CHURCH

Correct understanding of *1Corinthians 14:34*, *1Timothy 2:12*

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Two rules of Biblical interpretation:

1. **A verse of Scripture must be interpreted in the context of the passage.** A verse taken out of context can be used to mean something it was never intended to mean. When you take the text out of context it becomes a “Con.” (a deception, a lie, an untruth.)
2. **A verse of Scripture must not be interpreted to mean something that is in conflict with other clear Biblical truth.** Jesus makes this clear in *John 10:35*. The Jews were accusing Jesus of blasphemy, *John 10:33*. In verse 34 Jesus quotes a verse from the *Psalms* to justify His claim to be the Son of God and added, in verse 35, **“and the Scripture cannot be broken.”** This means that it is wrong to interpret a verse of the Scripture, so that the meaning you give to it, is in conflict with the clear meaning of the Word of God in other places of Scripture.

1Corinthians 14:34

In *1Corinthians 14*, from verses 6 to 40, the context is the need to avoid confusion and disorder in the Church.

(See verses: 6,7,8,9,11,16,19,20,23,26,27,28,30,33)

Verse 33 says, “God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the Churches of the saints.”

Therefore the correct interpretation of verse 34 must be in the context of avoiding confusion, not as a ban on women speaking in the Church.

Verse 35 confirms this to be the case. It appears that the wives, (not all women, only the wives, not singles or widows), were calling out to their husbands in the Church and asking them questions, and Paul instructs them to ask their husbands at home and not disturb the Church meeting. It is probable that the women sat on one side of the Church and the men on the other. This is still the practice in many places that we have visited in India and other nations.

Further confirmation that *1Corinthians 14:34* is not a ban on women speaking in the Church comes from the second principle of Biblical interpretation. The Bible does not contradict itself. Jesus said this in *John 10:35*.

Acts 2:1 – 4, records the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the 120 disciples of Jesus, who were waiting and praying in the upper room, for the coming of the Promise of the Father. This Promise of the Father was the Baptism with the Holy Spirit. *Acts 1:4,5,14,15*. **The 120 disciples comprised of men and women. *Acts 1:12 – 15*.**

This is the first meeting of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the “birthday” of the Church. When the Holy Spirit fell upon them **they all spoke with tongues in the Church** as the Spirit gave them utterance. **There were men and women present. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit.** From the assembly of the Church in the Upper Room, they moved out on the streets among the people visiting Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost. They came from fifteen different nations, *Acts 2:5 – 12*. By the Holy Spirit, the disciples of Jesus were speaking in the languages of the various nations represented in the crowd. They were speaking of the wonderful works of God. *Acts 2:11*.

This opened the door for Peter to preach the Gospel. *Acts 2:14 – 39*. In Peter’s message he said that what was happening was the fulfilment of the prophecy of Joel. *Acts 2:16 – 21*.

This prophetic word says, **“I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters will prophesy.”** This is repeated twice: *Acts 2:17* and *Acts 2:18*.

From *Acts* chapter one and two, it is clear that it is God’s will for women and men to speak in tongues and prophesy in the Church and outside the Church, as the Holy Spirit gives them the words to speak.

Prophecy is speaking by the Spirit, edification and exhortation and comfort to men. *1Corinthians 14:3*.

Prophecy is given by the Holy Spirit to edify the Church. *1Corinthians 14:4*.

Women are to prophesy, pray and speak in tongues in the Church.

This truth is also repeated in *1Corinthians 11:5*, where Paul speaks of **women praying and prophesying**.

The context of this chapter is the believers coming together as the Church. (Verses: 16,17,18,20).

1Timothy 2:11,12

The context of the passage, *1Timothy 2:11,12*, is also referring to the importance of **maintaining right order, and is not a ban on women speaking in the Church.**

1Timothy 2:1 – 7, is about praying for the Government whom God raises up to rule over us, and the overall authority of God. **It is an authority issue.**

1Timothy 2:8 – 15, is also about right order of men and women in the Church.

As the man is to lead in the family, *1Corinthians 11:3*, *Ephesians 5:22 – 24*, *1Peter 3:1*, so it follows that men should continue to lead in the Church which is a gathering of families.

In the KJV, in *1Timothy 2:12*, it says, “I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp, (wrongfully take), authority over the man, but to be in silence.” It appears that Paul was aware of the need to stress the order **that God has established in 1Corinthians 11:3**. Man is responsible to lead in the family and in the Church. Women must not try and reverse this order.

God gives gifts of ministry to men and women according to His will. We are responsible to recognise these gifts, accept them, and make room for them to function. Various gifts are mentioned in *1Peter 4:10*, *Ephesians 4:11*, *Romans 12:3 – 8*, *1Corinthians 12:4 – 11*, *1Corinthians 12:27 – 31*, *Romans 13:1 – 7*.

***Galatians 3:26 – 28* says, “For you are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”**

Deborah, *Judges 4:4 – 14*, was a prophetess and Judge over Israel. Huldah, *2Kings 22:10 – 20*, was a prophetess and brought the Word of the Lord to the people of God. God gave the Queen of Sheba, *1Kings 10:1*, *Matthew 12:42*, her power and authority and she was a minister of God. (*Romans 13:1 – 7*). Anna a prophetess, *Luke 2:36 – 38*, spoke to all who looked for redemption in Israel, in the Temple, the House of God. Philip the evangelist, *Acts 21:8,9*, had four daughters who prophesied.

In *Romans 16:3 – 5*, Paul greets Priscilla and Aquila, his fellow workers in Christ Jesus. They risked their necks for Paul’s life, they were honoured in all the Churches, and they cared for the Church in their own home. Priscilla and Aquila were both ministers of the Word of Christ to Apollos. *Acts 18:26*.

In *Romans 16:1*, Phoebe is described as a minister of the Church of Cenchrea. The word translated “servant” in this verse is the same Greek word used of Jesus in *Romans 15:8* where Jesus is described as a “minister to the circumcision for the truth of God.” “The circumcision” is a reference to the Jewish people. As Jesus was as a minister, so was Phoebe. This word “diakonos” is translated as “minister” twenty times in the KJV, and is used of Jesus Christ, *Romans 15:8*, of Phoebe, *Romans 16:1*, of Paul, *Ephesians 3:7*, *Colossians 1:23*, of all believers, *2Corinthians 3:5,6*.

In *Philippians 4:2,3*, Euodia and Syntyche, were two women who laboured with Paul in the Gospel and were his fellow workers.

Each verse of Scripture must be interpreted in the context it is in, and in such a way that it does not conflict with the rest of God’s Word.