

Women in Ministry

We believe God uses both men and women in ministry. There are many important women in the Bible. Eve was the mother of mankind; Sarah and Rebecca were the wives of important believers in the Tanakh (Old Testament portion); Deborah was a judge over Israel, and there were many more important women. We often hear the saying that behind a great man, there is a great woman and this is true for believers too. Jacob married a believer and became an heir to God's promises and a nation. Esau married pagan Hittites and became lost in pagan history. Women have made a big difference in history.

Women assumed leadership roles at times and are revered for what they did. There were a number of women who were leaders among the early believers in Yeshua. Therefore, women are not to be excluded from leadership.

Yeshua (Jesus) allowed women to sit under His teaching ministry which was entirely male at the time. Yeshua said that it was okay which gave her permission. Luke 10:38-42. Yeshua put men and women on an equal plain to some extent.

In Romans 16, Shaul (Paul) names women leaders:

- * Shaul makes special mention of Phoebe, an important woman rabbi and teacher¹ in Cenchrea. 16:1-2
 - * Priscilla who was a woman and fellow worker of Shaul who along with Aquilla, risked their lives for Shaul. She is mentioned a number of times in the New Testament portion. 16:3
 - * Junia is a woman who is mentioned as being an important apostle² among the early believers. 16:7
- So, Shaul (Paul) refers to women serving in leadership and even being messengers (apostles).

There are scriptures that probably put cultural limitations on women serving. These certainly wouldn't apply to a woman's ministry. At times it may not be appropriate for a woman to hold a specific service to the believers; again, culture is a factor. Yeshua broke the cultural norm of His time. If the Holy Spirit gives permission, it is definitely okay for a woman to serve in any capacity.

Shaul says that the head of the family should be the man (1 Corinthians 11:3). He should take on the spiritual responsibility to lead his house responsibly and lead his family spiritually.

Therefore, whenever possible it is best to have a man lead the congregation as Head Rabbi. It was the model in Yeshua's time and should be considered the best model in our time. All of Yeshua's rabbis were men (His chosen 12). Men and women are created different and for that reason, we should understand men and women have different abilities they are best suited for. Sometimes though the best person to assume a spiritual position is a woman. For example, Phoebe was the head rabbi at Cenchrea.

Also note, when Shaul talks about there being neither male or female he obviously knows there is a difference. According to the Torah, men and women are to remain different – it is a commandment of God (Deut. 22:5). The problem is with misunderstanding the context. Believers in the Messiah each have the Holy Spirit and can have a special fellowship with God. We are the same in that sense.

God has equal use for both men and women in ministry. Women play an important part in ministry.

¹ It is the same word used for men who teach. Rabbi is the modern word for teacher, so she was a rabbi and teacher.

² Apostles were messengers for God. It is a common ministry; there were many "apostles" according to Shaul (Ephesians 4:11).