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WOMEN'S ISSUES:

Women Roles Defined

Misunderstandings:

The role of women in the church today has become an area of disagreement, tension, and division. Therefore it is necessary to clarify what the Scriptures do and do not say about this issue; what is cultural and what is not. Although there undoubtedly are some difficult passages to understand regarding the role of women in the church, one must do his best to understand the main issues. It needs to be stated at the outset of this article that some women, especially in our day, wrongly justify their overstepping the bounds of Scripture in regards to their role in the church. Having said that, it must also be stated that too many times men in the church also overstep the bounds of Scripture in regard to the role of women in the church, demeaning and restricting them beyond what the Scriptures mandate. Both extremes are wrong!



Her equality and honor:

In the discussion of this topic, the words of the Apostle Paul in Galatians 3:26-29 need to be considered: "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

Another passage that establishes women's equality is found in the very first chapter of the Bible. In Genesis 1:27, it is recorded: "God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." Women, as well as men, are created in the very image and likeness of God. They are equal to men and are to be honored as God's special creation just as men are. By the very fact that woman was created from man (cf. Gen. 2:21-22) makes the solidarity between them very special and unique (1 Cor. 11:11-12). This is not true about any other of God's creation.

In God's plan, He created men and women with a dependency upon one another. In 1 Corinthians 11:11-12, Paul said: "However, in the Lord, neither is woman independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. For as the woman originates from the man, so also the man *has his birth* through the woman; and all things origi-

nate from God." In the Lord, God did not create men and women to be independent of one another, but interdependent. This is also seen in His design for marriage in that husbands and wives were created to be one flesh (Gen. 2:24; Mat. 19:5-6). Since this is true, the husband needs to understand that how he treats his wife, in a sense, so he treats himself since she is an intricate part of him, and he of her. Therefore because of God's design, this union is never to be broken and is to abide until death (Mal. 2:16; Mat. 19:6; Mark 10:9; cf. Mat. 5:31-32; 19:3-9; Mark 10:2-12; 1 Cor. 7:1-15).

"You husbands in the same way, live with *your wives* in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered" (1 Pet. 3:7). Christian women are to be shown honor because they are fellow heirs of the grace of life. The fact that they are weaker vessels does not mean that they are to be taken advantage of, mistreated or used. The Apostle Paul, when discussing the way in which God composed the body of Christ, said: "And the eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you'; or again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.' On the contrary, it is much truer that the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary; and those *members* of the body which we deem less honorable, on these we bestow more abundant honor, and our less presentable members become much more presentable, whereas our more presentable members have no need of *it*. But God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that *member* which lacked, so that there may be no division in the body, but *that* the members may have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if *one* member is honored, all the members rejoice with it" (1 Cor. 12:21-26). The marriage relationship reflects this truth since both the Christian husband and his wife are a part of the body of Christ. In applying this to the marriage relationship, although the woman is the weaker vessel physically and emotionally (not spiritually, intellectually or capably), the husband is not to treat his wife as if he has no need of her. "On the contrary," Paul said: 1) she is necessary; 2) upon her more honor is to be bestowed so that there is no division (between her and her husband); 3) she is to be cared for; and 4) when she suffers or is honored, he is to suffer with her and be honored with her. If however a Christian husband does not treat his wife in this manner, as the weaker vessel, one result will be a hindered and ineffective prayer life as Peter stated. Therefore, because she is a weaker vessel, it is his responsibility to love her as his own body, nourishing (caring for all of her physical needs) and cherishing her (treating her as worthy and very valuable), even being willing to die for her (cf. Eph. 5:25-30). This is honoring her as a fellow heir in Christ who is created in the image and likeness of God.

Christian men need to understand that passages such as Romans 12:10, Galatians 5:13, Philippians 2:3-4, Ephesians 4:2 and 5:21, and 1 Peter 2:17, are not passages which speak only about how men are to treat men, or how women are to treat men, but also about how men are to treat women; including their wives. Church elders also need to remember that they are to be examples to the church (1 Tim. 4:12; 1 Pet. 5:3), and this includes how they love and treat their wives. Others will follow their example. Therefore, in Christ, believers are all equal, even though they have different roles and different responsibilities.

Limitations in the home:

God has stipulated certain limitations in the Scriptures in regard to the husband/wife relationship and the role of women in the church. These limitations are not to be understood as inadequacies in regard to her spirituality, intelligence and/or abilities. To the contrary, women, as well as men, can be very spiritual, intelligent and capable. However, they do have limitations placed upon them by God. They are due to:

1. Divine order -- 1 Cor. 11:3
2. Created order (design) -- 1 Tim. 2:13
 - a. She was created as a helpmate -- Gen. 2:18
 - b. She is a weaker vessel -- 1 Pet. 3:7
 - c. She was created to bear, nurture and rear children -- cf. Gen. 3:16; 1 Tim. 2:9; 5:14; Titus 2:4-5
3. Her deception (by Satan) -- 1 Tim. 2:14

In God's divine order, He created man to be the authoritative head of woman (cf. 1 Cor. 11:3; Gen. 3:16). From the beginning, God never designed the home to be a place where the wife would be the leader.

God's created order establishes the fact that God created man to be the head of the home. God formed man first from the dust of the ground and then breathed into him the breath of life (Gen. 2:7). Man was created first, and it is due to this order that God established him as the head of the home (Gen. 2:22; 1 Tim. 2:13; 1 Cor. 11:8-9). God took a rib from Adam, and with it He fashioned a woman (Gen. 2:21-22) who was to be a helpmate for him (Gen. 2:18). "For man does not originate from woman, but woman from man; for indeed man was not created for the woman's sake, but woman for the man's sake," Paul stated in 1 Corinthians 11:8-9. Because of this Paul also wrote: "Wives, *be subject* to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself *being* the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives *ought to be* to their husbands in everything" (Ephesians 5:22-24). The woman is to be in subjection to her husband since he is her head just as Christ is the head of the church and is to be in subjection to Him (Num. 5:19,29; 1 Pet. 3:5-6; 1 Cor. 11:3). It is due to this position that God has placed him in, as head of the home, that his wife is to respect him. Paul stated this in Ephesians 5:33: "Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must *see to it* that she respects her husband." Although he may not have character qualities which are respectable, she is nonetheless to respect him due to his position as her head. God will bless the wife who does this.

What is her limitation in the home? As the wife, she is not to lead the home by usurping her husband's authority and responsibility. One difficulty with this is that it is in a woman's nature to desire to rule over her husband. In Genesis 3:16, when God cursed women for Eve's part in the fall of mankind into sin, God told her: "...I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth, in pain you will bring forth children; yet your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you." The phrase, "yet your desire will be for your husband," is speaking of her desire to rule over him. Some may interpret this phrase as sexual desire for him, but the context of this verse and the reality of life should cause a person to interpret this verse differently. Another reason is that the last phrase of this verse states that though her desire will be for her husband, "he will rule over you." The issue is who will be in subjection to whom? Please note if a husband is non-responsive to the needs and leadership of his family,

the wife will generally take over this role, not only due to necessity, but also because of her nature. From the beginning there has been a struggle between the sexes, which is still evident today.

However, in the Christian home, many women desire to submit to their husbands' authority in obedience to God. They understand the struggle of desiring to rule versus being the submissive wife. Therefore, in this discussion, two issues need to be considered. The first is: "What is biblical submission?" The second: "What is the husband's part in making submission an easier task for his wife?"

Biblical submission is not forced submission. When the Christian husband and wife are both walking by the Spirit and not carrying out the desires of the flesh (cf. Gal. 5:16), the husband will not need to force his wife to submit to him; and she will not need to force herself to submit. True submission is voluntary. Actually, the phrase, "forced submission," is an oxymoron for a forced submission is not true submission. It is slavery. Submission must be a voluntary act of the will for it to be true submission. True submission is seen in the life of Jesus who voluntarily submitted to the Father when coming to earth and when going to the cross (cf. Php. 2:5-8; John 10:17-18; Isa. 53:7; Heb. 10:7; 12:2). Jesus had a choice, and His decision was to subject Himself to the Father's will. Therefore for a wife to truly submit to her husband's authority, she needs to make the decision to do so even if her husband is not a good husband, not a good provider, not a good father, nor a man who is easily respected. God will bless her for her submission to him. Her attitude in submitting to such a man, or even to a good husband, should be one of submission to God, desiring to please Him (cf. 1 Cor. 10:31). Although wives are never to be slaves, Paul's exhortation to slaves was that they were to submit to their masters in this way (cf. Eph. 6:5-7; Col. 3:22-24). The wife who submits in a godly manner to a disobedient husband, displaying chaste and respectful behavior, may see him repent as a result of her obedience to God (cf. 1 Pet. 3:1).

How can a husband make his wife's submission to his authority easier? Ephesians 5 holds the answer to this question. Paul told Christian husbands: "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her" (vs. 25). He also told them in verses 28-30: "So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also *does* the church, because we are members of His body." If a Christian husband loves his wife in this manner, she will be able to submit to him much easier. Why? First John 4:18 states: "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love." If a woman knows that her husband truly loves her as Christ loved the church, loving her as his own body, nourishing and cherishing her, even being willing to die for her, she will have no fear of submitting to him. She will not be experiencing or expecting harsh treatment from him (punishment), but instead love as described in Ephesians 5 and 1 Corinthians 13. This is a man she would willingly submit to.

Limitations in the church:

God has also stipulated certain limitations in the Scriptures in regard to the role of women in the church. Again, these limitations are not to be understood as inadequacies in regard to her spirituality, intelligence and/or abilities. Women, as well as

men, can be very spiritual, intelligent and capable individuals. However, they do have limitations upon them which have been imposed by God.

In 1 Timothy 2:11-12, Paul stated: "A woman must quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet." Paul gave two reasons why a woman is not allowed to teach or exercise authority over a man in 1 Timothy 2. The first is God's created order. He stated this in verse 13: "For it was Adam who was first created, *and* then Eve." As discussed previously, woman was taken from man, was created to be his helpmate, and is in subjection to him for this reason. Paul also made this point to the Corinthians when he said: "For man does not originate from woman, but woman from man; for indeed man was not created for the woman's sake, but woman for the man's sake" (1 Cor. 11:8-9). Because of these reasons, a woman is not to be in authority over a man or teach a man; but instead, as verse 11 states, she "must quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness" in the church from the male leadership. (See the article titled, "Women: Keep Silent in the Church.")

The second reason given that women are not allowed "to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet," is a result of Eve's deception. Paul stated in verse 14: "And *it* was not Adam *who* was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression." Because Eve was deceived (she being the representative for women), women are not allowed to teach or be in authority over men. Adam on the other hand (he being the representative for men), because he was created first and was not deceived, men are allowed to teach men, women, and children, and be in authority over them. Was this simply a judgment upon women? Does it speak to a tendency she has as a part of her nature which does not suit her well for such a position? Or is there some other reason? One can only speculate. But whatever the reason, this is an imposed limitation of God upon her.

As stated twice previously, this is not an issue of a woman's spirituality, intelligence and/or abilities. Women are important in the plan and creation of God. Paul elaborated on this in verse 15 when he spoke about the very important role of women in the body of Christ. There he said: "But *women* will be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint." The key to this verse is the Greek word which is translated in this verse as "preserved," or "saved," depending on the translation. This word which has the idea of taking a person from a negative state or situation and bringing them to a positive state of security, restoration, protection, etc., can also be translated as, "make whole," "heal," "be whole." Therefore, one needs to determine how the Apostle Paul meant this word to be understood in this context.

When considering context, one must first note that there is a condition present in this verse. The condition is this, that a woman will be preserved through the bearing of children "if" she continues in faith and love and sanctity (holy living) in self-restraint (self-control). Summing up these four characteristics, it is safe to say that these are character qualities of a godly woman. Therefore "if" a woman is godly (implying that she is a Christian), Paul stated that she will be "preserved through the bearing of children."

Now the question is: How will she be preserved or saved though the bearing of children? In the context of this passage, and when considering other exhortations to women in the Bible (cf. Gen. 3:16; Pro. 31:27-29; 1 Tim. 5:10,14; Titus 2:4-5), a dif-

ferent yet acceptable translation of this Greek word which better fits this context is "made whole" or "made complete." Therefore, a godly woman will be "made whole" or "made complete" through the bearing of children. Understanding this verse in this way, and considering it in the context of the entire passage, Paul could be understood as saying that the priority of the godly woman is not in teaching or being in authority over a man, but in being a mother. Through this she will obtain her honor, glory and dignity which speaks about her significance. Although she may not be in an influential position within the church, she is in a very influential position within the plan of God in her home. It is there that she will be able to influence the next generation, the church and community, and the world through her testimony and as she rears her children, who will be a part of these realms. As a result of her influence, this godly woman may be preparing future pastors, elders, cross-cultural missionaries, deacons, deaconesses, and other godly, influential people who can impact the world for Christ. But if she does not live godly, she will not be made whole through the bearing of children because she will not be satisfied with her God-ordained role. She will desire more, possibly wanting to be a pastor or elder, desiring position and influence in another sphere more than fulfilling God's desire for her. Fulfilling her God-given position, she will be made whole and find her place of importance in the body of Christ. Also please consider that if a mother's family is not her priority, then who will make her family a priority? This is a disturbing thought as one thinks of all those in the world vying for her family's attention, many wanting to influence it through their godless philosophies and seductions. It is a fact that if her family is not her priority, they will be the priority of someone else. The question is, "Who?"

What about the case of a single woman or a married woman who does not have children. How can they find their significance in reference to their role within the plan of God? Though this passage does not address this issue, it is the author's opinion that this may be accomplished in two ways. In the case of a single woman, she can give herself in full devotion to the things of God as Anna the prophetess did (Luke 2:36-37). Paul himself said that it is better for a person to remain single so that he or she can give themselves wholly to the things of God (cf. 1 Cor. 7:8,32-35). For a married woman who does not or is not able to have children, she and her husband could consider adoption through which they can give unwanted children the love of Christ and the gospel. Another option would be that though married, she could give her time to the service of Christ rather than to the care of children.

Some interpret 1 Timothy 2:9-15 from a cultural perspective. The problem with this view is that women are not to teach or be in authority over men, not because of cultural issues specific to the time of Paul, but because of created order and the fall of man which took place thousands of years before Paul penned these words. The issue is not a cultural one, but an authority one. The question is: "Are women, and men for that matter, willing to accept the authority of the Word of God, His preordained created order, and His restrictions on women as a result of the deception of Eve, or are they not?" Actually, the issue of women's role in the church is really as simple as these two reasons given by Paul. And although feminists and those who rally to their cause try to explain away the authority of this passage as not being applicable for the church today as it was during the time of Paul, this is not the case. For both men and women, if they are faithful in the realms which God has prepared

for them, they will be successful and rewarded by Him for their faithfulness. This will not happen however when they step into spheres where they ought not to be.¹

Her freedoms:

Although women have limitations placed upon them, they also have many freedoms within the body of Christ in which they can express their spiritual gifts, talents and abilities. Following are some thoughts about how they can serve within the framework of Scripture.

Within the local church God has created a role for godly women, that of being a deaconess (see the article titled, "Church Leadership Roles Defined"). A deaconess, like her male counterpart the deacon, is a servant of the church. Within this role, she may serve the church in various functions determined by the elders. Her only limitation is that she cannot teach men or be in authority over them.

Within the Scriptures are examples of some very godly women who served in such roles. Phoebe (Rom. 16:1-2) was a servant of the church and a helper of many. There was Priscilla who risked her life for others (Rom. 16:3-4), was knowledgeable in the Word and able to teach others (Acts 18:24-26), and who opened her home so that a church could meet there (1 Cor. 16:19). Anna was another godly servant in the temple (Luke 2:36-37) who as a widow and served night and day involving herself in prayer and fasting. Each of these women are mentioned in the eternal Word of God for their love of Him expressed through their service to Him. Women today have many opportunities to serve in this way.

Although women are not permitted to teach men or be in authority over them, they are not limited in teaching women and children and having authority over them. Actually in Titus 2:3-5, Paul instructed older women to teach younger women: "Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, *to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored.*" Therefore women are able to teach Bible studies, Sunday School, children's clubs, be conference speakers, etc. They have much to add to the church and its work. These opportunities can be very rewarding.

Some other ways in which women can be involved in ministry are listed below, although they are not limited to these:

- Evangelism
- Cross-cultural missionary (doctor, nurse, teacher, evangelism)
- Assisting with church plants
- Bible translation work
- Missionary pilot

¹The truths taught in this passage applied to Priscilla who was a gifted and committed woman (cf. Rom. 16:3-5) and teacher (cf. Acts 18:26). She, along with her husband, ministered together in the church of Ephesus (cf. Acts 18:18-19) where Timothy was the pastor (cf. 1 Tim. 1:3; 2 Tim. 4:12) and to whom these truths were written. (Saucy, Dr. Mark; Department Chair and Prof. Of Theology, Kiev Theological Seminary, Kiev, Ukraine)

- Women's ministries
- Children's ministries
- Counseling ministry
- Teach in a Christian school
- Open her home for church meetings, Bible studies or for a new church plant
- Church secretary
- Music ministry
- Hospital ministry
- Prison ministry
- Orphanage ministry
- Church librarian
- Write and/or read poetry in the church
- Write devotional material for women and children
- Write books for women and children
- Write and/or perform dramas
- Ministry of hospitality
- Ministry of prayer and fasting
- Computer work for the church

Outside the home:

Are Christian women limited to working only in their home? No, they are not. Yet, when one considers their main role as mothers, their family should and needs to be their main priority (this is discussed further in the next major point). Unmarried women on the other hand, who do not have the responsibility of a family, have many opportunities through employment to express themselves and their faith in the world.

Married women do at times find themselves in circumstances where they need to work outside the home. This may be due to the death or severe sickness of a husband, a divorce, a difficult economy, an alcoholic husband, etc. This can make life for her (and her family) very difficult because she needs to care for her family as well as support them financially. This creates a great division of her time, efforts and energy. If she also attempts to serve in the church up and beyond her other responsibilities, it may simply be too much for her to handle. This is where the church needs to be involved, sensitive and understanding; trying to help women in these situations. As the Apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 12:26: "And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if *one* member is honored, all the members rejoice with it."

What about the married woman who does not find herself in a difficult situation as described above? Is she restricted only to caring for her family? When one views the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31, a very industrious woman is observed. She is a woman who obviously cares for her family and its needs (vss. 15, 21-22, 27), but also finds other opportunities to help her husband provide for their family (vss. 13-14, 16-19, 24). Not only that, she is a woman who ministers to the needs of others (vs. 20), being a woman of faith and godliness who is praised for these virtues (vs. 25-26, 28-31). She is an excellent wife who always does her husband good (vss. 10-13); and as a result of her efforts, helps her husband to be known and respected in his community (vs. 23). Although it is the responsibility of the wife to minister first to her husband and children, she also has the opportunity to help in the support of her family alongside her husband if this does not negatively impact her family, or if circumstances warrant it.

Most important role:

A woman has many freedoms in the body of Christ as was discussed above. First Timothy 2:15 speaks to the issue of a woman's most important role in the body of Christ, that of being a mother. (Since 1 Timothy 2:15 was elaborated on earlier in this article, it will not be discussed again.) Paul also speaks about this important role of women in the home in two other passages. He stated in 1 Timothy 5:14: "Therefore, I want younger *widows* to get married, bear children, keep house, *and* give the enemy no occasion for reproach." Then in Titus 2:3-5, Paul said: "Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, *to be* sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored." As Paul spoke to women in these passages, he did so with a focus on their main role -- that being within the home and caring for their families. If a woman does this well, she will not dishonor the Word of God by her behavior. If she does not act accordingly, God's Word can be dishonored. The role of a mother is an important one which can have a tremendous impact in her family and in the lives of those who are watching as she obeys the Word of God and lives for Him.

Her importance:

Another consideration in regards to the importance of women in the body of Christ is how God has created and values them in the Word of God.

The nature of women is very special. They are generally characterized by the following traits:

- Faith
- Hope
- Love
- Trust
- Tenderness
- Caring
- Nurturing

These are very important character traits in the sight of God which make women special, making them who they are. These are also traits which men find appealing in women and which attracts them to women.

As one ponders the importance of women in the Bible, it should be remembered that a woman bore our Savior, they were the first to be told of the resurrection of Jesus by the angels (cf. Mat. 28:1-7), and they were the first ones to see the risen Christ (cf. Mat. 28:8-10). Women traveled with Jesus and supported Him financially (Luke 8:1-3). They followed Him on the way to His crucifixion, ministering to Him, and staying with Him during His greatest time of need (cf. Mat. 27:55-56) while His disciples had fled from Him (cf. Mat. 26:56), and one had even denied Him (cf. Mat. 26:69-75). Mary, the mother of Jesus, was a favored one of God (Luke 1:28-30) who by faith trusted the angel who spoke to her (Luke 1:38), thereby becoming the mother of the Savior of the world (Luke 1:31-33). When there were no godly men who

trusted God in Israel, Deborah the prophetess by faith gave Israel the victory (cf. Jud. 4:8-10,14) (see appendix article titled, "Deborah"). In Hebrews 11, which lists the great believers of the faith, the following women are listed: Sarah (vs. 11), Jochebed the mother of Moses (vs. 23), Rahab (vs. 31), and other women (vs. 35).

Although women have a different role than men in the plan of God, they are no less important than them in the eyes of God (Gal. 3:28). They, as men, can and do make a great contribution to the work of the church. Their influence results from their personal faith which extends to their family, to their church and community; within their spheres of influence.



APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

1. What is the general attitude of your pastor and elders toward women in your church? Are they respected by them as equals? If not, in your opinion, how are they treated?

2. How do you and your church leaders treat your wives? Are you setting a good example for the other men of the church? How can you set a better example?

3. Women are to be treated as weaker vessels and therefore honored by the men of their church. Is this done in your church? If so, how is it done? If this is not done, how do you see a lack of regard for women manifested in your church?
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4. Do the men of your church understand the difference between the role of women in the church versus their position in Christ? How would you explain this difference?

5. If the way women are treated in your church and in their homes is not biblical, what attitudes in your church need to be changed? With whom does the change need to begin?

6. What can be done in your church to raise the status of women to a biblical level? List some ideas below.
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7. What ministries does your church have which minister to the women of your church?

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8. What ministries does your church have which minister to the women of your community?

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9. What ministries does your church have which help women who have alcoholic husbands, who have been abandoned by their husbands, or who are abused by them? How is your church making a difference in these families?

10. What opportunities do the women of your church have to use their spiritual gifts to minister in the body of Christ?

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11. Does your church have a biblical view of the role of women in the church? Are there women in your church who are in positions of authority in which they should not be? If so, what positions?

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12. Are there women in your church who are restricted from ministering in areas they should be allowed to serve in? If so, which positions?

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13. If your church is not reflecting a biblical role of women, what can it do to change this? List some ideas below.

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SPECIFIC QUESTIONS FOR CROSS-CULTURAL MISSIONARIES AND CHURCH PLANTERS:

1. As you begin your new church, you have the opportunity to lay a biblical foundation for the role of women in your church which properly reflects Scripture. Below, define what is permissible and what is not permissible for women to do in the local church. Use Scripture to validate your position.

Permissible:

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Not Permissible:

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2. How will you honor women as fellow heirs of the grace of life (1 Pet. 3:7) so that they will receive proper respect in their homes and in the church?

3. Define biblical submission. Please keep in mind that as women are to submit to their husbands, men are to submit one to another (Rom. 13:1-5; 1 Cor. 16:16; Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 2:13; 5:5). Therefore submission is not just for women, but for men as well. When answering, please take into account Galatians 3:28, Ephesians 5:21-30, Philippians 2:3-4, Colossians 3:18, Titus 2:5, and 1 Peter 3:1-7. How will you integrate this teaching into your church so that it will be a characteristic of both men and women?

4. Women have many important roles which they can carry out in the church, yet their most important role is in the home. What will you do in your church to encourage motherhood and emphasize that a woman's ministry to her family is vital to the church now and in the future?

5. It is not uncommon for churches today to allow women to hold positions of leadership which are not appropriate for them according to the Bible. Church leaders may allow this because the men of the church are not fulfilling these positions. What will you do as you lay the foundation of your church to make sure that one day this will not happen?