

# The Role and Work of Women

*by Bryan Gibson*

There are some things a woman cannot do. She cannot serve as an elder (1 Timothy 3:2), or a deacon (1 Timothy 3:12). She cannot preach to the congregation (1 Corinthians 14:34-35). She cannot “teach or have authority over a man” (1 Timothy 2:12). So what can she do? Enough to keep her busy the rest of her life.

Before we look more closely at the work she is given, let’s make something clear. God does not consider women less valuable than men. “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28). God assigns different roles to men and women, but He does not prefer one over the other. Men tend to measure greatness in terms of public works, but not God. Unfortunately, women who labor “behind the scenes” often get very little recognition, very little praise from men. But God notices everything they do, and His praise counts the most.

Everyone in the kingdom of God has work to do (Ephesians 4:16), including women. Various women throughout the New Testament are described as workers (Romans 16:1-4, 6, 12, Philippians 4:1-3). We certainly won’t exhaust the subject in this article, but here are three different areas in which they can make a tremendous impact.

Managing the house, bringing up children (please read 1 Timothy 2:11-15; 5:14; Titus 2:3-5).

We do not see in these passages an absolute prohibition against women working outside the home, but the home is where her most important work is accomplished, and she dare not neglect it. Who do you think was more important in God’s eyes, the evangelist Timothy, or his mother and grandmother, who evidently taught him the Scriptures from childhood? (2 Timothy 1:3-5; 3:14-15). A mother who stays at home with her young children and nurtures them in the ways of the Lord will have an immeasurable impact on the kingdom of God. She may not gain the attention of the world, but her husband and children will surely appreciate it (Proverbs 31:27-31).

Doing good works for others.

Women should strive to be like the “virtuous wife,” who “extends her hands to the poor” and “reaches out her hands to the needy” (Proverbs 31:20); like Dorcas, who was “full of good works and charitable deeds” (Acts 9:36); like Phoebe, who was “a helper of many” (Romans 16:2). Wouldn’t it be nice to have it said of you, that you have “diligently followed every good work”? (1 Timothy 5:10).

Teaching the gospel.

Yes, there are some restrictions on the circumstances under which they can teach, but there are still abundant opportunities. Philip’s four daughters must have found some opportunities to teach somewhere (Acts 21:8-9). Priscilla helped her husband Aquila when they went to Apollos and “explained to him the way of God more accurately” (Acts 18:26). Anna “spoke of

Him [Jesus] to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem” (Luke 2:36-38). Women still have great teaching opportunities today—with their own children, with other ladies (Titus 2:3-5), in classes with young children, etc. And they should never forget the powerful lessons they can teach by example (1 Peter 3:1-6). Live like Elizabeth (Luke 1:5-6), the mother of John the Baptist, and you will help a lot of people get to heaven. One thing is for sure—this writer has sure learned a lot from various women in his life—including his mother, his wife, and many other faithful women.