

Articles and Sermons :: Women Leaders -poonen**Women Leaders -poonen - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2007/5/13 19:43****Women Leaders***by Zac Poonen*

Does God appoint women to be the leaders of His people? God's first choice is always a man— as it says in 1Tim.2:12-14, for two reasons. First of all, because Adam was created first, and Eve was created to be a helper for Adam. Secondly, because Eve was deceived and sinned first. Therefore the Lord says through Paul there: "I do not allow a woman to exercise authority over the man in the church." A woman can lead and teach the children in a Sunday-school class, and women in women's classes. She can also teach her children at home. But she cannot be an elder in the church. That is the perfect will of God. In Isaiah, God says that things are indeed in a pathetic state, when His people are led by women (Isa.3:12).

But what should God do when He finds that all the men in Israel (or in a church) are lazy, sluggish and cowardly! Then God raises up a "Deborah". And through the years, He has raised up many "Deborahs" in Christendom to be His servants - and I want to praise God for every single one of them. God has used women mightily as missionaries and as writers to save souls and to build the body of Christ. When God cannot find a man, He will use a woman— in any ministry. That is what we learn from Deborah.

The promise in the new covenant age is: "I will pour out My Spirit on your sons and your daughters and your sons and on My bondslaves— both men and women— and they will (both) prophesy" (Acts.2:17,18). Philip had four unmarried daughters— all of whom took advantage of that promise of God and prophesied (Acts 21:9). Even though women are not called to be elders or to teach, they can still prophesy ("build up, encourage and comfort"— 1 Cor.14:3) and speak forth God's word to build up the church 1 Corinthians 11:4 is very clear on that.

Deborah was a prophetess (v.4). She was the wife of Lappidoth. I don't know what type of a man Brother Lappidoth was. But he didn't hinder his wife from being a judge. He sat beside her with a meek and quiet spirit and encouraged her in her ministry! Perhaps he helped to look after the children at home too. God could not use Brother Lappidoth, but He could use his wife. Praise God for such brothers.

In the Acts of the Apostles, we read of a couple— Aquila and Priscilla. It appears as though Priscilla knew God and the Scriptures better than her husband Aquila. I say that because in the five times that they are referred to together in the New Testament, four times they are referred to as "Priscilla and Aquila", and not as "Aquila and Priscilla" (Acts 18:18,26; Rom.16:3; 2 Tim.4:19)! The order there has a significance. It is a plain fact that there are many wives who know God and the Scriptures better than their husbands.

Priscilla however was a wonderful sister who knew how to submit to her husband Aquila. When she heard Apollos once in the synagogue and realized that he did not understand the truth fully, she invited him home and sat down with her husband and explained the way of God to Apollos, and thus revolutionized Apollos' ministry (Acts 18:24-28). She didn't get up in the synagogue and correct him. No. She called him home. That's a beautiful example of a sister who knew her place as a woman, but who had the anointing of God upon her life to bless other men. Apollos finally became a co-worker of the apostle Paul. But the one who set him on the right path first was a woman— Priscilla!

Deborah used to sit under a palm tree and the sons of Israel would come to her for judgment (4:5). Maybe her husband Lappidoth was cooking the food in the kitchen, while she was judging Israel. God had to do it like that, because all the men in Israel were so effeminate. Then she called for the bravest man in Israel— Barak - to lead Israel in battle. She recognized her limitations and knew that, as a woman, she could not go to battle. She needed a man, just like Priscilla needed Aquila.

Deborah told Barak, "Take 10,000 men with you and go and fight against Sisera and the Lord will deliver him into your hand" (4:6,7). That was such a clear and specific prophecy from the Lord. But what does the bravest man in Israel reply. Barak said, "Sister, if you come with me I will go. Please come with me." He was scared to go without her! So Deborah agreed to go with Barak. How effeminate the bravest man in Israel was! And he was typical of all the others. But because B

Barak was so effeminate, Deborah told him, "The honour of killing Sisera will not come to you. It will go to a woman." Finally, it was a woman, Jael, who killed Sisera (v.22).

There is a lesson here for all men. God is disappointed when He cannot find a man to lead His people. But God's work will not be hindered just because the men fail Him. He will use women instead. God has used many women, through the centuries, in all the continents, to do a tremendous work for Him. God is not limited to men to get His work done.

After Israel was liberated from Sisera, Deborah and Barak sang a song. It is called the "Song of Deborah and Barak." (Chapter 5). Verse 16 speaks about the different tribes that came to fight in the battle. And then in verse 23, we read, "Curse Meroz." Why does Meroz have to be cursed? Because they did nothing. They did not commit any sin, but they did nothing. They did not come to the help of the Lord when the enemy was coming.

Maybe you have not committed any sin. But if you didn't go out into battle to fight for the Lord, there is a curse on you. There is a curse on people who sit back doing nothing, when others are fighting the battles of the Lord. That's not a sin of commission. It's a sin of omission.

There are two types of sins - sins of commission and sins of omission. Sins of commission are those where we do something wrong. Sins of omission are those where we did nothing, when we should have done something. In the parable of the good Samaritan, the priest and the Levite did nothing. Theirs was the sin of Meroz. When there was a need for warriors to fight for the Lord, Meroz did nothing. So when you don't support the Lord's soldiers and don't go out yourself and fight, you are sinning.

Re: Women Leaders -poonen - posted by tjservant (), on: 2007/5/13 21:51

Quote:
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Quote:
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So...Does Poonen believe they can be leaders/elders?

Re: Women Leaders -poonen - posted by Koheleth, on: 2007/5/14 9:53

Quote:
-----So...Does Poonen believe they can be leaders/elders?

From what he says here and what I have heard from him elsewhere, no, he does not believe women can be elders. Read the statements more carefully. She *cannot* be an elder in the church Zac states.

I believe his point may be that leadership is not limited to position. Otherwise, Jesus would never have been able to lead--He had no position in the religious community of the day. The Spirit of God can work through anyone, and I believe Zac is saying that if God doesn't have men he is going to use women!

Re: - posted by tjservant (), on: 2007/5/14 15:21

Quote:
-----Read the statements more carefully. She *cannot* be an elder in the church Zac states.

I believe I did read them carefully it's just that after the *cannot* is

Quote:
-----*But*what should God do when He finds that all the men in Israel (or in a church) are lazy, sluggish and cowardly! Then God raises up a "Deborah".

Deborah was over men...right?

and then he says

Quote:

There are plenty of examples of this in the Bible...I thought maybe he was saying more

Re: Women Leaders -poonen - posted by Koheleth, on: 2007/5/17 9:02

Quote:
-----I believe I did read them carefully

I wasn't trying to imply you did not, just emphasizing the word cannot. I agree with you; the interpretation of what Zac is saying could go either way. Basically, we would need him to clarify, but my understanding of his teachings is that he is saying God can and will use a woman as a leader, but she still cannot Scripturally be an elder. Deborah was not.