

From: "Someone who left SBRCC"

To: chuck@chuckmorris.com

Subject: RE: Women role in the church

Chuck, From an initial read through here are some thoughts.

1. Neither are they to direct the congregations assemblies during its sessions of prayer and teaching of the Word. - from page 6 of "A Womans Place is....."

-When/where does the Bible teach women are not to direct the congregations assemblies during its sessions of prayer?

2. I think in the big picture, and not just concerning women's role issues, the elders need to consider how much they want to challenge or perpetuate this odd (unbiblical?) separation of what happens at the 10:00 AM hour, what happens in other "official" settings, and what can happen in "unofficial" settings. I think something I have in common with many of the ultra conservatives is this - we want consistency. If something is inherently wrong then don't say we won't do it in this setting but will in another (conservative perspective). If something is ok then why put all these limitations based on the settings (my perspective). I don't see as many of these so called time/setting differences in scripture as the C of C practices. For example, the verse "I do not permit a woman to teach or have authority over a man." What limits does the text itself put around that. When, where, what subject matter? At what point does a home-school mom need to stop teaching her baptized high school aged son the scriptures during home-school bible class? Does that verse say you can't do it at 10:00 AM Sunday or 9:00 AM Sunday, or 7:00 PM Wed. night, but you can do it at home?

3. I do understand why people differ from me in the complimentary/egalitarian discussion. However, I separate prayer from that discussion altogether. I think that one of the most important things the church does when it assembles together is pray. We see that so much in the New Testament. It is also clear to me that when the early Christians gathered to pray - the bible indicates that the women prayed with the men. I can find nothing in the scriptures that prohibits women from praying with men in the gathered community. This point was too essential for me to be able to stay somewhere that this is denied in so many settings (this was not the only reason I left SBRCC, but in the letter I sent the elders it was the only doctrinal issue I pointed to as playing a role). We are currently going to a church where the leadership has a complimentary view (whether they realize it or not, that is what it is). However, it is so refreshing to see women in public settings: pray, read scripture, share their joys and concerns, give testimonies, pass the communion trays, etc. It is interesting to see how much women and men participate in the public worship. Even if we went to an egalitarian church - unless the preacher was a woman, you would likely not see as many women involved throughout the service as you do where we are now. By the way, for any who would ever check out XYZ Church - you would have no doubt whatsoever that these practices have NOT dampened the involvement and role of men in the church.

4. This is my personal plea to you. Please don't ever buy into or use the argument (I have heard this from the ABC Church even) that if you let women do more, then men will just stay in the background. In other words, you need to limit what women do so it will force the men to step up. First, the men should step up period. It should not take squelching women for men to be able to do their jobs. Two, people who hold that view virtually never apply that to (a) children's ministry, (b) nursery staffing, (c) cooking. If we would ask women to quit teaching/serving in these ways - would that force more men to step up? Are these tasks too demeaning or insignificant for men to take on (compared to passing communion trays, leading prayers, teaching, etc.)? I'm being a little over the top in this - bottom line is please refute rather than encourage this line of thinking when it crops up.

5. In the area of women's role I think South could do 2 things that would be major/decisive steps, yet would allow the overall complimentary view to be upheld. One, stand with women that they can pray in the presence of men no matter what the setting. I think this would be a huge step for the church. Also, this change in practice would probably help keep some of the younger and more egalitarian type women. Two, let women pass the communion trays in the public assembly. The difference to me that this makes is huge. I felt very differently about XYZ Church and the ABC Church in their view of women just over this - even though their view is probably close to identical. However one church (XYZ) inviting women to do this and one (ABC) not letting them do this made a significant impact on me.