

"male and female He created them." (Gen. 1:27)

God's Grand Design

The Beauty of Biblical Complementarity (pt. 12)

Silence of Women in the Churches?

1 Corinthians 14:34-38

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³⁴ Let the women keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but are to subject themselves, just as the Law also says. ³⁵ If they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in church. ³⁶ Was it from you that the word of God *first* went forth? Or has it come to you only? ³⁷ If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment. ³⁸ But if anyone does not recognize *this*, he is not recognized.

1 Corinthians 14:34-38

➤ Context:

- Paul is addressing the proper use of spiritual gifts in relation to the assembly
- Paul emphasizes "love" as more excellent than the manifestation of any spiritual gift
- Paul priorities "prophesy" in the assembly for the sake of the edification of the church

²⁶ What is *the outcome* then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification. ²⁷ If anyone speaks in a tongue, *it should be* by two or at the most three, and *each* in turn, and one must interpret; ²⁸ but if there is no interpreter, he must keep silent in the church; and let him speak to himself and to God. ²⁹ Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others pass judgment. ³⁰ But if a revelation is made to another who is seated, the first one must keep silent. ³¹ For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all may be exhorted; ³² and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets; ³³ for God is not a *God* of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.

(1 Cor. 14:26-33)

Silence of Women in the Churches?

➤ Three plausible interpretations:

1. Refers to all types of public address/speech in the assembly of the church
 - understands the context of 1 Cor. 11:5 to be private or semi-private gatherings, not the assembly

Silence of Women in the Churches?

- Three plausible interpretations:
 2. Refers to the oral judgment of prophecies in the assembly of the church
 - women are allowed to pray and prophesy (11:5) but the judgment of prophecies is considered exercising improper authority over men

Silence of Women in the Churches?

- Three plausible interpretations:
 3. Refers to disruptive speech or questions by wives that would bring dishonor to their husbands
 - women are allowed to speak, but not in a way that shows lack of submission to their husbands

Silence of Women in the Churches?

- Abiding Principles:
 1. Gender distinctions in the church are based on God's creation design and order ("the Law")
 2. Edification of the gathered church places limits on the expression of gifts – the motive is love
 3. All members, men and women, are essential to the functioning and growth of the body