



God's Intention for Men and Women

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How did Jesus treat, interact with
and empower women?

A Man Like This...

“Perhaps it is no wonder that the women were first at the Cradle and last at the Cross. They had never known a man like this Man—there had never been such another. A prophet and teacher who never nagged at them, who never flattered or coaxed or patronized; who never made arch jokes about them, never treated them either as ‘The women, God help us!’ or ‘The ladies, God bless them!'; who rebuked without querulousness and praised without condescension; who took their questions and arguments seriously, who never mapped out their sphere for them, never urged them to be feminine or jeered at them for being female; who had no ax to grind and no uneasy male dignity to defend; who took them as he found them and was completely unselfconscious.”

-Dorothy Sayers

Jesus' View of Women

- **Anna** announced infant Jesus as Messiah
- Women companions/sponsors in ministry
- **Mary of Bethany** a rabbinic pupil
- Women **first to witness the tomb empty**
- Mary Magdalene first to see Risen Jesus & first 'apostle' to apostle



Examining roles played by women in
Scripture

Biblical Examples of the Roles of Women in the Church

- Apostle
- Apostolic co-workers and laborers
- Spirit-filled prophets
- Spirit-filled pray-ers
- Leader, ruler, patron
- Teacher
- Deacon/minister
- Mentors/trainers
- Spiritual mother

Anna announced infant Jesus as Messiah (Luke 2)

36 And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin, **37** and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day. **38** And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.

Apostle: Junia

Rom. 16:7 -- Greet Andronicus and Junia, my relatives and my fellow prisoners, who are outstanding among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.

1. *Junias (masc.)* = ASV, NASB, RSV, HCSB, NIV

2. *Junia (feminine)* = KJV, NKJV, NRSV, ESV, TNIV

“Greet Andronicus and Junia . . . who are outstanding among the apostles” (Romans 16:7): To be an apostle is something great. But to be outstanding among the apostles—just think what a wonderful song of praise that is! They were outstanding on the basis of their works and virtuous actions. Indeed, how great the wisdom of this woman must have been that she was even deemed worthy of the title of apostle.

John Chrysostom (344/54-407)

Apostolic fellow-worker & laborer

- **Rom. 16:3**

“Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus . . .”

- **Philippians 4:3**

“Yes, I ask you also, true companion, help these women, who have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the *rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.”

- **1 Corinthians 16:15**

“Now I urge you, brothers — you know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints— 16 be subject to such as these, and to every fellow-worker and laborer.”

- **Also:**

- Timothy (Rom. 16:21)
- Mark (Philippians 4:10)
- Titus (2 Cor. 8:2-3)
- Luke (Philemon 24)

Key Take-aways

- Many women are mentioned in the NT
- Many & varied activities are connected with these women
- Even more women (and men) were active in the NT churches than what is mentioned
- For almost everyone who goes back to the NT, there is new evidence on the table (more examples; more functions/roles that were previously recognized)
- The roles & prominence of women in the church is noticeably different/elevated from that of the societies/religions surrounding the church
- Translations can and have hidden some of the activities & roles of women in Scripture





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Women companions/sponsors in ministry (Luke 8)

1 Soon afterward he went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with him, **2** and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, **3** and Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's household manager, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them out of their means.

Mary of Bethany a rabbinic pupil (Luke 10)

38 Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. 39 And she had a sister called Mary, **who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching.** 40 But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, “Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me.” 41 But the Lord answered her, “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, 42 but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her.”

"She is 'sitting at his feet'; a phrase which doesn't mean what it would mean today, the adoring student gazing up in admiration and love at the wonderful teacher. As is clear from the use of the phrase elsewhere in the NT (for instance, Paul with Gamaliel), to sit at the teacher's feet is a way of saying you are being a student, picking up the teacher's wisdom and learning; and in that very practical world you wouldn't do this just for the sake of informing your own mind and heart, but in order to be a teacher, a rabbi, yourself. Like much in the gospels, this story is left cryptic as far as we at least are concerned, but I doubt if any first-century reader would have missed the point."

-- N.T. Wright, "Women's Service in the Church: The Biblical

England (September 4, 2004).

Basis," St John's College, Durham,

Spirit-filled prophets

- **1 Cor. 11:5**
“...but every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head...”
- Numerous OT examples of female prophets
- New Testament examples:
 - Anna (Luke 2:36), Women in Acts 2:17-18, Philip’s daughters in Acts 21:9, 1 Cor 11 (above), Elizabeth in Luke 1:41-45, women in 1 Cor 14:34-35
- What does a prophet do?
 - Acts 15:30-32
 - 1 Cor 14:1-4, 19, 29-32
 - Acts 11:27-28; 21:10-11

Spirit-filled “pray-ers”

- Numerous OT examples of female (public) “pray-ers”
- New Testament examples:
 - Anna (Luke 2:37), woman & Mary in Acts 1:12-14; Lydia & women in Acts 16:13-15; wives from the church in Tyre in Acts 21:5; Husbands & wives in 1 Cor 7:5; women in 1 Cor 11:5, 13; widow in 1 Tim 5:5, Mark in Luke 1:46-55, Luke 13:13

Leader, ruler, patron

- **Rom. 16:1**

“I commend to you our sister Phoebe . . . 2 that you may welcome her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints, and help her in whatever she may need from you, for she has been a patron [*prostatis*] of many and of myself as well.”

PROSTATIS

Feminine form found only here in Bible.

Literally Presider, president, leader, patron, provider.

OT: This noun (masc. form) is used of “*supervisors of the king’s work*” (1 Chron. 29:6) and of men “*who worked for Solomon as supervisors*” (2 Chron. 8:10).

NT: Verb used for “*those who have charge over*” (1Thes. 5:12 -*proistamenos*) and of “*one who leads*” (Rom. 12:8 –*proistamenos*).

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Mary Magdalene first to see Risen Jesus (John 20)

11 But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb. **12** And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. **13** They said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.” **14** Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus.
(continued)

. . . first to see Risen Jesus

15 Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?” Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.” **16** Jesus said to her, “Mary.” She turned and said to him in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means Teacher).

Mary Magdalene first ‘apostle’ to the apostles (John 20)

17 Jesus said to her, “Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’” **18** Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord”—and that he had said these things to her.

Teacher

- **Acts 18:24**

“Now a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, competent in the Scriptures. 25 He had been instructed in the way of the Lord. And being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John. 26 He began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him and explained to him the way of God more accurately.”

Deacon/Minister – Phoebe

- **Romans 16:1**
“I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant [diakonos] of the church at Cenchreae...”
- How to translate “diakonos”...
 - SERVANT: Romans 15:8, 1 Cor 3:5; 2 Cor 11:15
 - MINISTER: 2 Cor 3:6, Col 1:7, 4:7, 1 Tim 4:6
 - DEACON: Phil 1:1, 1 Tim 3:8, 12
- Why didn’t Paul say “deaconess”?
 - “...prior to canon 19 of the Council of Nicea (AD 325), there are no certain examples of the Greek feminine *diakonos*. In this earlier period, the masculine was used for both male & female deacons.” *Blackburn, EWEC, 1.303 n.1*
- Paul specifies the church as the place of her service

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