

Did Jesus Reject Women as Disciples?

It sometimes puzzles me that women weren't included among the twelve disciples. How easy it would have been for Jesus to have six disciples of each gender. But as I've been pondering it over recent days, I've come to a realization...

Jesus never seemed to care too much about his reputation. In fact, sometimes it seems he went out of his way to deliberately provoke the Pharisees and other religious leaders.

They found plenty of things to accuse him of—some true, some false:

- He ate with notorious sinners (Luke 15:1)
- He was a glutton and drunkard (Matthew 11:19)
- He consistently broke the Sabbath (eg. Matthew 12:1-2)
- He claimed to be the Messiah (Luke 23:2)
- He caused riots wherever he went (Luke 23:5)
- He told people not to pay taxes to the Roman government (Luke 23:2)
- He was criticized for
- Not washing his hands properly before meals (Luke 11:38)
- Allowing an immoral woman to touch him (Luke 7:36-39)

The religious leaders were out to get him. They tried to provoke and trap him by asking tough questions over various issues (Luke 11:53-54):

- Divorce (Matthew 19:3)
- Taxes (Matthew 22:15-22)
- The most important commandment in the law (Matthew 22:34-40)
- The right punishment for a woman caught in adultery (John 8:1-11)

I find it very interesting that the one thing they didn't accuse Jesus of was immorality. Why not? Because he gave them no grounds. If women had been among the twelve disciples, especially considering the intimacy of his relationship with the disciples, I'm sure he would have been accused of sexual depravity.

Jesus didn't care too much about his own reputation but I think there might have been a couple of things in his mind: firstly, he was protecting the good name of his female followers/disciples. Secondly, he was initiating a Way of life—a movement characterized by a depth and transparency of relationship and yet by purity/holiness. If there had been even the appearance of wrong-doing in Jesus' life, the integrity of this lifestyle/movement would have been compromised.

*Adapted from **Felicity Dale's** blog, *Simply Church*. Felicity Dale is an author and an advocate for women in the church. She trains people to start simple/organic/house churches around the world.*