

Should Women Be Barred From These 5 Ministry Tasks?

There are a number of activities that have traditionally been limited to men. However, I find no scriptural warrant for not including women in them:

1. Baptism. This is traditionally done by the pastor. When baptism is delayed so it can be performed by a special person, it slows the growth of any disciple-making movement. In some countries, like India, women are not allowed to be touched by a man unless they are a family member. Although there are no scriptural examples that specifically describe a woman baptizing, the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20) indicates that the person who leads someone to the Lord should be the one to baptize them.

2. Teaching. First Timothy 2:11-12 is often used to stop women teaching. But there are plenty of indications to the contrary. For example, Priscilla (mentioned first) and Aquila taught Apollos. First Corinthians 14:26 encourages everyone to take part in the meetings, including teaching (no mention here of this being a “men only” activity). Other lists, such as those found in 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4, that list teaching include activities we know were open to women. We are to teach and admonish one another (Col. 3:16).

3. Giving communion. Our traditional practice of Communion, with a wafer and sip of wine, is probably unscriptural. Communion was more like a meal—otherwise, why does 1 Corinthians 11:21 talk about some going hungry and others getting drunk? While there is nothing to say that women are allowed to “give communion,” there’s nothing to say that men are either.

4. Leadership. Leading is one of the gifts given to the body

of Christ. In Romans 12:6-8, leadership is included in a list of things God gives to us. Included in that list are gifts that we know women can use—for example, prophecy (Acts 2:17-18). If women were to be prohibited from leading, that might have been a good time to mention it!

5. Government. There are examples of women in government. For example, Deborah led and judged the nation of Israel. We see Junia as an apostle. Philip's daughters prophesied. Phoebe was a deacon (and Jesus used the same word in the context of leadership). I find nothing that says women cannot be elders. (There are no examples of women elders, but I can think of no named examples of Gentile ones, either.)

What similar activities can you think of? Tell us on Facebook.

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