

What Does the Bible Really Say About Women in Leadership?

In honor of March being Women's History Month, I am here presenting a sampling of women in the Bible who functioned in all kinds of leadership roles. My motive in presenting this is twofold: First of all, I pray that it will affirm those women who sense a call of God but are hampered by doctrinal questions about the validity of such a call. Secondly, I hope to influence others to rethink their theology that puts restraints on the ministry of women in the church. I am convinced that we will not see the great spiritual awakening for which many are praying apart from the full participation of the female members of Christ's body.

Deborah: Prophetess and Judge

Before the institution of the monarchy beginning with Saul, Israel was ruled by a series of judges. Perhaps the most celebrated of these judges was a woman named Deborah, who is referred to as both a prophetess and a judge. In other words, she exercised both spiritual and civil authority. She had such respect from the people that even the military commander, Barak, refused to go out to battle unless she accompanied him. She accompanied him to battle, and God gave them a great victory over the Canaanites.

Deborah had a husband named Lapidoth, but he is mentioned only in passing. She was obviously the one called of God to be the out-front leader and deliverer of Israel at that time in history. There is not the slightest hint that her example was out of order or even exceptional.

The Assemblies of God is, therefore, correct when, in its official position paper on women, it says, "The instances of

women filling leadership roles in the Bible should be taken as divinely approved pattern, not as exceptions to divine decrees.”

Miriam: God-Sent Leader to Israel

In Micah 6:4b, God speaks through the prophet and says, “I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.” Of the three leaders God sent to bring Israel out of Egypt, one of them was a woman. Note that in this passage God says, “I sent.” The word “apostle” literally means “sent one,” which means that Miriam, along with Moses and Aaron, were the “apostles” sent by God to bring deliverance to Israel.

This is confirmed by the Septuagint, which uses the word *ekapisteila*, the verb form of *apostolos* with the prefix *ek*, meaning “out.” It literally means “sent out.” Miriam was “sent out” by God along with Moses and Aaron. Could it be that that God is still calling and “sending out” women today? Will the church be open to receiving these women?

Mary Magdalene: Apostle to the Apostles

Jesus appeared first to Mary Magdalene after His resurrection. The emphasis that the Gospel writers give to this fact make it clear that this was no chance or accidental appearance, but that Jesus appeared first to Mary in order to make a statement.

We must remember that in the first century, neither Roman nor Jewish courts of law would allow the testimony of a woman as evidence. Jesus confronts this cultural bias head-on by appearing first to Mary and sending her to bear testimony to the most significant event of human history. He could have just as easily appeared first to the men, but he required that they hear the news of His resurrection for the first time from the lips of a woman.

His words to Mary, *Go and tell . . .* identify her as a “sent

one" who receives the first apostolic commission from the risen Lord to go and proclaim the Good News of His resurrection. This is why, throughout history, Mary has often been referred to as "the apostle to the apostles."

My father was converted as a result of a young "Mary" (her actual name) responding to the voice of the Lord to "go and tell," who began conducting revival meetings in southeastern Oklahoma and northeastern Texas. I have no doubt that there are a host of Marys in the world today who are hearing the voice the Lord instructing them to "go and tell."

Phoebe: Minister and Church Leader

In Romans 16:1b, Paul refers to Phoebe as "a servant of the church in Cenchrea." The word "servant" in this passage is translated from the Greek word *diakonos*, which literally means "servant," but was used as a general designation for Christian leaders.

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Paul also said that Phoebe had been a "helper of many and of myself as well" (Rom. 16:1b). It is unfortunate that some translators have translated the Greek word *prostatis* as "helper," for it appears to be another case of translator bias. The word is feminine and literally means "to stand before."

Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon defines a *prostatis* as "a woman set over others; a female guardian, protectress, patroness, caring for the affairs of others and aiding them with her

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This word *prostatis* identifies Phoebe as a leader from the church in Cenchrea who has Paul’s respect. Not only does he refer to her as a *diakonos* and a *prostatis*, but he instructs the church in Rome to receive her with respect and to assist her in whatever business she has with them (Hyatt, *Paul, Women and Church*, 28).

Does the church today show respect to the Phoebes who are in her midst?

Priscilla: Pastor and Co-Worker with Paul

When Paul mentions Priscilla and Aquilla, he always mentions them together, and they were obviously a husband-wife team. Paul had lived, worked and ministered with them while in Corinth and when he departed, they departed with him (Acts 18:1-3, 18). He always uses plural pronouns—“they” and “them”—when referring to them.

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Junia: An Apostle

In Romans 16:7, Paul greets Andronicus and Junia, who, he says, “are noteworthy among the apostles.” Junia is a feminine name and was recognized as a female apostle for the first several centuries of the church’s existence. The famous church father of the fourth century, John Chrysostom, declared of

Junia, “O how great is the devotion of this woman that she should even be counted worthy of the appellation of apostle.”

Some have tried to argue that the name should be “Junias,” which is a male name. The problem with this claim is that, first of all, every ancient Greek manuscript, without exception, has the feminine form of “Junia.” Secondly, the name Junias is unknown in the ancient world, while Junia is a common name. Junias, therefore, is a hypothetical name created by those who cannot accept that Paul would recognize a female apostle (Hyatt, *Paul, Women and Church*, 25).

Commenting on why some translations have used “Junias,” Dr. N. Clayton Croy, professor of New Testament at Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Columbus, Ohio, says, “It is hard to see any reason other than the translators’ bias against the possibility that a woman could be an apostle.” Faced with such overwhelming evidence, the NIV translators changed the word from “Junias” (1984 edition) to “Junia” in the 2011 edition.

Lydia and the Women Who Labored with Paul in Philippi

Paul began the church in Philippi with a group of praying women. His base of operations and the church’s meeting place was in the home of one of these women whose name was Lydia (Acts 16:13-15, 40). Jewish law required a quorum of 10 Jewish men, who were heads of households, for establishing a synagogue in any community. Paul, however, had no problem beginning a Christian congregation with a group of praying women. As far as we know, this was the first church in Europe.

These women obviously functioned in leadership alongside Paul. This is borne out by the fact that in 4:3b of his letter to the Philippian church, he exhorted, “help those women who labored with me in the gospel.” Gerald F. Hawthorne, in the *Word Biblical Commentary*, says that Paul, in this passage, uses a metaphor which means “to fight together side by side with,” clearly indicating that Paul sees these women, not as

peons under him, but as highly esteemed members of his team who have labored at his side in the cause of Christ.

This reminds me of the words of the noted, British New Testament scholar, F.F. Bruce, who said;

He [Paul] delighted in the company of his fellows, both men and women. The most incredible feature in the Paul of popular mythology is his alleged misogyny. He treated women as persons. The mainstream churches of Christendom, as they inch along towards a worthier recognition of the ministry of women, have some way to go yet before they come abreast of Paul (Hyatt, Paul, Women and Church, 31).

Paul's Spiritual Mother

Paul never mentions a spiritual father, but he does mention a spiritual mother. In Romans 16:13 he sends greetings to Rufus, "and his mother and mine." This is obviously not Paul's biological mother, but a woman who has been a spiritual mother to him. We know little about this woman, but at some point in Paul's spiritual journey, she had offered encouragement and counsel to Paul and been like a mother to him.

The identity of this woman can perhaps be identified by comparing Paul's words in this passage to Mark's Gospel, which also mentions an individual named Rufus. Since Paul's letter and Mark's Gospel were both written to the same Christian community in Rome, and within a few years of each other, it is likely that the Rufus mentioned by Paul and the Rufus mentioned by Mark are the same person.

In his Gospel, which was originally written to the church in Rome, Mark tells of Simon of Cyrene being compelled to carry the cross of Jesus. He notes that Simon is the father of Alexander and Rufus and obviously expects his audience to make the connection when they hear the names of the two sons. The Rufus of Paul, therefore, is most likely the Rufus of Mark,

the son of Simon of Cyrene who carried the cross of Jesus.

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Some will surely quote I Timothy 2:12 as a counter to all the above biblical passages. It reads, "I do not permit a woman to teach or to usurp authority over a man, but to be silent." First of all, the above passages about women must be given equal consideration with this passage. Many have made the error of making 1 Timothy 2:12 a canon within the canon when it comes to women and forcing every other passage to fit their interpretation of this one passage. That is not good hermeneutics.

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In 2010, I awakened very early one morning and, not wanting to awaken Sue, went into an adjoining room where I sat on a sofa enjoying the solitude and quietly communing with the Lord. At some point, I sensed my heart become very still and quiet, and then I heard, "I want you to be more identified with Sue and what she is doing," a reference to her work for the full acceptance of the gifts and callings of women in the church.

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This article is derived in part from Dr. Eddie Hyatt's book, Paul, Women and Church, available from Amazon in both paperback and Kindle. He and his wife, Dr. Susan Hyatt, have founded the International Christian Women's Hall of Fame in Grapevine, Texas, with the goal of "celebrating God's women of yesterday and creating world changer's today." The website is . Visit Dr. Eddie Hyatt's website at .

This article originally appeared at .

The Unique Way This Orthodox Jew Is Connecting Christians and Jews

An Orthodox Jew, Jonathan Feldstein has dedicated his life as a bridge builder between Jews and Christians. As a nonrunner, little did he know that work would involve a marathon.

Through his Genesis 123 Foundation and his project, Run for Zion, Feldstein has devised a unique way to connect Jews and Christians and provide them with the spiritual experience of a lifetime—running through the historic streets of Jerusalem as part of the 2019 Jerusalem Marathon. But runners don't have to be professional. They can either run in 5K or 10K events or simply walk through the ancient roads of the Old City where Jesus walked.

Run for Zion's motto is, "Blessing Israel with Every Step."

"I'm building this up as a Christian experience because if you are a Christian and a runner, this is the most powerful, the most meaningful place you'll ever run," Feldstein said on a recent episode of "Charisma Connection" on the Charisma Podcast Network. "The Bible says that God will bless those who bless Israel, and participating in this event will be a huge blessing.

"As Christians and Jews, we all have in common that we worship the Creator of the universe—the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. In my lifetime, I have seen way too much division between Jews and Christians. Connecting Jews and Christians, especially in these perilous times, is vital."

To learn more about Run for Zion, listen to the podcast below.

High School Student Suspended for Posting Bible Verses in Response to LGBT Campaign

An Ohio high school student is speaking out after she received a suspension for posting Bible verses on walls and lockers in response to a collection of LGBT “pride” flags that decorated the hallways. In a video posted to Facebook last Friday, Gabby Helsing claims that she is being punished for allegedly “targeting” the school’s Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) club.

“So on Thursday when I got to school, I see that there were pride flags, posters around my school,” Gabby says in the video, which her mother, Tina Helsing, shared to Facebook. “And I felt the need to write down some Bible verses so I could put them around my school. And I wrote them down and I put them around the lockers, the walls.”

“I was coming back from lunch ... and I [saw] the teachers taking them down, and the next day, I got called to the office and there is a letter that says that I have an ISS, which is an in-school suspension, and the reason why I have it is because ‘abuse of others, disrespect, rudeness’ because I put Bible verses up ‘targeting the GSA organization,’” she explained. “I did not know what the GSA organization was or meant.” {eo}

Click here to read the rest of this story from our content partners at Faithwire.

Washington Tells AG Church They Must Pay for Abortions

The attorneys for a church in Seattle filed a federal lawsuit on Friday against Washington state officials for forcing churches to pay for elective abortions in their health insurance.

Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) lawyers representing Cedar Park Assembly of God, challenged the constitutionality and legality of a new state mandate that requires the Seattle-area church to fund abortion if it provides its staff members access to group health insurance.

“No church should be coerced to pay for abortions, least of all a church that dedicates its ministry to protecting and celebrating life,” ADF Legal Counsel Elissa Graves said in a press release. “Cedar Park believes and teaches that every human life begins at conception and is worthy of protection at every point until natural death.”

“Further still, Cedar Park demonstrates its pro-life ethic in tangible ways: partnership with a local pregnancy care center, hosting an annual camp for children in foster care, operating a school that serves over 1,000 students and ministering to hundreds of couples struggling with infertility,” the press release continued. “The state of Washington has no business strong-arming this church, or any other, into contradicting the deeply held beliefs that motivate its ministry.”

The church’s lawsuit challenges the constitutionality and legality of Washington State Senate Bill 6219, legislation signed into law last March. The legislation requires Cedar Park to provide coverage for abortion if the church also

offers maternity care coverage to its employees, or face fines and criminal penalties, including imprisonment.

“Washington state has gone out of its way to bully churches and other religious nonprofits to violate their beliefs by paying for abortions,” said ADF Senior Counsel Kevin Theriot, vice president of the ADF Center for Life, said in a press release. “The Supreme Court has consistently held that government hostility toward people of faith is unconstitutional and has no place in our society. The state’s policy crushes dissent and violates the Constitution’s Free Exercise Clause by targeting Cedar Park’s entirely legitimate internal policies and religious beliefs.”

[Click here](#) to read the rest of this story from our content partners at CBN News.

Listen to the podcasts to hear incredible interviews from the front lines of the battle against abortion.

Man Who Spent 23 Minutes in Hell Releases Warning Video for Those Who Mock, Deny and Ignore God

There is a payment required for sin. Have you trusted in Jesus to pay for yours? What will happen to the people who reject Jesus Christ? In this video, Bill Wiese warns those who mock, deny and ignore God what the Bible says about the price of their decisions made on earth.

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Alveda King Is the First Woman to Join Promise Keepers Board

Ken Harrison, chairman and president of Promise Keepers, announced the appointment of Alveda King, niece of civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, to the Promise Keepers board of directors. Promise Keepers, founded in 1990 by former University of Colorado football coach Bill McCartney, is a Christ-centered organization calling men to courageous and bold servant-leadership by sparking a movement that will mobilize millions of men to follow Christ into today's broken world as change makers for their families, churches and communities.

King grew up in the civil rights movement. Her family home in Birmingham, Alabama, was bombed, as was her father's church office in Louisville, Kentucky. She was jailed during the open housing movement. She sees the pro-life movement as a continuation of the civil rights struggle.

Currently, King is a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ, serving as executive director of civil rights for the unborn for Gospel of Life, headed up by Father Frank Pavone of Priests for Life. She is also part of the teaching and music ministry as well as former executive director of African Humanitarian Christian Fellowship, founded by her mentor, the late Pastor Allen McNair, founder of Believers' Bible Christian Church in Atlanta, Georgia.

King is a former college professor, holding a Master of Arts degree in business management, and was awarded an honorary

doctorate from Saint Anselm College. She also served in the Georgia State House of Representatives, is a presidential appointee and also an accomplished author, actress and songwriter.

Alveda lives in Atlanta and is a regular columnist for "Insiders" section as well as a Fox News contributor. She is the grateful mother of six and a blessed grandmother.

Ken Harrison said,

It's time for men to start acting like men. Calling men to be men isn't chauvinistic or somehow against women—although it is countercultural and controversial. But it is a fact that when men check out of their families, women suffer the most, as do their children—whether born or unborn. Our goal is to start a global movement of healthy masculinity sourced in absolute surrender to God that will empower and encourage men to be better fathers, husbands, friends and men.

Few people understand social movements like Dr. Alveda King. Few have sacrificed for change like Dr. Alveda King. But all-too-many women—including Dr. Alveda King—understand what happens to women and children when men fail to act like godly men. That's why I wanted Alveda to join the board of Promise Keepers—to remind us of the stakes at risk in our mission, the urgency of the need, and to provide the wisdom to help us chart a way forward.

Alveda King said:

A pressing civil rights issue of our day is the plight of the unborn, murdered by the millions, defenseless, voiceless and "choiceless." We are praying that men will rise up as husbands and fathers, leading to genuine life, liberty and happiness in Christ for all; born and unborn.

As my uncle, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, "Injustice

anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” The Promise Keepers message and movement is needed now more than ever, and I’m glad to serve by sharing insight, energy and prayerful support to the Promise Keepers board.

Megachurch Pastor John Gray: I Had an ‘Emotional Affair’

South Carolina Pastor John Gray told *The Real* that he had an emotional affair.

“Over a year ago, my wife and I were in a very difficult place in our marriage, and in that time, I began to converse with someone—other than a counselor, other than a pastoral leader, which is where I should have taken my issues and challenges—and began to converse, and I was even in the presence of that person one time. But being in the presence of someone is not the same as sleeping with them. I did not sleep with anyone,” Gray told host Adrienne Bailon, who is married to Israel Houghton.

Gray pastors Relentless Church in Greenville. Previously, Ron Carpenter pastored the congregation and called it Redemption Church.

Gray was open with his congregation about many of his marital struggles, which sparked rumors.

“There’s no baby, none of that,” he said. “It’s important for me to take responsibility for the areas where I did come up short. Sharing things about my marriage, outside of my wife and outside of trusted counselors, is an emotional affair. It

was wrong. I take responsibility for that. But I will not take responsibility for that which I did not do.”

Watch the video to see Gray’s full explanation.

Church as We Know It Is Over

Yes, church as we know it is over, but not anywhere near the way the FOX News author suggests.

Church leaders and pastors have spent time every week encouraging, inviting and pleading with people to come to a specific place at a specific time on Sundays. This approach has created church staffing models, systems and ministry strategies focused on improving attendance.

But that way of doing church is dead.

And just like Joshua needed to hear God say, “Moses my servant is dead” (Josh. 1:2), so he could move into the next level of leadership, I think the Church needs to accept the fate of physical church as we know it, so we can move into the next phase of digital church. –Dave Adamson, FOX News

And the church takes another hit, this time not from the anti-church society that’s filled with disgruntled Christians who didn’t have their expectations met in the last church they attended, and not from the organic, house church proponents, but from a pastor featured by FOX News. His take on the emerging, morphing church in the 21st century isn’t unique, but it is gaining steam, especially among those who are pretty much done with church as it has been known for centuries.

There’s a problem though. What is being proposed simply cannot

be defined biblically as the church. Technology, video and alternate methods of worshiping, listening to teachings and even connecting with other Christians are all benefits for believers. Every night, I fall asleep to worship music I'm streaming online. I am thankful for the never-ending livestream of the prayer room at the International House of Prayer. Limitless sermons are available to all of us. In fact, nobody has an excuse in this digital age for lacking in spiritual depth, knowledge and intimacy with Jesus. The opportunities for spiritual growth are endless. This is good, but this is not church.

An omni-channel approach to church would allow people to fully connect and engage with a church without the need to step inside a physical environment every week. They could attend one Sunday, listen to the message on podcast the following week, watch a live online stream the Sunday after, and catch the message on demand in a church app the week after that. –Dave Adamson

That sounds freeing, but it's not the church. It is not the *ekklesia*.

The *Ekklesia*

In fact, Dave misunderstands the purpose of the church gathering quite remarkably. It's not simply to connect, worship and learn. If that were the case, the online options would absolutely be better in many ways than connecting physically in a local church. It's easy to find the best of the best worship experience, the deepest and most impacting teaching and the experience we specifically desire somewhere online. Those experiences will most always outperform what the local church can offer. Except for at least one, important thing—the governmental gathering. The *ekklesia*.

The church isn't primarily there to satisfy our desires for worship, teaching and connections. It's been ordained by God

as a governmental force in the region. *Ekklesia* is actually a secular term referring to the gathering together of the people in the region by governmental authorities for the purpose of relaying information and calling people to action.

So, for the *ekklesia* to function, there must be local leadership, a regular gathering under that leadership and a responsiveness to what God is calling people unto.

Add to that the key purpose of the church, corporate intercession, and you realize it's not possible to have church or to be the church in any legitimate way online.

In my *Charisma* article titled "Ancient and Emerging: 5 Major Changes Coming to the Church," I write:

We will gather together most days of the week. The 24/7 church will again emerge as the church drives culture instead of reacting to culture. Cares of life will lose their power as we simplify our lives and put corporate prayer and mission ahead of most everything else.

This may be the most challenging change for Christians. Today, Sundays are the days to set aside for corporate worship while we give precedence to our 'normal lives.' In the coming church, the very reason we live will be to pray on fire together every day, receive apostolic assignments and then move out into our lives as kingdom ambassadors. It wouldn't be surprising if a tithe of our time is what became the standard. Two to three hours a day, whether it's in the morning, afternoon or evening, or even in the late-night hours, will be given by every believer to praying on site together with others, ministering and giving ourselves to intercession-fueled kingdom ministry. Of course, much of what we have been giving ourselves to will have to be eliminated so we have the time necessary to devote.

I want to encourage you to consider picking up a copy of my

book *The Coming Church*. This 300-page book is a powerful revelation of what I believe is coming to the church, and the changes for every one of us will be dramatic.

In fact, I'll make the digital version of this book available FREE for anyone who reads this article. Visit and you can download it immediately.

In my article titled *Five Unusual Marks of the Coming Church*, I write:

The church will drive culture instead of being driven by culture. The 24/7 church is coming and it will violate the prevailing culture of busyness and distraction.

Gone will be the days of formatting our churches to fit within the schedules and expectations of society. The seeker movement will fade away and the urgent call to the wall will overpower even the most demanding of personal and social pressures.

Acts 17:6 (ESV) And when they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some of the brothers before the city authorities, shouting, "These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also,

ESV Study Bible: These hostile opponents spoke better than they knew, for the spread of the gospel throughout the Roman Empire was the beginning of a movement that would change the course of history forever.

The coming church will be marked by its boldness and culture will be threatened for the good.

What About Church Online?

To Dave Adamson's credit, he did state:

This approach allows the church to connect with people

physically for 1 hour on Sunday, and stay connected for the other 167 hours of the week, digitally.

While one hour per week in church is woefully short of what is coming in the 24/7 church, he does emphasize staying connected. Utilizing technology to stay strategically and actively locked in to what is happening in the local church is a smart move. While I disagree with surrendering to the whims of today's noncommittal generation and encouraging empty pews, I believe using online media and social connectors is a great move. I remember spending hours in the prayer room every day at the International House of Prayer in Kansas City while also accessing the livestream from home and watching teachings by Mike Bickle and others. IHOPKC is doing media right as it enhances its 24/7 mission instead of replacing it.

However, we need to look a little deeper at the idea of online church.

In my article titled: "You are Not the Church: The Scattering Movement," I deal with this concept of church online. There are some very clear issues that can't be ignored.

Devoid of apostolic leadership: There is most probably (there are exceptions) no clearly defined apostolic leadership involved. We have to know who we're called to serve with. We have to all hear, together, in our local congregation, how we are to respond in mission advance. What's God calling our leaders to focus on? How are we to participate? What are the goals? What steps must we take to prepare ourselves to see this come to pass?

- **1. Lack of strategic corporate intercession:**