

# LET YOUR WOMEN KEEP SILENCE IN THE CHURCHES

*By Darrell Farkas*

Women keeping silence in the churches is a hotly debated issue. I wanted to touch on this with a brief illustration from what we would expect to see in Congress.

## FIRST, A WORD FROM THE APOSTLE PAUL:

34 Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but *they are commanded* to be under obedience as also saith the law. 35 And if they will learn any thing, let them ask

their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.

**1 Corinthians 14:34-35**

I believe a look at how government assemblies conduct themselves in session will help us see what is being described by the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians. I will use Congress as the example, but one could as well see such in governments across the world.

In the U.S. Congress, the Senators and Representatives have their aides. These aides are assisting according to their appointed tasks. The Senators and Representatives speak out in their respective order, but for an aide to give their opinion would be viewed as outrageous. Such is not their place. As we saw in verse 34, “for it is not permitted unto them to speak.”

Paul’s authority here touches on God’s Word setting the standard of conduct. Paul wrote, “as also saith the law.” He is referring to the law of Moses, but his “keep silence in the churches” simply clarifies that this issue of proper feminine conduct, is not subject to change simply because we are in the New Testament period.

Verse 35 makes it real clear what he meant. Not only was keeping their opinions to themselves mandatory, but even asking questions was out of line, just as it would be for Congressional aides to ask questions in the assembly.

Now, if “Senator Smith’s” aide should suddenly pop up with a question for the Senate Speaker, whose shame would it be? Undoubtedly, it would be “shamful” for that aide, and this aide would hear about such breach of conduct from both the Senate Speaker

as well as from “Senator Smith”. Let me add here that “Senator Smith” would also face public shame. He would no doubt be addressed directly by the Senate Speaker, but would also face some ribbing by fellow Senators.

If you run like many church assemblies today, you would swear Congress had gone mad, if you saw a session conducted in such a manner. You would have your jaw drop open at the lack of proper decorum in the place where there should be esteem for what it is.

I have seen Bible studies where the men, sitting in the audience, say narry a word, while their wives and daughters run the show with questions, opinions and comments. This would be like the Senate, carrying on a session where the aides were talking four to one over the actual Senators, and in some cases, some Senators would be unable to get a word in because of all the talking aides. Add to that, the shame and disrespect that would be shown to your fellow Senator when he couldn't get a word in because you keep letting your aides go off at the mouth. Maybe your fellow Senator is a naturally quiet

fellow and he simply needs a little encouragement to speak up. A naturally quiet fellow will not speak up if all the aides are ready and willing to fill the time slot with their voice.

I remember reading of a woman who was so conscious of her position to her husband that she would look to him for a word or nod of approval before answering questions directed to her in a mixed society setting. The other men were astounded and congratulated him on the respect he maintained in his household. Her maintaining her place brought honour to both him and herself. Sadly enough, in most churches, scorn would be heaped on the gentleman whose wife openly showed a submissive demeanor.

In the Senate, there is still a degree of decorum, so the shock and shame is aroused at the breach of Senatorial aides, but in the church, it is upside down and the shock and shame would be heaped on the Senator who keeps his aides under control. Such a “Senator Smith”, with his outspoken aides in the church setting would be scorning all those other Senators and the Senate Speaker for restraining their

aides. How noxiously topsy turvy this has become!

Some lift up the argument that men and women are equal human beings and for the women to keep silence is somehow making them of lesser value. Look back at the Congress again on this point. We know that just because the aides are not permitted to speak, does in no way insinuate the aides are somehow inferior as humans to the Senators. No one would make that assumption, it is more “smoke and mirrors” to use that as a criticism for women's keeping silence in the church.

One last thought here. I have repeatedly encountered the challenge of the woman in the church who claims to have the authority to speak out and teach because her husband said it was alright for her to do so. Excuse me, the “Senator Smith” does not possess the authority to authorize his aides to speak in the Senate. This is a ridiculous line of reasoning, exceeding his power and place. It is shameful of him and his aides. Not to mention it still violates the Apostolic statement, “let your women keep silence in the churches.”



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