

Concerning the “Servants of the Lord” and the second office of the Church

The word deacon which has been used as a title for the second office of the church is really not a word at all. It is what is called a transliteration. A transliteration is a word that is not translated but is rather carried over into the new language. The word that we get deacon from in 1 Timothy 3: 8-16 (*diakoneō*) means specifically a Christian teacher- minister, servant, and pastor. The word is either translated as a servant of the Lord or transliterated deacon in our modern English Bibles.

The question is why did the translators decide not to properly translate this word every time it is used and create a new word instead? This is not the only transliterated word in the English Bible. There are several. Another transliteration is the word baptism. Baptism is from the word (*baptizō*) and when literally translated means to totally immerse. The meaning of this word comes from the act of taking a material and placing it under water. This was done for washing and also dying clothing and other materials. So why not translate baptism properly as emersion and deacon as servant of the Lord? These two words were not translated properly for one of two reasons. The translators were afraid of the repercussions it would cause or they did not want to make changes in the way they were doing things and so to avoid these two realities they transliterated these two words. Truth is more important than tradition, and God's original intentions are better than man's religious teachings so we will not use these transliterated words and instead we will translate them properly. When translated properly we see very quickly why the translators decided to transliterate and not translate this word every time it is used.

Many traditions today say that women are not to have any leadership roles in the Church and some still forbid women to speak at all. The question is if that is a true Biblical doctrine why does it seem to be so inconsistent with many instances we read about in the Bible?

In Romans 16:1 and following, we see for instance that the very same word (*diakoneō*) is used to describe Phoebe a woman servant of the Lord, or if transliterated a deaconess. Further in this passage Paul also greets Mary, Tryphaena, Typhosa, Persis, and Priscilla who he also says are all fellow servants and hard workers in the Lord. Priscilla with her husband Aquila are called co laborers with him in Christ. It is Priscilla who first understands that Apollos does not yet know the Lord and begins to instruct him along with her husband Aquila. Also Paul sends a greeting to them and the church that meets in their home. It is clear that Paul sees Priscilla as a Servant of the Lord who co laborers with him in the faith. And she is considered to be a leader in the early church by early church historians. In Acts 21:8 we see that Philip had 4 daughters that were virgins, and they prophesied. The Greek word here used is (*prophēteuō*) meaning to speak under inspiration. This is the same word that is used as a fulfillment of Joel's prophesy referring to both men and women.

""And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and **your sons and your daughters shall prophesy**, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; **even on my male servants and female servants** in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. (Act 2:17-18)

In Corinthians 11:5 we continue to read that the women who were praying and prophesying were to have their head covered as was the custom of that day. This was to prevent any distraction for those who would hear the message the Lord had given them. This passage does not say for them to stop, it only says that they are to do so properly. So then where does all of the confusion come in? God predicted that women would prophesy and Peter said that this prophesy was being fulfilled here in the last days. So what is the problem? The problem comes with a misunderstanding of

1 Cor.14:34-35 Women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the law says. If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church.

This verse seems to come out from leftfield somewhere but that is primarily because of the way it has been translated. The word husband has been properly translated but the problem comes here with the word women. The word women here in relation to its connection to the word husband in the Greek really should have been translated wife not women. Paul is addressing the husband and wife relationship with in the context of a church's worship service. The word speak (*ἁλαεῶ*) means to utter unintelligible words. Paul is still keeping with his main theme of everything being done properly and in order and is addressing this interruption in the church properly by instructing the husbands and wives of their positions in Christ. Paul here is addressing another issue concerning distractions in the worship service in as he has already done earlier in the passage when he instructs those who speak with an unknown tongue to be silent when there is no interpreter. This is not a general order for all men not to allow women to speak in church. This also does not mean that this was always the biblical response to any women that spoke for God or in the context of a worship service or in the work of the Lord. We have already mentioned Priscilla and Aquila above. This was a husband & wife team that served alongside Paul as co labors. It is already known that Priscilla was active in teaching, evangelism and all other aspects of the ministry. She is always working alongside her husband. She is not usurping her husband's position as the head of their home. They are both equally active in the ministry of the Gospel and receive warm greetings from Paul 7 different times throughout the scriptures. It is also interesting that of the 7 times they are addressed Priscilla is greeted first. Whether this is of any importance it is hard to say but what is clear is that they are considered to be serving God and working in the church properly. Having then done an accurate and in-depth study we have seen that God has made no distinction as to who can speak for Him and who cannot.

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (Gal 3:28)

If God has determined that men and women are both able to serve in the position of Servant of the Lord than that is the position we too should take regardless of what our traditions or culture has taught us. Our traditions and culture should change in the light of Scripture. Not the other way around.