

Ranking the Gifts of God
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Women were meant to teach, prophesy, and lead- not just in the kingdom, but now, in this life. This is true whether you are 16 or 60. (Ex 15:20-21)

It is clear that God gives to us all gifts (talents, if you will) that He intends to be used in His service (Matt. 25:14-30). So, if you have a talent for speaking, prophesying, or teaching, you must use it. If your talent, however, lies more in listening, praying, showing empathy or encouraging, you had better develop and use that ability.

The question, then, is whether a more visible gift has more value.

Humankind seems to have a need to rank all things. We rank movies, restaurants, hotels, music and even the Ten Commandments. Murder is terrible, lying is sometimes necessary, and adultery, why that's okay as long as you don't get caught. The disciples also got drawn into the human tendency to rank themselves (Luke 22:24).

After reading the list of spiritual gifts and exhortation to value all parts of the body of Christ in 1 Corinthians 12:1-26, we still have looked at the list of gifts in the body in verse 28 as ranks. However, the gifts of God do not have any rank, except that which is mentioned in verse 31 and in chapter 13, verse 13. God values love above all other spiritual gifts.

Just as spiritual gifts have no rank, there is no value system assessed by God on where you use those talents. There is no Biblical support of the theory that opening church with prayer is of any more value than privately praying with a friend over a need in their life. Nor has God shown us that speaking to a crowd from behind a podium is more to be desired than sharing the truth with a co-worker or your children or that writing an article for an official church publication has more value than a note of encouragement to a stranger in need.

In fact, the works that separate the sheep from the goats in Matthew 25:31-46 seem to be more personal (as opposed to public) ministries. Nor do we find any indication that a Christian must feed thousands or set up a worldwide prison ministry to receive the reward, only that it must be done by each of us in some manner when we personally see the need.

Therefore, why would we ask "Should a woman be allowed to preach?" When a better question would be "Where is a woman who has been given the talent of 'preaching' able to 'preach'?" Perhaps God never intended for women to "preach" (in the traditional sense of the word) to a crowd from behind a lectern in formal church services, but that leaves many, many avenues still open for teaching, instruction, direction, encouragement, stirring to action, etc.

Just as every talent is a gift from God, so is every opportunity for its use. Step up to the plate. Teach, prophesy, and lead, as you have the opportunity.