

**Q. When are women supposed to be silent in church? Does the command for a woman to be silent in church apply from the moment she walks into the building or only during meetings, prayer times, and classes?**

A. Thank you for your question concerning when women are to be silent. This question was written in response to the article, "The Role of Women in the Church" (<http://www.wordofhisgrace.org/women.html>).

A literal translation of the first part of 1 Corinthians 14:34 is, "Let your women be silent in the assemblies." "Assemblies" is a plural noun translated from *ekklēsiai*. In the singular, *ekklēsia* often refers to the saints who are called out of the world and gathered to a spiritual assembly before God. In that sense, the *ekklēsia* refers to God's people, not to a building or even to an assembly in that building, but to the people. However, in the plural, as it is in 1 Corinthians 14:34, *ekklēsiai* is referring to the local assemblies. Never does *ekklēsia* refer to a building.

Thus, when Paul says that women are to be silent in the assemblies, he is not saying they must be silent simply because they are in a building called a "church." Women are to be silent in the assembly or meeting during which the men are to pray and teach (see 1 Timothy 2:8-12). Prayer meetings and classes (such as Sunday School classes and Bible studies) apart from the meetings of the *ekklēsia* are totally foreign to the Bible. Therefore, the question of how women are to behave in prayer meetings or Sunday School classes or Bible studies is impossible to answer, as such. The real answer is that no one should be attending such things because they are unbiblical and outside the rules for proper conduct of the assemblies of the saints.

To attend such unbiblical things as prayer meetings, Sunday School classes, and Bible studies when you know the truth will put you into an impossible catch-22 situation. Women are to be silent, not teach, and not audibly pray in the assemblies of the saints. Yet, in meetings

called "prayer meetings" and "Sunday Schools" and "Bible studies," where prayers are spoken and the Bible discussed with those very same saints, women are expected to announce prayer requests, pray, answer Bible questions, make other comments, and even teach. It should be obvious that prayer meetings and Sunday Schools and Bible studies make nonsense of the Bible's rules for the *ekklēsia*. In reality, prayer, teaching, and Bible study should take place in the regular meetings of the *ekklēsia*, during which the women are to be silent.

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