

# WOMEN PRAYING VOCALLY IN WORSHIP ASSEMBLIES<sup>1</sup>

By Ashby L. Camp

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Despite the fact that 1 Cor. 14:34-35, when isolated from its context, can be read as imposing absolute silence on women in congregational gatherings,<sup>2</sup> there is broad agreement in churches of Christ that it is proper for women in worship assemblies to sing (1 Cor. 14:26; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16), say amen (Deut. 27:15-26; 1 Chron. 16:36; 1 Cor. 14:16, 2 Cor. 1:20), confess their faith at baptism (Acts 8:37 [relevant despite textual issue]; Rom. 10:9-10; 1 Tim. 6:12-13), greet people (Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 16:20; 2 Cor. 13:12; 1 Pet. 5:14), and when "going forward," to confess their sins and express their desire for prayers (Jas. 5:16). I am persuaded that it is also proper for women to pray vocally in worship assemblies, though not as one appointed by the leaders to pray on behalf of the congregation.

## Why I think women prayed vocally in worship assemblies

Luke notes in Lk. 8:1-3 that many women were among those who traveled with Jesus as he went through towns and villages and that they provided for the Lord out of their means. In Lk. 23:48-56 he reports that the women who had followed Jesus from Galilee were present at his crucifixion and burial, and in Lk. 24:1-10 he reports that it was "Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them" who discovered the empty tomb and reported it to the apostles. On the road to Emmaus, Cleopas referred to these woman as "women of our group" (*gunaike ex hēmōn* – Lk. 24:22), meaning they were among the disciples of Jesus.

In the Book of Acts, which is the second volume of Luke's work, he reports that after the Lord's ascension, the apostles returned from the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem. He states in Acts 1:13-14: "And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James."<sup>14</sup> All these with one accord were *devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary* the mother of Jesus, and his brothers."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> I here pull together some things I have written elsewhere to focus on the specific issue indicated by the title.

<sup>2</sup> The context strongly suggests that in 1 Cor. 14:33b-36 Paul is prohibiting women from participating in the prophetic process during the worship assembly, meaning they can neither prophesy nor challenge the prophecies delivered by others. This meaning is often dismissed because of the mistaken belief that 1 Cor. 11:2-16 proves that women both prayed and prophesied in the assembly. The specific issue in 11:2-16 was women *praying* in the assembly uncovered (11:13). It was understood from what Paul previously had taught them that women did not prophesy in the assembly, which was a universal practice (14:33b-34) that he reaffirms in 14:33b-36. He mentions prophesying along with praying in chapter 11 not because both occurred in the assembly but because his ruling on praying uncovered in the assembly would by logic apply to prophesying uncovered outside the assembly.

<sup>3</sup> Regarding the identity of "the women," Craig Keener states in *Acts* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 1:748:

They undoubtedly are those who appeared at the end of Luke's Gospel: Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Mary mother of James (Luke 24:10); also the women who followed from Galilee (23:55), who probably would be Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Susanna (8:2-3); and *other* women (24:10; perhaps not specifically named by Luke or preserved in his oral sources because they were lower status or simply forgotten).

If there was a text in Scripture that declared or necessarily implied that women were prohibited from praying vocally in Christian gatherings where men were present, then one would have a basis for concluding that the women in 1:14 were praying silently, but there is no such text.<sup>4</sup> One cannot just assume the women prayed silently and then impose that assumption on Luke's statement. Just as we generally recognize that no text prohibits women in mixed assemblies (male and female) from singing and speaking in the other ways noted above, no text prohibits them from praying to God vocally. On the contrary, since praying to God is analogous to singing to him,<sup>5</sup> both being non-instructive expressions of devotion and praise to God, there is every reason to think that women prayed vocally in congregational assemblies. This is confirmed in the example in Acts 4:23-24.

Acts 4:23-24 states: "When they were released [referring to Peter and John's release by the Sanhedrin], they went to their friends [lit. "their own," meaning the community of believers] and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them.<sup>24</sup> And when *they* heard it, *they lifted their voices together* to God and *said*, 'Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, . . .'" The prayer continues to the end of v. 30.

Given that Luke has already made clear that the community of believers in Jerusalem included women and reported that the men prayed together with them, if he did not expect the reader to assume that women were among the believers in this instance, he would have indicated that in some way. So here we have Christian men and women again praying together, but this time Luke specifies that they all were doing so vocally: *they* lifted (plural) their voices<sup>6</sup> together to God and *said* (plural), "Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, . . ." The fact such a long prayer was spoken in the same words by all of them may mean it was prayed a phrase at a time after a precentor, but the point is that the women were praying vocally in gatherings of saints where men were present.

Acts 12:11-12 states: "When Peter came to himself, he said, 'Now I am sure that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from the hand of Herod and from all that the Jewish people were expecting.'<sup>12</sup> When he realized this, he went to the *house of Mary*, the mother of John

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<sup>4</sup> See footnote 2 regarding 1 Cor. 14:33b-36. Paul's desire expressed in 1 Tim. 2:8 for "the *men* in every place to pray" does not mean that women are not to pray. He does not say he wants the men to pray; he says he wants the men to pray *without anger and argument*. He assumes they will be praying and urges them to do so with the proper attitude so that their prayers will not be hindered (e.g., 1 Pet. 3:7). If on the brink of a recess a teacher said, "I want the boys to play without fighting," no one would think the teacher was thereby excluding girls from playing. Rather, they would conclude that the boys had a problem with fighting that the teacher did not want carried over into recess. The statement in 1 Tim. 2:11-12 that a woman is to learn in quietness and to be in quietness is not a requirement of complete silence. Indeed, as I explain below, I think Paul assumes in 1 Tim. 2:9 that women will be praying in the assembly.

<sup>5</sup> Like prayer, singing is directed "to God" and "to the Lord" (Acts 16:25; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). Those who hear the praise, gratitude, and devotion expressed to God in prayer and song are edified, built up in their understanding and appreciation of who God is and what he has done, but as indirect beneficiaries rather than direct addressees (1 Cor. 14:15-17). Ephesians 5:19 indicates that the "speaking to one another" that takes place in the singing of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs occurs in our "singing and making music *to the Lord* with [our] hearts."

<sup>6</sup> The fact "voice" (*phōnē*) is singular does not deny that all the people were speaking the prayer. The plural verbs make clear, which is why virtually all English translations render the word "voices" (plural). The singular refers to their collective voice, as it does elsewhere in Luke's writing (see, e.g., Lk. 17:12-13, Acts 14:11, and Acts 22:22).

whose other name was Mark, where *many* were gathered together and were *praying*." Peter went to Mary's house because he expected to find fellow Christians there, which he did. Many were gathered there praying, no doubt for Peter's protection and blessing. From what Luke previously reported, it would be odd indeed if there were no women among the large crowd at Mary's house praying for Peter. Since he says nothing to deflect that expectation, he presumably intends for the reader to assume they were present. And since he previously made clear that the women prayed vocally with the men and says nothing here to suggest the contrary, there is no reason to doubt that happened on this occasion.

1 Corinthians 11:2-16 shows that women praying in Christian gatherings where men were present was not limited to settings other than the Lord's Day assembly. In 1 Cor. 11:5-6, 13, Paul assumes the propriety of women praying and prophesying as long as they did not remove the head covering in question when doing so. The overwhelming majority of commentators agree that 11:2-16 addresses conduct in a worship assembly,<sup>7</sup> as did such notable figures of the American Restoration Movement as J. W. McGarvey, David Lipscomb, J. W. Roberts, C. R. Nichol, and Guy Woods.<sup>8</sup> I dissent from that majority in that I think 1 Cor. 14:33b-36 establishes that women did not *prophesy* in that assembly, but I agree that the female speech in question, namely *praying* (11:13), took place in that venue. That the section relates to conduct in a worship assembly is indicated by the following.

- 11:17-34 deals with an assembly in which the Lord's Supper is shared, so that clearly is a reference to the gathering of the church for worship on the Lord's Day. The repeated use in 11:2 and 11:17 of the identical form of a verb that is rarely used by Paul ("Now I praise you"; "But in giving this instruction, I do not praise you") is a rhetorical tie, which suggests some kind of continuity between the sections.<sup>9</sup> A common forum in which the different conduct took place would qualify.
- The phrase "on account of the angels" in 11:10 is best understood as a reference to angelic oversight of the worship assembly of the people of God.<sup>10</sup> There is Jewish

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<sup>7</sup> See, e.g., H. L. Goudge (1909), Archibald Robertson and Alfred Plummer (1914), C. K. Barrett (1968), F. F. Bruce (1971), Hans Conzelmann (1975), William Orr and James Walther (1976), W. Harold Mare (1976), Jerome Murphy-O'Connor (1979), Nigel Watson (1992), Simon Kistemaker (1993), Craig Blomberg (1994), Richard Oster (1995), Ben Witherington III (1995), Richard Hays (1997), Richard Horsley (1998), Marion Soards (1999), Anthony Thiselton (2000), J. Paul Sampley (2002), Stephen Barton (2003), David Garland (2003), Alan Johnson (2004), Craig Keener (2005), Joseph Fitzmyer (2008), Verlyn Verbrugge (2008), Roy Ciampa and Brian Rosner (2010), PHEME Perkins (2012), Gordon Fee (2014), Mark Taylor (2014), Thomas Schreiner (2018), and Paul Gardner (2018).

<sup>8</sup> Gary T. Burke, *God's Women Revisited* (Eugene, OR: Luminare Press, 2019), 16, 22, 222 (fn. 5).

<sup>9</sup> Paul uses *epaineō* only four times in his writings, one of which (Rom. 15:11) is a citation of Ps. 117:1 from LXX. The three uses that are not determined by a cited text are all in 1 Corinthians 11 (vv. 2, 17, 22), and they are identical in form (*epainō*).

<sup>10</sup> Thomas Schreiner states in *1 Corinthians*, TNTC (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2018), 235, "The best solution is probably that the angels are good angels who assist in worship and desire to see the order of creation maintained."

precedent for the notion of angels being present at the community gatherings,<sup>11</sup> and this perspective was reflected in the early church.<sup>12</sup>

- When regulating conduct in a worship assembly, Paul in 14:33b appeals to the universal practice of "the churches." So we know there was a universal, churchwide norm regarding the worship assembly and that Paul would appeal to that norm to compel certain conduct. We do not know of a churchwide norm regarding practices in public forums other than a worship assembly. Therefore, the fact Paul in 11:16 appeals to the universal practice of "the churches" suggests he is doing so with regard to a worship assembly, as he does three chapters later in 14:33b.
- If, as I believe from other texts and church history,<sup>13</sup> women prayed vocally in Christian worship assemblies, even if only by repeating prayers with the congregation, there is no reason to assume that the women in 11:2-16 were not praying in a worship assembly.
- The fact Paul does not refer to their "coming together" in 11:2-16 but does so repeatedly in 11:17-34 does not mean that the problem of women praying uncovered (11:13) was occurring somewhere other than a worship assembly. The problem for which he rebukes them in 11:17-34 was their maintenance of social divisions *as manifested in the Lord's Supper*. The Lord's Supper (and love feast) was shared only in the congregational assembly, but since Christian women prayed publicly both in and out of the assembly (and prophesied outside the assembly), I suspect Paul did not say "when you come together" in 11:2-16 because he did not want to give the impression that his instruction about head coverings applied only when speaking in the congregational assembly. Being

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<sup>11</sup> Joseph Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, Anchor Bible (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 418-419.

<sup>12</sup> Larry Hurtado writes in *At the Origins of Christian Worship: The Context and Character of Earliest Christian Devotion* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 50-51:

[Christians] experienced their assemblies as not merely human events but as having a transcendent dimension. They sensed God as directly and really present in their meetings through his Spirit. . . . In 1 Corinthians 11:10, the curious passing reference to the angels present in the worship assembly shows how familiar the idea was. Paul's Corinthian readers apparently needed no further explanation (though we could wish for one!). As the 'holy ones' (saints) of God, believers saw their worship gatherings as attended by heavenly 'holy ones', angels, whose presence signified the heavenly significance of their humble house-church assemblies.

<sup>13</sup> Women did not prophesy or teach in the assembly of the mainstream post-apostolic church. Everett Ferguson states in *Women in the Church: Biblical and Historical Perspectives*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Abilene, TX: Desert Willow Publishing, 2015), Kindle 964, "Women were not appointed as elders, nor did they take public speaking roles in the assembly *as prophets, teachers, or leaders* in the assembly. Where women did take these roles in heretical and schismatic groups, the practice was a basis for objection to these groups." Regarding prayer, however, Justin Martyr says of a worship assembly in the mid-second century (*First Apology*, 67):

And on the day called *Sunday*, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability, and the people assent, saying *Amen*; and there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons.

The *Apostolic Constitutions* (Book III, Ch. VI), a collection of earlier materials on church order that was compiled in the fourth century, states, "We do not permit 'our women to *teach in the church*,' but only to *pray* and hear those that teach."

an issue of cultural gender propriety, it also applied to speaking in public (praying and prophesying) outside the assembly.

In 1 Tim. 1:18-20, Paul charged Timothy to oppose the false teachers, and then, in light of that charge ("Therefore"), he told him in 2:1-7 that his first order of business was to see that all sorts of prayers were offered in the assembly for *all* people, to see that no group or class of people, including rulers and authorities, was excluded from the prayerful concern of the church. His stress on universality seems to be pushback against some kind of limitation on the scope of the gospel, suggesting that the false teachers had a sectarian or exclusivist theology that emphasized God's love for some people *at the expense of* his love for all mankind, perhaps most notably at the expense of his love for pagan rulers. Marshall notes, "This universalistic thrust is most probably a corrective response to an exclusive elitist understanding of salvation connected with the false teaching."<sup>14</sup> Towner states, "Probably the speculative views of the false teachers or the general atmosphere surrounding the approach to the faith they promoted fostered either some sort of elitism or indifference to those outside the church."<sup>15</sup>

Most commentators recognize that the prayer addressed by these instructions took place in the corporate worship assembly.<sup>16</sup> For example, Towner writes, "From 2:1 onward Paul has been preoccupied with activities and behavior within the worship assembly."<sup>17</sup> Linda Belleville says, "The setting is corporate worship."<sup>18</sup> This is confirmed by the activities occurring there – prayer (v. 8) and teaching (vv. 11-12) – and by the phrase "in every place" in 2:8. As Everett Ferguson has shown: "The 'every place' of 1 Timothy 2:8 is to be taken as 'every meeting place,' 'every place of assembly,' bringing this passage into parallel with 1 Corinthians 14:33b-34. The prayers of 1 Timothy 2:1-2 are the public prayers of the church."<sup>19</sup>

Given the significance God places on the prayers of the church for all people, Paul says in 2:8 that he wants the men to pray lifting *holy* hands, meaning hands that are not stained by anger and argument. Anger and argument, division and disharmony, are hindrances to effective prayer, to communion with God. He says literally in the first clause of 2:9: "Likewise [also]<sup>20</sup> women<sup>21</sup> in appropriate attire with modesty and decency to adorn themselves." There is broad

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<sup>14</sup> I. Howard Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 420.

<sup>15</sup> Philip H. Tower, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 165.

<sup>16</sup> Robert W. Yarbrough, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, PNCT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018), 144 (fn. 208).

<sup>17</sup> Towner (2006), 190.

<sup>18</sup> Linda Belleville, "1 Timothy" in Philip W. Comfort, ed., *1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Hebrews*, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2009), 43.

<sup>19</sup> Everett Ferguson, *The Church of Christ: A Biblical Ecclesiology for Today* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 343. See also, Thomas R. Schreiner, "An Interpretation of 1 Tim. 2:9-15" in Andreas Köstenberger and Thomas R. Schreiner, eds., *Women in the Church*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 175 (fn. 53).

<sup>20</sup> The *kai* ("also") is textually suspect. It is absent in such notable manuscripts as Sinaiticus and Alexandrinus, placed in brackets in Nestle-Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece* (28th ed.), and is not included in *The Greek New Testament* produced by Tyndale House (2017).

<sup>21</sup> Though some claim *gunaikas* in this section refers to wives rather than to women generally, most commentators recognize that such a limitation is highly improbable (Schreiner, 180). The context is rejecting the effect of the false teaching on the prayers that are offered in the assembly, and since v. 8 clearly refers to men generally rather than to husbands, there is no sound basis for limiting *gunaikas* to wives. It is noteworthy that all the standard English versions render the word in this section as "women" not "wives" (KJV, ERV, ASV, RSV, NEB, NAS, NKJV, NRSV, REB, NASU, HCSB, NAB, CEB, NIV, NET, LEB, ISV, CSB).

agreement that the verb "I want" from v. 8 is implied in v. 9: As Paul *wants* the men to pray in a certain way, he likewise *wants* the women to do something. Some translations supply "I want" in v. 9 to make that implication express (e.g., NAS, NASU, NIV), and others convey the idea by saying "women *should*" (RSV, NAB, NRSV, ESV), "women *are to*" (HCSB, CSB, NJB, NET), or "women *must*" (REB, NEB), but what Paul wants the women to do is debatable.

Paul could be saying in 2:9, "Likewise [I want] women to adorn themselves in appropriate attire, with modesty and decency," in which case "women" serves as the subject of one infinitive ("to adorn"). But that seems like an abrupt change of subject from a focus on praying to a completely unrelated focus on dress, especially with the connecting word "likewise." As Marshall puts it, "[T]he introduction of the reference to women's adornment is an unmotivated digression if it is not related to prayer in some way or other; after an injunction to the men about how they are to worship, it would be strange if something parallel was not being said to the women."<sup>22</sup>

Alternatively, Paul could be saying, "Likewise [I want] women [to pray] in appropriate attire, to adorn themselves with modesty and decency." In that case, "women" serves as the subject of two infinitives ("to pray" and "to adorn"). Either translation is grammatically acceptable,<sup>23</sup> and the latter is favored (in meaning if not in actual translation) by many scholars.<sup>24</sup> The choice is governed by the context of the passage and by the view one has from other texts of the propriety of women praying in the assembly. Given the focus on prayer throughout this section of Scripture, my understanding of 1 Cor. 14:33b-36 and 11:2-16, and the examples of women praying in Acts, I am convinced that Paul here assumes the women will be praying, just as he assumes the men will be praying.<sup>25</sup>

### **How I think women prayed vocally in worship assemblies**

I think women prayed in Christian assemblies of the first century by repeating the prayer with the entire congregation a phrase at a time following a precentor, a man who initially spoke the prayer. That seems to be what was happening in Acts 4:23-24 where they all prayed a lengthy

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<sup>22</sup> Marshall (1999), 447.

<sup>23</sup> Korinna Zamfir and Joseph Verheyden state in "Text-Critical and Intertextual Remarks on 1 Tim 2:8-10," *Novum Testamentum* 50 (2008), 404, "[T]he ellipsis can be supplied with the entire clause in v. 8, with Βούλομαι or with Βούλομαι προσεύχεσθαι. The latter reading does not interfere with the text, it can work grammatically, and it provides a thematic unity between w. 8 and 9-10."

<sup>24</sup> E.g., C. K. Barrett, *The Pastoral Epistles*, New Clarendon Bible (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), 55; Martin Dibelius and Hans Conzelmann, *The Pastoral Epistles*, Hermeneia, trans. by Philip Buttolph and Adela Yarbro (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), 45; Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles*, TNTC, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 84; Ben Witherington III, *Women in the Earliest Churches* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 263 (fn. 203); Craig S. Keener, *Paul, Women & Wives* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1992), 102-103; Walter L. Liefeld, *1 & 2 Timothy/Titus*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 93-95; Marshall (1999), 446-447; Jerome D. Quinn and William C. Wacker, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy*, ECC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 215-216; Andreas J. Köstenberger, *1-2 Timothy & Titus*, BTCP (Nashville: Holman, 2017), 109; Yarbrough (2018), 165-166; Christopher R. Hutson, *First and Second Timothy and Titus*, Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2019), 67. Collins does not supply "to pray" in the translation of v. 9 but clearly understands vv. 9-10 as a reference to women praying in the worship assembly. Raymond F. Collins, *I & II Timothy and Titus*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 64-65.

<sup>25</sup> William Loader states in *The New Testament on Sexuality* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 421, that rather than implying an absolute silence, one may assume "that in liturgical responses or songs women would be vocal, and the link between instruction to women and what precedes suggests that women also prayed aloud in the gatherings."

prayer in the same words.<sup>26</sup> I suspect there also was "open praying," where all were free to pray individually and personally without any appointment or designation to speak for the assembly. Some are convinced that a woman praying vocally in the context of "open praying" would be an improper exercise of authority over men because the woman would be directing men's minds to the extent that they prayed along with her. I am not convinced that is right.

I know of no one who objects to a congregation singing songs in the worship assembly that contain parts in which only the women sing.<sup>27</sup> There is no concern in that case that women are directing men's minds as they vocalize their devotion and praise in song. So I do not see why there should be a concern that women are directing men's minds as they vocalize their devotion and praise in prayer. One might argue that in the case of singing the women are not doing the directing because they are merely singing lyrics written by another, but by vocalizing those lyrics they are the immediate cause of the male focus. And what if the writer was a woman? We do not investigate that because we do not believe the propriety of the conduct depends on it. We accept that women lifting men's thoughts by singing in their presence is not a prohibited exercise of authority. It is not like directing or correcting men by addressing them with the authoritative word of God as in prophesying, preaching, and teaching, which women are forbidden from doing in church assemblies (1 Cor. 14:33b-36; 1 Tim. 2:11-12).<sup>28</sup>

### **Why I do not think women were appointed to pray on behalf of the church**

If it is permissible for women to pray in a worship assembly in a context of "open praying," I do not think it follows that they also can "lead prayers" in the church, meaning be appointed by the leaders to pray on behalf of the congregation. An appointment to serve as the congregation's representative before God vests that person with the authority or right to speak for the community. In that act, the person is not merely praying personally but as a designated spokesman for all the assembled saints, men and women. That strikes me as inconsistent with the submission a woman is called to manifest in the assembly (1 Cor. 14:34; 1 Tim. 2:11).<sup>29</sup> I do not believe women prayed that way in the early church.

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<sup>26</sup> It is possible, of course, that the Spirit caused all of them miraculously to utter the same words simultaneously, but one might expect some acknowledgement of that divine work.

<sup>27</sup> Neither do I know of anyone who objects to a woman verbalizing to men her gratitude to God when she "goes forward," though doing so directs the men's minds to God and his particular work in her life.

<sup>28</sup> That women may present the word of God to men elsewhere follows from the fact that some were given the gift of prophecy (Lk. 2:36; Acts 2:16-17, 21:9; 1 Cor. 12:10) and God spoke to men through the prophetess Huldah (2 Ki. 22:14-20; 2 Chron. 34:22-28). Note also the prophetess Anna in Lk. 2:36-38. In Acts 18:26, we see that Priscilla and Aquila took Apollos aside and they explained (plural) to him the way of God more accurately. What qualifies as a "church assembly" to which the restriction applies is a matter of debate.

<sup>29</sup> Presenting the authoritative word of God to men is a specific violation of the duty of submission. I am suggesting that praying as an appointed representative of the congregation would be another. If that is correct, leaders have no right to make such an appointment.