



WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE (Sunday October 16, 2005)

Outline:

1. Is it right for women to be in the workplace?
2. How can women in the workplace balance their family, work, and their own spirituality?
3. How do working women handle stress, competition, gender bias, etc. in the workplace?
4. Some pitfalls of dual-income families and how to avoid them

Approach

. A purely Biblical perspective

SECTION 1. IS IT RIGHT FOR WOMEN TO BE IN THE WORKPLACE ?

1A. A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE ON WOMEN

Genesis 2:18 The woman was to be man's aid and companion. She was to be his "help meet". This in the Hebrew means "opposite part or counterpart".

Woman was not created to be man's subordinate part – but to be his counterpart, a coequal.

Since they were coequal, the relationship between man and woman was to be reciprocal in nature. They were to be "aid and companion" to each other.

In the Fall, woman became subordinate to man (Genesis 3:16). Her desire and longing was to be toward her husband and he would rule over her.

In redemption, Christ restored the woman as coequal to man. There is neither male nor female in Christ (Galatians 3:28). Both man and woman are now coheirs (Greek = "participants together") of the grace of life (1 Peter 3:7).

However in the unredeemed Fallen world, we do see predominantly that man dominates.

God used women in different capacities throughout out history.

Exodus 15:20 - Miriam the prophetess.

Exodus 35:22, 25, 26 - Women worked in building the Tabernacle.

Deuteronomy 31:12 - God wanted women to be taught the Law.

Judges 4 - Deborah a judge in Israel and Jael, a home-maker who killed Israel's enemy.

Nehemiah 3:12 - Women helped rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

Esther - a woman who brought deliverance to God's people.

Mark 15:41, Luke 8:1-3 - Women Ministered To Jesus.

Acts 16:14 - Lydia, The Business Woman At Philippi. Lydia was a business woman, a trader in purple cloth. God used her to house the church at Philippi (Acts 16:40) .

Acts 18:1-4 - Aquila & Priscilla - The Business Couple and Paul's Ministry Partners. At least in 3 other places Paul refers to Aquila and Priscilla: (Romans 16:3 1 Corinthians 16:19 2 Timothy 4:19)

Romans 16:1-7 - We read of a woman named Phoebe, who was in charge of some business of the church. We also read of Junia a woman apostle and others who partnered with Paul.

Philippians 4:3 - "those women which labored with me in the gospel,"

1B. A WOMAN'S PRIMARY CALLING

The Bible is very clear that a woman's first and primary calling is to be a wife to her husband, a mother to her children and a keeper of the house and family.

1 Timothy 5:14 " the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house,"

"guide the house" Greek "oikodespoteo" = to be the head of (that is, rule) a family, guide the house.

Titus 2:1-5

"the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands,"

"keepers at home" Greek "oikouros". From "oikos" a dwelling, a family, a house, and "ouros" a guard.

Therefore "oikouros" = a stayer at home, that is, domestically inclined (a "good housekeeper"), keeper at home.



1C. THE CASE FOR WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE

1. The Bible does not categorically state that women cannot be in the workplace. If the Bible does not oppose something, then it is permitted within the boundaries set by other related Scripture.
2. The gifts of grace (Romans 12:6-8) are given without regard to gender. Hence, there will be women who will have gifts of leadership, administration, teaching, prophesying, and great financial ability. One of the obvious places where this gift may have to operate will be the workplace.

The Proverbs 31 woman is shown to be involved in activity outside her home, some of which is clearly indicative of her involvement in business. Proverbs 31:16,19,24
3. In cases where the man has abdicated his responsibility to the family - woman is to lead, guide, manage the house 1 Timothy 5:14.
4. In cases where it may be necessary due to financial considerations.

SECTION 2. HOW CAN WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE BALANCE FAMILY, WORK AND THEIR OWN SPIRITUALITY ?

2A. UNDERSTAND THAT GOD VALUES YOU AS A PERSON

God values you as a person - independent of your gender.

Galatians 3:28 "There is.... neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."
There is no gender bias in God's Kingdom.

Women and men are co-equal when it comes to receiving the blessings, anointings, gifting and callings of God.

1 Corinthians 11:3 "...the head of the woman is the man;.."

In God's authority structure there is a difference in the position, privileges and responsibilities between men and women.

2B. EMBRACE YOUR FIRST LOVE

Your primary focus is to build an intimate relationship with God.
Luke 10:38-41

. Be a Mary before you be a Martha.

2C. EMBRACE AND FULFILL YOUR PRIMARY CALLING AS WIFE, MOTHER AND HOME MAKER

[Note: Obviously, if you are not married, this does not apply to you as yet.
Or if you are well advanced in years, this is something you may have already fulfilled.]

. If you fail in this calling, success in workplace will not mean very much.

2D. EMBRACE YOUR CALLING IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

Every woman has a God-appointed ministry in the Body of Christ. Discover and fulfill your function in the Body of Christ.

2E. EMBRACE YOUR CALL TO THE WORKPLACE

Women who are called to the workplace, can make a significant contribution to the Kingdom of God by embracing and fulfilling their calling to the workplace.

Practical Instructions

- . Understand where your heart is
- . Know your gifts and callings
- . Know your limits
- . Don't feel guilty (those who work) and don't feel inferior (those who do not work). Just remember each one has to fulfill God's individual call.



SECTION 3. HOW DO YOU HANDLE STRESS, COMPETITION, MALE CHAUVINISM, GENDER BIASES, SEXUAL ADVANCES, ETC. IN THE WORKPLACE?

Stress

- . Learn to rely on the Lord. Isaiah 26:3
- . Learn to meditate in God's Word

Competition

- . Healthy competition is fine and good. Colossians 3:22-24.
- . There is nothing wrong in competing in a honest, ethical manner in the workplace. Integrity prevails.

Sexual Advances

- . God is your defender Psalm 3:3 Psalm 27:1
- . Do not compromise – no matter what.
- . Be faithful to your man if you are married.
- . Dress with modesty - don't wear suggestive clothing. Conduct yourself with decency. Titus 2:4-5

Male Chauvinism & Gender Biases

- . Promotion comes from the Lord Psalm 75:6-7

Choice of occupation

- . Remember you don't have to run away from an occupation just because there is sin around. Whether you like it or not, sin exists in almost all industries and corporations!! We are to be in the world, not run away from it (John 17:14-18) . If your occupation (e.g. Events management, Entertainment, Fashion design, etc.) forces you to compromise on your faith or conduct - then you may remove yourself from that position and move to another position within that industry.

SECTION 4. THE PITFALLS OF DUAL-INCOME FAMILIES AND HOW TO AVOID THEM ?

PITFALLS

1. Independence & Self-reliance instead of mutual-dependence
2. Competition between the spouses
3. Becoming married to the workplace
4. More money but less time
5. Overworked women

ACTION STEPS

1. Understand true value – if you gain the whole world and lose your home, family and children, you have missed true value.
2. Make a conscious effort to balance time – Although the challenges and pressures are great, make a sustained effort to distribute your time and energy appropriately.
3. Husbands must learn to fulfill their role at home, especially when their wife is also employed.
4. Develop the power of two Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Testimony:

In our own lives, although Amy is trained as a medical doctor and was pursuing her masters degree, she made a deliberate choice to place her professional career on hold until our children grew up. It has not been easy – some times very painful. However, the end of this season is in sight as both kids will soon be in full-day school. At this point, Amy can make a change and step back into the work place, being fully assured that she did her part and sacrificed for her children, when they needed her the most.