

GAMMA 2017

STUDY 12

1 Corinthians 11a

Women and Head Covering

Ancient Mediterranean societies existed with an honour shame value system. Within any social group at the time the group's honor before contemporary society depended upon the honor of their patriarch who represented the group. This was the oldest living male like our grand fathers or great grand fathers. But his honor in turn was also dependant upon the honor of the individual group members. Thus in a similar manner a man can be shamed by the dishonoring of the woman as he is responsible for her honor. It was common practice for women to wear head coverings. The coverings gave a sense of respect for the woman otherwise they could be perceived merely as sexual objects or indecent. Not wearing a covering was equivalent to a prostitute wearing their hair down as was common of prostitutes. Thus if they did not wear their head coverings they would bring shame upon their men folk and consequently their whole community. Others looking in on the fledgling Christian community would immediately notice this and thus the witness of the whole Christian community would be held in shame as far as the society was concerned.

- 1. Why do you think that some women abandoned their head coverings? Why would there be a problem in the church if they not wear head coverings when they went to worship?**

- 2. What reasons did Paul give that the women had to wear the head coverings?**

3. Paul in this chapter allowed women to pray in public and prophesy but in 1 Tim 2:12 he insisted that they learn in submission and not teach or have authority over men. Is he contradicting himself here? What can women do in church ministry today?

Can women be elders of the church? give reasons for your answers

4. What point is Paul making in verse 11-12 and is this second argument from the nature of creation directly opposite of Paul's earlier basis for justifying head coverings? Why did Paul say this?
5. Look at the culture of your society and church today and can you comment whether head coverings should be worn today?

Case Histories

Case 1

Emily was a very devoted Christian and was asked to serve in the Social Ministry department of the 3rd Baptist church. The ministry consisted of a group of men and women going to street feeding and also running a boys and girls home where they teach

the children. Emily was asked to lead the ministry where she would organize the events and even teach the children. She was reluctant to take up the leadership role as she believed it would be male leadership required but all the men in the ministry were young Christians and were not happy to take it up.

- a. Should Emily take up the post of being in charge of this ministry? Why or why not?
- b. Emily was then asked to share with the worship meeting on Sunday about the ministry and challenge the worshippers to give to the ministry. Can she do this?
- c. Emily was asked to lead in prayer for the public prayer meeting in two weeks time. Can she do this?
- d. Emily was also asked by the Elders to preach from a particular passage for a short devotion to the congregation on Sunday. Can she do this?
- e. Emily was asked to go to Bible school and train and come back to the church as one of its pastors what do you think should she do this and under what circumstances should she do this?
- f. Emily trained in Bible college and was now qualified with a Masters in Theology and was asked to teach in one of the classes in the bible school...Can she do this?
- g. Emily was asked to teach the Gamma class of FBC Subang as an invited speaker for three sessions. Can she do this?

Case 2

George attends the 5th Baptist Church in Subang Jaya and is regular worshipper there and had been asked to do the corporate prayer on occasion. George loves to cross dress wearing a dress, a bra and makeup with some ear rings. He says it makes him look good. George loves the Lord and is a faithful Christian. Gina has always grown up with a large family with lots of brothers. She cuts her hair very short and wears jeans and a shirt all the time. She never wears dresses nor uses make up or jewelry.

- a. Should George be allowed to lead in corporate prayer dressed like that? Why or why not?
- b. Should Gina be allowed to lead in corporate worship dressed like that? Is there any double standards here?

