

# Bible Classes

2 Timothy 2:11-15

Introduction: Through the years there has been much confusion over the authority to hold Bible classes. Many people have pointed out that the Bible does not contain a passage directly authorizing the practice of studying the Bible in the fashion which has become our custom. Others are scared that this custom has resulted in a practice unauthorized by Christ. So let us examine what the Bible does say concerning the practice of holding Bible Studies.

I. There is a duty in the church for teachers to teach.

- A. Along with the evangelist, there is the role of a teacher (Eph. 4:11-16).
  - 1. They are to equip Christians for the work of service to God.
  - 2. They are to unite them in a common knowledge, faith and purpose.
  - 3. They are to help everyone reach spiritual maturity (edify).
- B. However, not everyone is expected to be teachers (James 3:1).
- C. If there is a designated teacher, then there must be students (Gal. 6:6).
- D. This necessarily implies that the teacher and the students must meet in a common location. We call the common locations classes.

II. How classes are conducted is up to each congregation.

- A. Privately (Acts 18:24-28).
- B. Publicly or in people's homes (Acts 20:20).
- C. Therefore, we can hold Bible classes in a public location like this building or we can hold classes in separate locations like the rooms in this building. However it is done, one thing is clear, churches must provide their teachers a place to teach!

III. Some people still have objections to holding Bible classes in a church building.

- A. "Children should be taught at home" (Eph. 6:4). The reasoning behind this objection is the fact that fathers are given the responsibility to bring up their children in the Lord.
  - 1. However, this passage does not exclude others from teaching their children.
  - 2. Mothers can teach their children (Prov. 1:8). Timothy was taught by his mother and grandmother (2 Tim. 1:5). Notice what they taught Timothy (2 Tim. 3:15).
  - 3. The apostle John taught young people (1 John 2:14). These young people were spiritually strong and able to defeat Satan. How did they get that way?

4. We must conclude that any responsible father will take advantage of a variety of teachers to instruct his children in God's word.

B. "Women can not teach in the church."

1. It is true that women can not speak in the church (1 Cor. 14:34-37).

a. Two reasons are given. (1) It is forbidden and against the Lord's commands. (2) It is shameful.

b. This does not mean she cannot participate in worship. She is also commanded to sing (Eph. 5:19) and she is required to confess Christ before baptism (Rom. 10:9).

c. Her prohibition applies when the church is gathered for worship. She is not prohibited from speaking when the church is not gathered for worship (Acts 12:12-15). Notice Rhoda announced Peter's release to those who gathered for prayer. Sapphira also answered Peter's question when some of the church was gathered (Acts 5:8). Neither of these two cases involved the church gathering for worship.

d. Today, the only time we are all gathered in one place is during our worship to God. We are not gathered together as the church during Bible study.

2. It is also true that woman cannot hold authority over a man (1 Cor. 11:3; 1 Tim. 2:11-15).

a. Three reasons were given. (1) Man is the head of woman. (2) Eve was formed after Adam. (3) Eve was deceived to sin, not Adam.

b. However, a woman can assist a man in teaching (Acts 18:26). Priscilla did.

c. Therefore, we can conclude that a woman can participate in a Bible class so long as she does not dominate, direct or teach the class. When a man is present, he is in charge.

3. However, women are restricted in the worship service. These passages also prohibit women from preaching, leading a prayer, leading a song or reading a scripture to the church. In other words, a woman is not permitted to address the congregation during worship services.

4. Some people argue that the elders of a church may permit a woman in such roles since she would be under their authority. However, an elder cannot authorize what the scriptures forbid.

C. "Bible class is part of worship." They reason that all assemblies of the church (Heb. 10:25) are worship.

1. However, we can come together for other reasons than just worship (Acts 15:4). Here the church in Jerusalem assembled to hear a report from Paul and Barnabas.

2. When we assemble to worship, the whole church must come together (1 Cor. 11:18, 20, 33).

3. If we know we can gather to hold Bible classes in each other's homes around the city, why couldn't we meet in separate classes in the same facility?

Conclusion: The local church fulfills its duty and obligation to teach in a variety of ways. We hold Bible classes when we assemble, and we hold Bible classes at homes for those who request it. We provide sermons on Sunday. We even support weekly Bible classes. Yet, our duty to teach is only fulfilled if we have students to teach. Bible classes are a custom that helps fulfill our obligation to teach the members in the church.