



## ON LOCATION 11: LEARNING TOGETHER

...male and female he created them. (Genesis 1:27, NIV)

**I**F YOU CAN'T HANDLE GETTING "BEAT BY A GIRL," I have a word of warning for you. Don't show up to a Links Players staff meeting. Likely, Tracy Hanson will post the lowest score in our bunch. In fact, for several of us, this isn't a chance; it's a certainty.

I grew up in a similar arrangement. I played mostly with boys my age, right through high school. But in our midst was a girl who would go on to become a four-time Division I All-American and the US Women's Amateur runner-up. She's still a dear friend, and she still knows how to outdo me on the golf course. In fact, if I ever need a short game lesson, she's the one I'd call.

Which leads us to our question of the day: How closely should men and women be learning together in the faith? It's not as easy a question as it looks. We're all uncomfortably aware of Paul's passages about women maintaining silence in the meetings of the church. But the questions are many here: Was this a directive for the church in all ages? Does it apply to house meetings in the same way it would during formal service? Are there greater principles in play?

The last question seems the easiest to answer, for we know that salvation is applied equally to men and to women. We know that Jesus interacted freely with women about the important matter of faith, as did the apostles after him. And we know that the body of Christ is as dependent on those who are "lesser" as it is on those who are "greater," so even if a culture leans toward male dominance, the church is to prize everyone's contribution.

So let us recognize that our job is to learn—learn of God, learn of his church, and learn of his people. We should fear nothing and no one in his creation. For the sake of doctrine of order or tradition, your local congregation may limit certain contributions and forms of teaching to men only. Let it be so. But a husband can certainly gain from the perspective of his wife, boys from the wisdom of their mother, and each of us from the Spirit-led words of women if we are men and men if we are women.

To not learn from a woman, I would have to never talk to one! My job is to listen for the truths of God. Anytime, anywhere, these may come from the voice of anyone, man or woman.

**Opening questions** Are you comfortable playing golf in mixed groups, or do you prefer the game when you play with those of your same sex? What has shaped your preference in this matter?

**READING** Genesis 2:20-24; Romans 16:1-2; 1 Corinthians 12:21-26

### Men and women (Genesis 2)

Whether or not you are married, what does this passage reveal about the importance of men and women to one another? If you are a man, who have been some of the most important women in your life? If you are a woman, who have been some of the most important men in your life?

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### Phoebe's contribution (Romans 16)

What was Phoebe's role in the church? How did Paul honor her with his words here? What women in your faith circles deserve special honor for the work they have done?

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### Honor and care (1 Corinthians 12)

How does this passage remind us that our appreciation and respect should be equally given to all in the church?

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