



A Woman's Place in Ministry

Interview with Thomas Trask

The Assemblies of God has long recognized the valuable role women play in ministry. It has released women to pursue their calling and use their God-given gifts in whatever area of ministry they desire.

In this interview, General Superintendent Trask discusses the issue of women in ministry. He offers encouraging words to women who are seeking to fulfill God's call on their lives and counsel to men who can assist women in reaching their Kingdom potential.

Q You have encouraged women to become involved in leadership and develop their spiritual gifts. Why have you done this?

TRASK: My own ministry has been impacted over the years as a result of women in ministry. Gladys Pearson, Hattie Hammond, and many other outstanding women ministers of the gospel have impacted not only my life, but this church as well. Lillian Trasher in Egypt and other women missionaries, both at home and abroad, have given of themselves unselfishly and sacrificially to further the gospel and to bless this church. The role of women in ministry is biblical, timely, and it's of God.

Some people ask, "Should

women take the place of men?" Not necessarily, but women should have a place alongside men. Many times God has used a woman where a man wasn't available, and consequently the Kingdom has been enriched. There are many people in heaven today as a result of women who have answered the call of God on their lives.



There are many roles that only a woman can adequately fulfill, and there is a needed place of ministry for lay women within the church as well. You see this example in the Old and New Testaments.

In my devotions this week, I was reading the Book of Ruth. It's a marvelous account of how God used a woman. Throughout Scripture you find many places

where God used women to fulfill His plan. Many women have a sensitivity and an intuition that men don't have. They have a dedication and a commitment that men may not have. The Assemblies of God would not be as effective today if it were not for the many lay women and credentialed women in ministry within this church.

Q What ministry and leadership opportunities are available for women in the Assemblies of God?

TRASK: There are many areas of ministry open to women. This doesn't mean they won't face challenges because of culture, society, tradition, and history. But I look at this in the same light that I look at the racial issue. As a nation, we have come a long way, but we still have a long way to go. Barriers have broken down. As to women in ministry and the strides being made today, we'll look back someday and say, "We've made great progress in this area."

We have many women pastors in this church who know how to handle the Word of God with expertise and are being mightily used of the Lord. If I were a person in a congregation,

I would not have a problem sitting under the ministry of a qualified woman pastor.

There are also opportunities for women in leadership in our churches as associate pastors, missionaries, evangelists, and chaplains. Our Fellowship is coming into a new day of appreciation for women in ministry. We are going to see more opportunities for women than there have ever been. As people prepare themselves, Scripture indicates that their gifts make room for them. There's a great future in the Fellowship, and I'm grateful for the stance and the posture the Assemblies of God has taken as it pertains to women in the ministry.



How can pastors encourage women to grow in their leader-

ship gifts and develop their God-given skills?

TRASK: Pastors need to be open to the work and leading of the Spirit as it relates to women in ministry. If pastors are closed-minded and prejudiced in this matter, they will have a difficult time accepting a woman's place in ministry. But if pastors will open their hearts, God will lead and guide them. Then it becomes necessary for pastors to give women opportunities for ministry.

When I was pastoring, it was my responsibility to provide opportunities for women in ministry. Some may say, "Brother Trask, there's risk in that." There's risk in giving men opportunity as well. In some places, when a woman was given opportunity for ministry, there were problems because an unwise woman did not submit herself to

authority and did her own thing. Consequently, all women get lumped together; this isn't fair. But the same thing holds true with men. There have been men who have been unwise, but at times it seems there is more tolerance with men than with women. In both situations, we need to provide opportunity with training, patience, wisdom, correction, and encouragement. We sometimes think only about correction, but encouragement helps people grow and mature. In Colossians 1:28,29, Paul wrote about the need to help people in their growing and maturing process.

The role of the pastor is to help men and women discover their gifts, to provide opportunities for those gifts to blossom, and for people to be used of the Lord.

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