

AFRICA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY
EXAMINATION OF 1 CORINTHIANS 14:33b–35 IN RELATION TO WOMEN’S
MINISTRY IN CHURCH

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ABSTRACT

This study examined I Cor 14:33b–35 in its context, to determine its meaning and how it relates to our contemporary context as far as women’s involvement in church ministry is concerned. It has come up with the following findings and conclusions. The first one is that the instructions were given in the context of the disorderly conduct of the Corinthian believers during worship and the prevailing socio-cultural realities. Secondly, they were not forbidding every kind of speech by women in the church but only that kind of speech which was considered to be disruptive to orderly worship and disrespectful to their husbands and the church leaders, hence undermining the biblical expectation of women being in submission. It also refers to speech which was considered as shameful within the norms of the Greco-Roman culture. Therefore, it is the position of this thesis that the instructions in 1 Cor 14:33b– 35 should not be taken across the board to forbid every kind of speaking by women in church or to bar them from active involvement in church ministry. Doing so is to disregard the principles of biblical interpretation by overlooking the literary and socio-cultural context of the passage. It will also imply disregarding the various socio- cultural contexts of contemporary churches. So this thesis concludes that in view of what Paul says earlier in this epistle and other relevant NT passages, women are equally gifted by the Holy Spirit and they have a right to exercise these gifts in church even in the presence of men as long as they do so in an orderly manner and they remain submissive and respectful to their husbands and church leaders. Order and communal edification during worship are what should be upheld by believers everywhere because our God is a God of order and not confusion. Hence, we should seek to manifest that character in our worship.