

## "PRAYING OR PROPHECYING"

"Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head. But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven" (1 Cor 11:4-5).

In other writings comments have been made regarding what is meant by the "covered" or "uncovered" in these two verses. Our consideration here is what is meant by "praying or prophesying."

Prophesying is explained in Cor 14:3 as that which has the effect of "edification, and exhortation, and comfort." Such prophesying or teaching is not restricted to those inspired, for the ability to so speak is equally gained by the words or writings of those who were inspired. "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Timothy 2:2). Thus, the prophesying mentioned here is simply the teaching of God's truths, even as we do today as we are influenced by the written Word.

It is understood that only men may speak at an assembly of the church, while women are to be in silence (1 Cor 14:34-35). The praying or prophesying, therefore, does not have reference only to church assemblies, for in the assembly the woman is not allowed to speak anyway.

But there are numerous places in the New Testament Scriptures where women did in private exercise their freedom to teach: Priscilla in Acts 18:26, Phillip's virgin daughters in Acts 21:9, Timothy's grandmother and mother in 2 Timothy 1:5, and the aged women were instructed to teach the young women in Titus 2:4.

These verses are not intended to imply that only in praying or prophesying is the covering important, but rather that in these two capacities the brother or sister assumes a role especially designated to God's service.

The understanding, therefore, is that wherever a brother or sister may happen to be, occasions will arise where prayer and the teaching of God's word will be possible. Should the brother have long hair when such opportunities are presented, it would distract from the effect of his prayer and teaching. It would even be contrary to nature and would thus hinder acceptance by those he was attempting to teach. Should a sister have such an occasion, her shorn hair would loudly proclaim that she was not in subjection.