



WOMEN IN THE EARLY CHURCH

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The average woman spent the majority of her time providing for her family's needs



- Household work
- Food preparation
- Work in the fields
- Took the surplus to the public marketplace to sell or exchange for food, clothing and other necessities



Ways Women Participated in the Early Church

- They helped prepare the Lord's Supper
- They offered prayers
- They led hymns
- They read and interpreted Scripture
- They performed acts of charity

Mary of Jerusalem - Acts 12:12-16



There is speculation that the upper room where Jesus had the Last Supper belonged to Mary of Jerusalem, the mother of John Mark. Peter went to her home when he was miraculously released from prison, where he knew concerned believers would be gathered.

Lydia - Acts 16:13-15, 40



Lydia was a member of a guild of professionals who produced and sold expensive purple dye in Philippi. She met Paul and Silas by the river and invited him to her house. She and her whole household were baptized. Her house became the first Christian church on Greek soil.



Damaris – Acts 17:17

When Paul went Athens, he was invited to address the leading council. Some ridiculed him, but Damaris became a believer. She may have been a courtesan attached to a rich man in the city.



Phoebe - Romans 16:1-2

Paul spent 18 months in Corinth where he met Phoebe. When Paul wrote a letter to the Romans, Phoebe, who traveled for business purposes, offered to take the letter on her next trip to Rome. Paul describes her as a deacon and a benefactor.



Priscilla – Acts 18:2



Paul supported himself in Corinth by making tents, collaborating with Priscilla and Aquila who were also tent makers. This couple became so valuable to Paul that when he left to start a church in Ephesus, he took them with him.

Junia - Romans 16:6

Paul says Andronicus and Junia were prominent among the Apostles, and they were "in Christ" before Paul was.

Andrew is Andronicus in Latin.

Joanna is Junia in Latin.





Early Church

Men and women worked side-by-side in ministry until the third century. We have their record in the New Testament. Thanks be to God!

Resources

- “5 Ways Women Participated in the New Testament” - Biblical Archaeology Society Library
- “Forgotten Women of the New Testament” - Franciscan Media
- “Women Workers in the New Testament” - Theology of Work Project