



## The Role of Christian Women as Peace Makers in the Home: A Biblical Study of Abigail

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### ABSTRACT

*Women are different from men. The much publicised gender equality notwithstanding women should be proud of their different roles in their homes. Since women are regarded as traditional home keeper, prayer warrior, teaching children, spiritually gifted and financial supporter to the family. This paper therefore, focuses on the important parts being played by Christian women in the home. It proceeds to discussing the significant role of a particular women in the Bible, who saved her family from destruction and that is Abigail in the Old Testament. The supreme dignity of human being is expressed in the concept that men/women are "created in the image of God". This is immediately related to both male and female (Gen. 1:27). They are both the image of God. Apparently speaking, both man and woman are created by God. It was a woman that was taken from the side of Adam to be suitable mate, as Adam was made first. God created the woman as the Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone, I will make a helper suitable for him" (Gen 2: 18). This is more than being an assistant. However, being a "helper" does not imply that the women was inferior or subservient to the man, the same Hebrew word `ezer translated as "helper" means is a co-worker and is used to describe God, Himself in Psalms 33:20, 70:5, 115:9-11. This image of Abigail is further supported by many Christian women in our contemporary time. When a house hold occupies the preeminent place in society, women have a strong role in decision making and consequently exercise considerable power in the household. This is especially true for complex household such as Abigail the extended or multiple - family units that made up a significant number of domestic compounds in Israelites villages. No doubt this was true of Nabal's household. Because of his wealth, his home was most likely quite complex, probably more likely a compound.*

**Keywords:** *Christian Women, Peace Maker, Abigail and Feminism*

### INTRODUCTION

From the beginning of human existence man never existed or stayed alone without a woman. The two Creation accounts of Hebrew creation story for example Genesis 1:1-31 and 24- 25 represents Gods design for men and women, husbands and wives, after the creation of men God think that it is wise to create a women to serve as a comforter and as an assistance. The woman is accorded an important partnership and as such could make or unmake family or an institution. Such roles have continued till the present day. To have an insight into the previous roles woman were made to play in both old and new Testament time and finally in contemporary times. The Old Testament conception of woman's place in home and society in general is very dose to the African scene. She must be a woman who readily submits to her husband in obedience and her sole desire must be to please her husband and God. Therefore in order to generously please her family she must be a women characterized by humility and gentleness.



Furthermore the old Testament scriptures also make us to understand that the woman's life revolved round that of her husband because her main priority is to please her husband and children at all times and in all situations, it is clearly evident that the Old Testament revise conception of the role and place of women did not change during the New Testament periods, our Lord entrusted women to be the original witnessed to his works and resurrection, the cornerstone of the Christian Faith. Mary of Magdala was the first person to meet him after his resurrection (Mark 16: 9-10; John 20-14-18); and the first later announced it to the disciplines. As a result of this in this contemporary time the Christian women has been left with the primary task of looking after the home. The Christian women today are becoming more conscious of their changing roles. They are now demanding a change in their status on the spiritual front in the home and society. This brings about important roles being played by Christian women in the peace making in a security and home.

### **Women as Traditional Home Keeper and an Instrument of Peace**

A women is a warm, loving, home makers. She is a person to let own right and has a sense of personal secondly at self-respect. She makes marriage enjoyable instead or a battle galore. She cares not just looking after the children but cares for the whole family and up spiritually. The atmosphere in the home is fashioned by her. A peace loving women will always admire, adapt, appreciate, forgive or forget some terrible memories. The Christian women is also an excellent manager of interpersonal relations. In this of crisis when others lose their heads and explode she keeps herself under control and confident she employs soothing appeals to quite the anger.

### **Prayer Warrior**

Covenant women prayer directly to God without the priestly mediation of their husbands For example when Jacob defaulted in his responsible to pray for their children and wife (Gen 30: 1-2), in contrast to his godly forefathers who prayed for their children and wives (C.F 24.7, 12-15; 25:21) Rachel petitioned God directly and he listened to her and open her womb. (30:22-24) and this brings peace to the home. Barren Hannah also sought dignity and which through child bearing. She too went directly to God in prayer, independently from her husband, Elkanah and the high priest, Eli, both of whom were insensitive to her need. But she prayed and God answered her and this brings peace into her family and she called him "Asked of God" and dedicated Samuel to the Lord with the prayer that he would introduce kingship into Israel. (1 Samuel 2:10<sup>B</sup>). Rebekah felt the twins struggle in her womb, she asked the lord, why is this happening to me? The Lord revealed to her that there are two children in her womb and one will be stronger than the other and this brought peace into the mind of Rebekah. So also, in the contemporary time many Christian women had gone on their knees in prayer to God and there have been testimony from people of what God has done in their life.



## Teaching Children

Christian women speaks with wisdom and faithful instruction is on her tongue (Proverbs, 31-26). Israel's, sages were also cultural revolutionaries with regard to the role of women teaching in the home. The father's commend to the son? Do not forsake your mother's teaching (Proverb 1:8). This seems unexceptional to the modern time. The mother who trains up the child in the way of God gains reward both here and in eternity (c.f. Proverb 22:6). The mother helps the children to have a positive thinking or feeling about life, to make contributions to their self-confidences, self-control, self-realization and nature judgment. She transmits the societal values to her children and to make the children submit or resent the normal social restrictions.

## Spiritually Gifted

God did not limit the call to the prophetic ministry to men both in the Old and New Testament era. Women were called by God to be "Prophetesses". Although the prophetesses were very much fewer in number in comparison with the prophets, Gog nonetheless, had a place for them in this very important office. They served well as spokespersons of God. These prophetesses were majorly oral prophetesses or non-writing prophetess, unlike many of their male colleagues. Sampson (2001) listed seven prophetesses referred to in the Bible they are:

*Miriam the elder sister of Moses, first mentioned in connection with her victory song after the crossing of the Red sea. (Exodus 15:20) Deborah, who was also a judge in Israel (Judges 4:4). Huldah, who prophesied in the reign of the king Josiah (2. King 22:14:2 Chronicles 34:22).*

Noadiah who may likely have been a false prophetess since, she was associated with Sanballat and Tobiah in opposition to the rebuilding of the wall of Jerusalem under the leadership of Nehemiah. (Nehemiah: 6:4) Isaiah's Wife was called the prophetess by her husband (Isaiah 8:3). Anna, the aged Christian lady, present at Jesus Christ's dedication was also called in prophetess (Luke 2:36). Lastly Evangelist Philips four daughters were said to have prophesied (Act 21:9), So also, in our contemporary time we find women who are highly spiritual, gifted such as Rev. Mrs. Oset, Rev. Mrs. Adarno, Evangelist Bola Are, Prophetess Dr G.I Aimila, Prophetess Oyewole and so on.

## Financial Supporter to the Family

Christian women have been contributing immensely to the economic development of their home through their education Piwuna believes that education has greatly lifted the status of women in the society. As he wrote an educated woman almost and always had more value and status in the eye of both her husband and the society. She is lifted to have more awareness, more opportunities, more choice or more confidence. It was in the light of these that 1975 was declared an international women's year by the United Nation (p. 74). The educated women improve the capacity of life for her children by allocating more resources (energy time and money) for them. The educated women support in the purchase of educational goods and sources for her children such as books, uniform and extra lesson. The educated women also to provide a healthy diet, seek proper medical help for the family and



tries to manage when the need arises. Finally Christian women have been left with the task to care of their house and the children.

### **Abigail as a Peace Maker in Her Home**

Abigail is described in the biblical text as “beautiful and intelligent” (125:3) Sandra A William (2003) thus said this of Abigail; “She is portrayed as a bold women, a woman who had self-confidence and who has the respect of the house hold help a woman who has self-confidence and who has the respect of the household help she knows how to take charge of a situation. This image of Abigail is further supported by many Christian women in our contemporary time. When a house hold occupies the preeminent place in society, women have a strong role in decision making and consequently exercise considerable power in the household. This is especially true for complex household such as Abigail the extended or multiple - family units that made up a significant number of domestic compounds in Israelites villages. No doubt this was true of Nabal’s household. Because of his wealth, his home was most likely quite complex, probably more likely a compound. The fact that Abigail had five women attending to her, and the long list of provisions she look, along with the mention of other Servants shows it was indeed a complex household. The image of women in domestic households in ancient Israel accorded position of power and prestige. In the self-sufficient Israelites household, the women’s participation and expertise in crucial matters of domestic function gave her the ability and right to control key aspects of family life Israelites women performed manifold tasks every day, and these task involved decisions about economic resources: Furthermore, the technical skills of these women made them “wise women and thus technical instructors of those less skilled” Sandra A. William (14) Abigail is not only beautiful and intelligent, but she is also wise in understanding (1 Sam. 25:33) David blesses her prudence, a virtuous women.

### **Abigail’s Effort to Bring Peace in to Her Home**

After the initial description of Abigail’s physical and mental status, we hear of her again in (1 Sam 25:14-17) where the servant is informing her of the possible danger the household is in. she immediately reacts as she does with everything else (verse 18) se quickly put two hundred loaves, two bottles of wine and five sheep ready dressed and five measures of parched corn, a hundred clusters of raising and two hundred cake of figs. She rode off behind this provision to meet David. While David was still angry he said to her in (verse 32-35) blessed be the ford God of Israel which sent thee this day to meet me. And blessed be thy advice and blessed be thou, which has kept me this day from coming to shed blood and from avenging myself with mine own hand. For in very deed, as the lord God of Israel liveth, which hath kept me back from hurting thee except thou hadst hasted and come to meet me, surely there had not been left unto Nabal by the morning light any that pisseth against the wall. So David received of her hand that which she had brought him, and said into her, go up in peace to thine house, see I have hearkened to thy voice and have accepted the person. The action taking by Abigail has presented her family from bloodshed and total destruction of her home.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

It is highly recommended that the church should make use of the following recommendations; a major need in the primitive church was caring for the needy, the sick, the widows, the orphans and the visitors. The apostles were made forcefully aware of such a need soon after Pentecost by the murmuring of the Hellenists over the apparent neglect of their widows (Acts 6:1). To remedy the problem "seven men of good repute" were appointed at that time (Acts 6:3). Soon women, especially widows, became active in the charitable services of the church, communicating Christian love by deeds of mercy and hospitality (1 Tim 5:9-10). The book of Acts reports the story of a woman; Tabitha (Dorcas), who "was full of good works and acts of charity" (Acts 9:36). Her works of charity consisted in making clothes for the poor (v. 39). The fact that "All the widows stood beside . . . weeping" (v. 39) after her death, suggests that she herself was probably one of the widows in the local church. There is no indication in the story that at this point the widows were organized as a group or order within the church. By the time Paul wrote in first Timothy widows were recognized as a special group within the church, since the apostle writes: "Let a widow be enrolled if she is not less than sixty years of age. . . . But refuse to enroll younger widows" (1 Tim 5:9, 11). Some have argued that the enrolling represented an official appointment to certain offices in the church. However, as James B. Hurley points out, "A close look at the text indicates that the roll is a welfare roll rather than an employment roll." The ministry performed by these widows apparently consisted of prayer and supplication for the church (1 Tim 5:5), as well as "doing good in every way" (v. 10). There is no indication that their service was perceived as an official order of ministry in the church. As Charles C. Ryrie puts it: Women as well as men also participated in the prophetic ministry of the apostolic church. Two specific New Testament passages refer to women functioning as prophets. Acts 21:9 speaks of the four daughters of Philip, "who prophesied." In 1 Corinthians 11 Paul recognizes the presence of women who prophesied in the worship services: "Any woman who prays or prophesies with her head unveiled dishonors her head" (1 Cor. 11:5). The prophetic ministry of women in the apostolic church confirms the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy quoted by Peter on the day of Pentecost: "And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy; . . . yea, and on my menservants and my maidservants in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy" (Acts 2:17-18). It is possible that Peter quoted this prophecy to explain to the surprised crowd of onlookers why the gift of prophecy had been bestowed upon women also. The prophetic ministry of women in the New Testament stands parallel to that of prophetesses in the Old Testament.



## CONCLUSION

Man and woman he created them "God made men and women equal but different for a reason ..... to love each other to help and complete and depend on each other in the home and in the world. Women express their genius through mercy, patience, endurance and forgiveness a hunger to embrace and protect a realism that comes from the labour of bearing "new life". The genius of every Christian woman is to love; to protect and nourish the lives entrusted to her; and to support the full development of life in others. The decision of Abigail to support her family had saved her family. She gave aid and comfort and support. "She took provisions" refusing her home to be destroyed by David's army. This was a situation that brought her respect and honour to her home. Finally, Christian women must be seen in her physical, mental and social and psychological value which makes her an integral part of the home and society. They must be seen as a source of peace making in the home.

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