

THE IMPORTANCE OF BALANCE

Acts 13:1-3

INTRO ILLN The weather

VISUAL of Jet stream

usual summer – in balance

2012 summer – out of balance

Result - constant rain

Other extreme – drought

THE IMPORTANCE OF BALANCE IN THE CHURCH

Acts 13:1-3 – leaders - various nationalities & social backgrounds

Barnabas – businessman from Cyprus, Simeon – Black, from Africa, Lucius – Cyrene (Libya north Africa), Manaen – aristocrat from Galilee, Saul – from Tarsus (Turkey), Pharisee, trained as a Rabbi in Jerusalem

Is this a good balance? How is it different to our church today?

All men. Where were the women?

There were women in the church

They usually worked behind the scenes – preparing and serving food, looking after children – not educated

WHY NO WOMEN LEADERS?

Women not excluded from leadership

Miriam – prophetess Ex 15:20

Deborah – judge Jud 4:1-10

Huldah – prophetess 2 Ki 22:14 - same time as Isaiah – Hezekiah + scrolls

Unusual because most women married and had a family

Jesus attitude to women was radical in his society

Mary allowed to sit at his feet and listen to his teaching

Mary Magdalene the first to see him after resurrection – Go tell the men!

Early Church

Pentecost – Holy Spirit given to both men and women

No difference between male and female (Gal 3:26-29)

Phillip's 4 daughters – preachers (Ac 21:9)

Pricilla – teacher (Ac 18:26)

Phoebe – deacon – leader (Ro 16:1)

THE 20TH CENTURY

CHANGES IN SOCIETY

Property – 150 yrs ago husband owned wives property. 1882 Act

Vote – 1928 – all women over 21

Education – co-ed – all subjects

Job opportunities – change in attitudes

Wages - Equal pay act 1970

Roles – wife / mother – now bread-winner, house husband

CHANGES IN THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

1972 – Effie Irvine – first woman minister

2004 – Alison Elliot – elder – first woman Moderator

2007 – Sheilagh Kesting – minister

More men than women in leadership

But more women than men in the pews

WHICH VALUES CHARACTERIZE THE CHURCH? - discuss

LEFT

- Power
- Achievement
- Results
- Technology
- Goals
- Skills
- Success
- Competition

RIGHT

- Love
- Communication
- Relationships
- Nurturing
- Feelings
- Harmony
- Community
- Cooperation

From “Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus”

Danger of church becoming out of balance – dominated by women

Cf. primary school teachers

Other religions – there are more men

Need to think about how we can cater for the men as well as women in church

BALANCE NEEDED IN THE CHURCH –MEN AND WOMEN

Women and men have different gifts to offer – all needed, all important

We are stronger when we work together

So let us value both men and women and find a place for all people to use their particular gifts in the church for the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ