

Tell Her Story: How Women Led, Taught, and Ministered in the Early Church

Nijay K. Gupta

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In his Christian studies text *Tell Her Story*, Nijay K. Gupta retells the stories of the Bible's women leaders.

Covering women leaders in the time before the early church and women leaders of the early church, and with a section that addresses common arguments against allowing women to assume ministerial roles, this text includes a diverse group of stories. Their heroines include Deborah, a judge in the Book of Judges, and Paul's confidante, Phoebe. Here, their tales become a means of challenging common notions within Christian communities, such as that the woman by the well was a sexual sinner; Gupta calls such ideas unfounded.

To make its arguments, the book draws on biblical and other ancient sources to offer alternative interpretations. Great detail is paid to the original Greek and Hebrew words, especially in now-contentious passages like 1 Timothy 2:11-15, which prohibits women from speaking in church. The book traces the historical development of how words like *authenteno* have been translated to argue that such passages ought to be understood as responses to specific issues, not universal mandates. It closes with arguing that, though early Christians made much social progress, modern Christians ought to still strive for further improvements and equality, especially regarding marriage. Still, despite its abundance of citations, the book's ethos is undermined by its overuse of phrases like "perhaps" and "I presume." And despite the helpfulness of its initial historical contextualization, the book repeats its naming of the challenges and opportunities that early women leaders faced so often throughout that it draws focus from the women being examined.

Tell Her Story reintroduces the women leaders of the Bible in historical context.

VIVIAN TURNBULL (March / April 2023)

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