

DISCIPLES OF JESUS

In the ancient world, many pagan cults in Greece and Rome were for men only, or at best allowed women to participate in very limited ways. Judaism likewise offered women proselytes a limited place at best because of rabbinic restrictions on women's participation in religious functions. Jesus, however, broke with these traditions that restricted women's roles in religious practices in that he rejected attempts to devalue the worth of a woman or her word of witness. The community of the disciples of Jesus gave women together with men the right to participate fully in the family of faith. Among those early disciples we find Mary, the mother of Jesus (see John 19.25-27; Acts 1.14), Mary and Martha, sisters of Lazarus (see Luke 10.38-42; John, chapter 11), Mary of Magdala, Joanna, Susanna, Mary, the mother of James, Salome, and many others (see Luke 8.1-3; compare Matthew 27.56, 61; 28.1). These women of faith ministered to Jesus (Mark 15.40-41) and witnessed his resurrection to the men (Luke 24.10). Faithful to their calling, these disciples stand as prototypes for Christian women of all generations. The Women of the Chapel stand in this tradition of faith as followers of our Lord. As they minister to the community of the disciples of Jesus at Barksdale, they give witness to the resurrection hope, the hope of new life, in their own hearts and in the hearts of others. May God continue to raise up godly disciples like these.