

Along the Way 16 August 2019 It's Not Pie

“Equal rights for others does not mean less rights for you. It's not pie.”

I saw this meme on Facebook recently and it reminded me of a dinner conversation fifty years ago. Because we had nine family members, my mother always baked two pies so that everyone would get at least one piece. But that created another dilemma—leftover pieces. Three pieces if the pies were cut into six slices and seven smaller pieces if the pie were cut into eight slices. I remember bursting into tears during dessert because the extra slices always went to my Dad and brothers. I suppose the reasoning was that they were built bigger and needed more energy. Because I started crying, which I rarely did, my brother offered his extra piece. I left the table and their confused faces, shouting, “I don't want the pie, it's the principle!”

For me it was just one more time where I felt the inequality of being female. In my family and community, it meant fewer choices, double standards, strict gender roles and in this case, less dessert. Unfortunately for my family, this deeply embedded cultural idea was grounded in the scripture. For example, in Ephesians 5:22, “wives are to submit to their husbands.” Somehow this scripture translated to “all women must submit to all men.” Later as a seminary student, I noticed that the verse before the one I had heard quoted many times, verse 21 reads, “Submit one to another out of reverence to Christ.” In today's language we may not appreciate the word “submit” but it can easily be translated as *respect* or *deference* or even yielding to the other.

To follow Christian principles is to promote respect and equal rights for all people, regardless of skin color, abilities, sexual orientation, and gender. To follow Christian principles is to live out of God's abundance, not scarcity. And out of God's abundance, it means there's always enough pie.

Rev. Dr. Paula Northwood