

Were any of the disciples married?

We know for certain that Peter was married because he had a mother-in-law (Matthew 8:14). The apostle Paul, who was not married, asked the Corinthians whether he also did not have the right to take a believing wife (1 Corinthians 9:5), as did “the other apostles and the Lord’s brothers and Cephas [Peter].” From this, we can assume that Peter was not the only one to have a wife.

From the fact that some of the disciples were married, we can conclude that it is right for ministers to marry and that the Roman Catholic doctrine of the celibacy of the clergy is contrary to apostolic example. Peter is claimed by the Roman Catholics to be the head of the church, and the Pope, according to their view, is the successor of this apostle. Yet they maintain that it is wrong for priests to marry. If that is true, why did not Christ at once reject Peter from being an apostle for having a wife? How remarkable that he should be set up as the head of the church and an example and a model to all who were to succeed him. But a celibate clergy is tradition and human law and is contrary to the New Testament (1Timothy 3:2-5). That Peter having a wife was no objection to his being an apostle is clear, and marriage has been expressly declared to be “honorable in all” with no exception made for the clergy (Hebrews 13:4).

Finally, we can conclude that it is equally acceptable for missionaries to marry and to take their wives with them to the mission field. The apostles were missionaries and spent their lives in pagan nations as missionaries do now. We should also note that there are still people like Paul who can do more good without being married. There are circumstances like his where it is not advisable to marry, and there can be no doubt that Paul regarded the unmarried state for a missionary as preferable and advisable.