

Women Preachers

The debate rages over the place of women in the church especially in leadership positions. The answers lie in identifying what God says about it.

The debate needs to leave the arena of feminist and be removed from the backdrop of patriarchal society. The minute we allow either societal philosophy to cloud our perspective we become wrong.

Few topics of biblical teaching have stirred the emotions and the minds of believers as has the topic of the “role of women” in the church.

Still others say a woman may lead singing, read scripture, testify, teach “sub-groups” of men and women, etc. The only restrictions are: She cannot serve as an elder and must not “direct the congregation's plenary sessions of prayer and teaching the word”

(Wineskins, May, 1993, p. 7.)

There are two important truths that we need to consider first in answering the question of whether or not it is right for women to be preachers.

- That men and women have equal worth in the sight of the Lord
- That men and women have been assigned different roles in the Lord's church – and both are critically important to the welfare of the church.

There is no doubt that women are intellectual equal with men. Whenever someone considers submission to be disparaging insult to someone and their abilities, or an indictment of their inferiority, it shows that he doesn't understand the place of either leadership or submission in the Lord's church. Women serve in valuable ways in the life of the church as teachers, helpers, etc.

There is not doubt that women are spiritual equal with men. God makes no distinction.

Galatians 3:28

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”

It is not a question of worth. Although we are to hold tenaciously to the view that women and men are equally valuable in the Lord's eyes, we must also admit that men and women have different roles to fulfill in the church.

God has issued a divine order of authority and position in the church, and it is wrong for either men or women to reverse or reject it!

1 Cor. 11:3

“But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.”

It is not about subservience. It is about recognizing authority. Even though there is a relationship of authority and submission between men and women, there is still interdependence on one another.

1 Cor. 11:11

“Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord.”

God has arranged for men to be leaders in the church – elders, deacons, and preachers. The qualifications for elder demand that these individuals be men.

1 Tim. 3:1-7

“This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. [2] A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; [3] Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; [4] One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; [5] (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) [6] Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. [7] Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.”

The credentials for deacons demands that they be men

1 Tim. 3:8-13

“Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; [9] Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. [10] And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. [11] Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. [12] Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. [13] For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.”

The work done by preacher’s demands that they be men.

1 Tim. 2:12

“But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.”

Even the responsibilities of worship leaders demand that they be performed by men.

1 Tim. 2:8

“I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.”

No one is denying women their right to positions of leadership in the church – according to the Scriptures that is not a right they can claim.

1 Tim. 2:11-14

“Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. [12] But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. [13] For Adam was first formed, then Eve. [14] And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.”

God indicated two reasons why He does not permit a woman to teach or have authority over a man.

- 1) Because her role in the church reflects the original act of creation in which man was first created, and woman was created to be a helper comparable to him: [**For Adam was formed first, then Eve**] 1 Timothy 2:14

Genesis 2:18

“And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.”

- 2) Because her role in the church reflects the fact that it was the woman who was first deceived by Satan and fell into sin: [**And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.**] 1 Timothy 2:14

Genesis 3:1-6, 16

“Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? [2] And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: [3] But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. [4] And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: [5] For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. [6] And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. [16] Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.”

The woman’s role in the church is closely connected to her unique role of submission in the home.

Ephes. 5:22-24

“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. [23] For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. [24] Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.”

Submission is not a position of dishonor or disgrace. Actually, anyone who is looking for a position of honor in the Lord’s Kingdom doesn’t understand the nature of the Kingdom.

Matthew 20:20-28

“Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him. [21] And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom. [22] But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able. [23] And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for

whom it is prepared of my Father. [24] And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren. [25] But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. [26] But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; [27] And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: [28] Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

Some of the greatest characters in the Bible were women: Mary, Dorcas, Lydia, Phoebe, Euodia, Synteché, Eunice, Lois, Priscilla, etc. But one of the things that made these women great was that they recognized the place that **God** had for them and the honor that **He** bestowed upon them in their submission.

1 Peter 5:5-6

“Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. [6] Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:”

The beauty of these women was in *“the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible ornament of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God”* [1 Peter 3:3, 4]

There is nothing demeaning about submission. Actually in one way or another, we are all in submission to each other.

Ephes. 5:21

“Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.”

It is not a question of men being uncomfortable and threatened by women competing with them for positions of leadership in the church. It is a question of being uncomfortable and threatened by people who don't care what God said about the subject – people who are more interested in adopting the thinking of our times than the timeless wisdom and instructions of God.

1 Peter 2:25

“For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.”

It is not a slap in the face of women to forbid them from pulpits and positions of leadership in the church – it is a slap in the face of God to demand that He allows it!!