

Establishing the Doctrine of Women in Ministry/Leadership Roles

I. Establishing Doctrine

A. This series will be an attempt to answer some of the questions coming out of the recent controversy regarding popular teacher Beth Moore. The main question being, is it biblical to allow women to teach or hold pastoral leadership roles in the church? We would be remiss if we did not acknowledge that on every side of this controversy are men and women who love Jesus and desire to honor Him and His word. We must uphold the honor and value that is to be given to all brothers and sisters in Christ whether we agree with them or not on an issue.

1. At the onset we must be clear that this subject is not to be viewed as a women's rights issue or a cultural battle we are trying to win. This is a knowledge of God issue, a bible issue, and an issue of church destiny in God. This is why we are making this a priority of understanding and why we exhort believers everywhere to know the truth on this issue.
2. As with most controversial subjects this one generally revolves around a strong stance regarding how a few verses in the bible should be interpreted and applied. In this case it is two verses in particular in the NT upon which this controversy hinges. (1 Cor. 14:34-35; 1 Tim. 2:11-12)
3. If these were the only verses in the scriptures that spoke into the topic of women in ministry then there would be no controversy. The controversy arises not because of these verses but because of the other scriptures that seem to say something opposite of these verses. (Lk. 10:39; Acts 1-2, 18:24-26, 21:8; Rom. 16:1-16; 1 Cor. 11:1-16; 2 Jhn.)

B. **Scripture must be interpreted by scripture** – We can easily end up in error if we single out a particular passage of the bible and have it stand alone in our mind. This then becomes the only passage we look to concerning a particular subject. Our error worsens when we then establish a doctrine concerning that subject by only using that verse. (1 Jhn 2:27; Eph. 4:11-13; Col 3:16; Mat. 6:14-15 vs by grace through faith alone)

1. When faced with these types of verses that at face value seem to contradict others it is critical that we come to the conclusion that we are misunderstanding or misinterpreting the one to two verses that do not harmonize with the rest.

Scripture must be interpreted by scripture; we must never interpret any Scripture in such a manner as to contradict other Scriptures. We must "rightly divide the word of truth" and we must see there is a conformity of doctrine to doctrine. – Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

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II. Brief Biblical Survey Regarding Women's Roles/Ministry in the Old Testament

A. Ideal Kingdom Reality – At the onset of this discussion concerning the roles of men and women it is essential that we start with the creation story and look at the undefiled role of women before sin entered the world and how this changed as a result of the fall. (Gen. 2:15-25, 1:26-28)

1. Multiply and Subdue the Earth – It is clear that this assignment was given to both Adam and Eve it was not given to Adam and then Eve was to support Adam in this task. Rather it was given to both and they were to support one another in it. A major part of the restorative work of Jesus in redemption is to position mankind (Adam and Eve) to rule and reign over the earth together again as they once did. (Rev. 5:10; 20:4-6)
2. Not Good – We must consider the severity of this truth as a pre fall reality. Even in the fullness of communion with God and absence of Sin and Death Gods desire for Humanities experience and destiny was lacking to the point that God called it “not good”.
3. Helper – In order to bring the “not good” to the “very good” God designed a helper comparable to Adam. In the original Hebrew “helper comparable” does not at all mean “supporting role”. This word is used 19 other times in scripture and only used to speak of a scenario when you are overcome by your enemies and facing sure defeat, and then someone comes and defeats your enemies on your behalf. It is primarily used to describe Gods activity when He fights for His people. (Ex. 18:2-4; Deut. 33:26-29; Ps. 115:9-11, 124:1-8)

When I first read of Eve being a helper, it made me think of Hamburger Helper. It means something far more powerful than just "helper"; it means "lifesaver." The phrase is used elsewhere of God, and only used when you need him to come through for you desperately. Eve is a life giver; she is Adam's ally. It is to both of them that the charter for adventure is given. It will take both of them to sustain life. And they will both need to fight together. – John Eldredge

4. Very Good – The creation of the woman in the and the joining of the man and woman together in the mandate to “be fruitful and multiply, and to have dominion over the earth and subdue it” moves from “not good” when there was no woman alongside Adam to “very good” or “exceedingly good”.

B. When considering the question of women in leadership or ministry roles there is no question that Man and Woman were both given the faculties and capacities to

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relate to, and know God equally. They were given the same authority and mission by God to subdue the earth because they designed and destined to do it together.

- C. The Fall and Corresponding Curses – Hopefully is obvious that when we examine implications and results of the fall we are looking at what should not be rather than what should be. As born-again believers we must not fall into the trap managing fallen realities or mindsets simply because we are so accustomed to them.

“Then He said to the woman, ” I will sharpen the pain of your pregnancy, and in pain you will give birth. And you will desire to control your husband, but he will rule over you.” (Gen. 3:16)

- D. OT Heroines of the Faith – There are many other women who God highlighted to us as examples believers who walked in great faith and whole hearted love. All believers are charged to learn from them and to be encouraged by their lives. (Heb. 11)

1. Sarah – Brought forth the promised son through great faith. Abraham would be nothing without her. (Heb. 11:11)
2. Jochebed – Bravely saved Moses from certain death from the most powerful king in her time. (Ex. 2:1-3)
3. Zipporah – Saved Moses from death through her obedience when Moses was rebelling against God. (Ex. 4:24-26)
4. Rahab – Hid Joshua’s spies and through faith saved her family (Josh 2:1-24, 6:17-25, Heb. 11:31, James 2:25)
5. Deborah – Was God’s chosen leader over all of Israel not because of a lack of good men but because God called her to be the judge of His people. She restored the people to the Lord and commanded their army. She brought peace to the Land for 40 years under her leadership. (Judges 4-5)
6. Ruth – A Moabite woman who the Lord highlighted to all his people as the pinnacle demonstration of faithfulness in a time of national faithlessness. God rewarded her faithfulness by granting her a privileged position in the lineage David and ultimately Jesus. (Ruth)
7. Hannah – Faithful intercessor who contended for her son Samuel and raised him in righteousness. She prophesied the first utterance of the King (Jesus) who would rule the earth forever. (1 Sam. 1:1-2:11)

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8. Esther – God's chosen individual to save all His people from destruction through her wisdom, obedience, and bravery. She is the first biblical example of willingness to die for the salvation of her nation. (Esther)

III. God in the Flesh

- A. We should not have to look further than the permissions, encouragements, and commandments that Jesus gave to women to do ministry right along side of men. Most of these examples are simply missed because we are very unfamiliar with the context of the culture He was part of. This was daily family prayer in Jesus' day and is still part of the daily blessings for tens of thousands of Jews today.

"Blessed are you, Oh Lord, King of the Universe, for not having made me a Gentile, for not having made me a Slave and for not having made me a Woman." Then the Woman replies "Blessed are you, Oh Lord, King of the Universe, for making me according to your will."

- B. A clear reading of the way Jesus responded to, and encouraged women during His ministry, along with an understanding of the cultural context in which He did it, should eliminate any false ideas about God preferring men over women or reserving ministry assignments to only men.
 1. The first person He told plainly He was the Messiah was a woman – (Jhn 4:25-26)
 2. He allowed women to sit under His teaching – (Lk 2:46; 8:35; 10:38-42; Acts 22:3)
 3. Women were listed as some of primary providers of His and His disciples financial and physical needs – (Lk 8:1-3)
 4. He highlighted many woman as examples for others to follow of having great faith – (Mat. 5:34; 9:20-23; 15:28)
 5. He highlighted a woman as the pinnacle of wholehearted love – (Mat. 26:6-13)
 6. He highlighted a woman as the pinnacle example someone who truly understood forgiveness – (Lk 7:36-50)
 7. He appeared first to women upon His resurrection – (Mat. 28:1-10; Jhn 20:1-18)

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8. He commissioned all His disciples including women to Go into all the world and preach. (Lk. 24:33-53; Acts 1:4-16)
9. He poured out His Spirit upon His disciples including women and endowed them with power to do kingdom empowered ministry. (Acts 2:1-21, 32-33)

IV. New Testament Examples

- A. The writings and examples given in the N.T. give the same permissions and encouragement that Jesus gave to women to do the work of ministry. The New Testament recognized woman as ones who received the Holy Spirit equally and were empowered along with men to preach the gospel and do the work of ministry.

Jesus and Paul did not hesitate to minister to people of both sexes, from all stations of life. And they ministered in an empowering way. Lydia, the Samaritan woman, and countless other women were equipped and empowered with faith, knowledge, and personal experience to tell others. Jesus and Paul had no difficulty in teaching theology to women, and they allowed women to minister according to their abilities and their situations with the only restrictions being their level of maturity and humility. – Marg Mowzcko

1. Ministry Gifts - Gifts of the Spirit were given to both genders through the outpouring of the Spirit. Jesus gave us gifts for the work of ministry to empower the preaching of the Gospel. There is no distinction anywhere in the scriptures of certain gifts of the spirit reserved for men vs women. (Acts 1:8, 2:1-21, Eph. 4:7-16; 1 Cor. 12:1-31)
 - a. Women spoke in tongues (Acts 2:1-21)
 - b. Women had the gift of prophesy (1 Cor. 11:5)
 - c. Women had the gift of teaching (Acts 18:24-26)
 - d. Women had the gift of apostleship (Rom. 16:7)
2. Women used their gifts in public ministry in various modes of leadership to further the gospel just as Jesus commanded them.
 - a. Labored in the Gospel – (Paul Labored in the Gospel 1 Cor. 15:10; Gal. 4:11; Women Labored in the Gospel Rom. 16:6, 12; Phil. 4:3)
 - b. Fellow Workers – (Phil. 4:3; Rom 16:3)
 - c. Women were considered part of the Brethren – (2 Tim. 4:21)
3. Equal Persecution – Persecution of the church shows us that women were targeted right alongside men as needing to be imprisoned in order

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to stop Christianity from spreading. This would only be necessary if the women were actually leading effectively. (Acts 8:1-4)

4. Chloe's House – Paul writes the first Corinthian letter based upon reports from members of Chloe's fellowship – (1 Cor. 1:11)
 5. To the Elect Lady – The entire letter of 2 John is addressed to a woman who is some kind of a main leader. The type of leader she was is unclear but the fact that she was a leader is unmistakable.
 6. Phoebe the Deacon – Many translations will tell us that Phoebe is a “deacon” in the church some say “servant”. However what is often missed was her assignment from Paul was to deliver and teach or explain the Roman letter to the church in Rome and help them resolve some of the areas of conflict he was addressing in it. (Rom. 16: 1-2)
- B. It is my strong conviction that ministry gifts of the Spirit, including the 5-fold leadership gifts of (apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher) are clearly for both men and women. The ministry gifting's of women are to be recognized and encouraged in order for the entire church family to grow up into the fullness of maturity and love for Jesus. (Rom. 12:3-8)
- C. At this point in our study many will ask if there is biblical evidence for women holding the office of Elder or Deacon of a church. This is an entire teaching all in itself which we will address soon at Restoration. For now I must point out that the election to the role of Elder and Deacon had NOTHING to do with gifting or ministry assignment. The qualifications for Elders and Deacons are all about mature character rather than gifting or holding various ministry leadership roles in the church family. (1 Tim. 3:1-13)

V. Exegesis of First Controversial Verse

“Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive as the law also says. And if they want to learn something let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church.” (1 Cor. 14:34-35)

- A. Context – The context of this passage is the proper maintaining of peace rather than confusion when allowing for believers to use their spiritual gifts (specifically prophecy and tongues) in a corporate setting. Paul makes it clear that the context of this entire section is that He is laying out proper methodology for corporate prophecy and tongues. It is absolutely out of context and a extremely poor hermeneutic to use this passage to argue a general stance on women speaking or ministering in public gatherings. (1 Cor. 14:26-40)

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Paul is correcting problems as they arise in Corinth. One such problem is caused by some women, who are interrupting the time of prophesying by asking questions. Now Paul has already said in 1 Cor. 11 that women are allowed to pray and prophesy publicly. The largely Gentile congregation in Corinth brought with them into the church their pre-existing assumptions about prophecy. Pagan prophets were consulted in society. People would go to ask questions like— Should I marry this man, or Should I buy this land, and the oracle would give an answer. It was natural for some Corinthians to think that when prophets spoke in their assemblies, they were to ask questions. Paul's response is no, "worship time is not Q+A time, and you are interrupting the prophets. If you have questions ask your man (probably husband) at home. The reason Paul corrects women/wives in this case is not because they are women but because in this instance women are causing this problem. – Ben Witherington

1. Silent – The original Greek word used is “sigao” and it means to produce and maintain a peaceful environment it is always used in a corporate dynamic (Examples Acts. 12:17; 15:12) . If Paul wanted women to personally be silent, He would have used the Greek word “siopao” (Examples Mat. 26:63; Mrk. 10:48; Lk. 1:20)
2. Not permitted – This verse must remain in the context of maintaining peace when others are using their spiritual gifts. Paul made it clear women could speak and prophesy in corporate gatherings. (1 Cor. 11:5)
3. Submissive as the Law says – The original Greek word for submissive “hypotasso” means to rank yourself under or to yield yourself to something or someone (Examples Lk. 2:51, 10:7; Rom. 8:7, 20). There is nowhere in the Torah where women are commanded to be submissive to men in general or submissive in public meetings. However the Torah has much to say about submitting yourself under the word of God and being silent and reverent before His presence. It is my opinion that Paul is talking about regarding the words of prophecy to be inspired by God and to receive those words reverently. (Hab. 2:20; Zep. 1:7, 2:13)
4. Shameful – The original Greek word “aischros” used here means dishonoring or impure. It was impure or dishonoring to be talking or interrupting the corporate time of prophecy that was happening.

B. Paraphrase – Let me offer this paraphrase of this passage in humility and reverence to the holiness of scripture in attempt to help us understand it better.

Tell the women who are talking and disrupting those who are sharing words of prophecy that they should to be eager to hear and listen. Disrupting those who are sharing is inappropriate and distracting, it dishonors God and those who are trying to share. God is speaking to us

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through these prophetic words and we must receive them with all reverence. If these women want to ask questions concerning the prophetic words, or talk more about them, have them wait till the gathering has ended. – Justin Frie Paraphrase (1 Cor. 14:34-35)

VI. Exegesis of Second Controversial Verse (1 Tim. 2:11-15)

Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. Nevertheless, she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control. (1 Tim. 2:11-15)

A. Context – This is a letter written to Timothy who is a main leader in the church of Ephesus. Paul was so concerned about all the false doctrines that were being taught in Ephesus that He commissions Timothy help lead the church into proper truth again. In this particular passage Paul is talking about what Timothy should be looking for to identify Godly and mature leaders in order to help him oversee the church. (1 Tim. 1:18-2:10)

1. It is of great note that the city of Ephesus was home to the temple of the Greek god Artemis also known as Diana. The temple was one of the 7 wonders of the ancient world and the main religion of the entire city. The temple was also home to the largest bank in the world because of the offerings given to it. Only women were allowed to be leaders in the temple, men were strictly forbidden to teach or hold any place of authority. (Acts 19:23-41)
2. A famous ancient document called “Ephesiaca” written by Xenophon of Ephesus around 50 A.D. tells us that Artemis was the mother of all life and she produced women first and then men. It also says that Artemis was the protector of women, and the goddess of fertility in childbearing, and if you didn’t worship her rightly you would not have children or die during childbirth.
3. The status symbol of a woman in the temple of Artemis was fine clothing and a head covering made up of intricate braiding and arrayed with priceless jewels.

Women is that they played vital roles in the Greco-Roman religious festivals, temples, worship services. They were priestesses, they were prophetesses, they were teachers, healers, keepers of the eternal flame, etc. It is then not surprising that high status women would expect to be able, once they converted to Christ, to do the same sorts of things in the church. – Ben Witherington

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B. Exegesis of the passage

1. Let a woman learn – First we must point out how countercultural this statement is. In the Jewish culture of that day women were not allowed to learn the scriptures along with men. Paul desired woman to be taught in order that they might more effective and mature influencers.
2. In silence – The original Greek word translated silence is “hesychia” it means peaceable or quiet hearted posture. It is used just a few verses earlier in (1 Tim 2:2) to speak of living a peaceable life. It does not mean to be noiseless or not talk, if that was the case the Greek word “sige” would have been used (Examples Acts. 21:40; Rev. 8:1)
3. With all submission – See Heading V, Subheading A, Paragraph 3
4. Authority over a man – The original Greek word translated authority is “authenteo” it is used no where else in scripture but in other Greek documents of its time period it is used describe (one who acts on their own authority or to deliberately usurp authority structures). Just a few verse earlier Paul speaks of Kings in authority (1 Tim. 2:2) and uses a totally different word “hyperoche” which means to be superior in elevation of order so we know that Paul is not saying men to be viewed by women as having a higher rank in God.
5. For Adam was formed first then Eve – Paul gives the reason He does not want women to walk out Ephesian Artemis mindset, that women have no need or to value men as a lower gender. He calls to mind the Genesis story and points out that Eve was fashioned out of Adam and that she completes him. They are to see themselves as equals and understand they are to be in unity, for it is not good for man or woman to be alone and to act alone.
6. Adam was not deceived, Eve was deceived – Paul points out what happened when Adam and Eve were not in unity. Eve was deceived by Satan acted as her own authority and ate the forbidden fruit. He also points out that Adam had the greater sin because he ate deliberately and knowingly sinned.
7. Saved in Childbearing – This passage is not saying that there is any kind of merit of righteousness in having children. The biblical idea of being “saved” is a progressive work of Jesus restoring all that was lost at the fall. Paul is saying once again something contrary to the Artemis mindset. Childbearing meant that you needed a man and you stepped out

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of individualism into the God ordained order of mutual dependence. He is also cutting off the cultural lie that if they don't worship Artemis, they will be cursed in childbearing in his desire to set them free from fear.

C. Paraphrase

Help women to learn from the scriptures to end the contention in their hearts. You must not allow women to teach that they are better off without men. You must not allow women to dominate and control men through manipulation in their desire for independence. Exhort them to stop striving against the created order. Remind them that they were fashioned to be in unity with men, for Adam was incomplete without Eve and sin entered the world when Eve made an independent choice apart from Adam. This is not how it should be! Jesus wants to restore these women to the joy and life found in His created destiny the unity of men and women, marriage and family. However, they will only find the fullness of that joy and life if they trust Jesus with their life not giving into fear, growing in love, walking in holiness and combating the cultural mindsets with truth. – Justin Frie Paraphrase (1 Tim. 2:11-15)

VII. In Summery

- A. In my opinion you are hard pressed to form a doctrine according complete cannon of scripture that women should not be allowed to speak or do ministry publically in a church service setting. I believe that any forms of that type of doctrine are very short sighted and focused upon one or two scriptures that are misunderstood by their readers.
- B. I believe scripture is clear that woman operating in ministry roles and leadership capacities alongside of men is God ordained and nessesary if we are to come to the fullness of the dream that He has in His heart for the church. If you hinder women from operating in their gifts and offering it to the body in an authoritative way you are robbing Jesus from the reward of His suffering and fullness of love. In turn you are robbing women and men from the fullness of love and life that we so desperately hunger and long for in the same way our bridegroom longs for us.

But to each one of us (both men and women) grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift..... And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers..... That we may grow up in all things into Him who is the head from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes the growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love. (Eph. 4:7-16)
 Parenthesis Added