



You Asked About...

The Role of Women in Church Leadership

Pastor Mike Chapman

One of the most hotly controversial and hotly debated topics in the church today is the role of women in church leadership. There are a variety of opinions on this topic by people of faith. It is not a matter of heresy or orthodoxy – at least not in my opinion. God and godly people disagree on this question.

In this message, I want us to take a look at several biblical passages and attempt to lead us to move from our world to the biblical world in an attempt to gain understanding of the principles at stake.

IN THE BEGINNING

Both Adam and Eve were created in God's **image** and given **leadership** responsibilities.

Genesis 1:27-28, God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. Then God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. (NLT)

Sin entered the human race with devastating **consequences**.

Genesis 3:16, 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.' (NLT)

THE NEW TESTAMENT

Jesus treated women in a way that was **revolutionary**.

At the beginning of the church, Peter references Joel who wrote...

Acts 2:17-18, 'In the last days,' God says, 'I will pour out my Spirit upon all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your young men will see visions, and your old men will dream dreams. In those days I will pour out my Spirit even on my servants—men and women alike—and they will prophesy.' (NLT)

Paul mentioned many women who were his **colleagues** in the ministry of the Gospel.

From Romans 16: Phoebe, Priscilla, Junia, Mary, Tryphena, Tryphosa, and Persis

From Philippians 4: Euodia and Syntyche

TWO PROBLEM SITUATIONS

2 Peter 1:4-5, Paul's letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do other Scriptures. (NIV)

In Corinth there was a problem with **order** in worship.

1 Corinthians 11:4-5, Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head. And every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head. (NIV)

1 Corinthians 14:33-35, *For God is not a God of disorder but of peace.*

As in all the congregations of the saints, women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says. If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church. (NIV)

In Ephesus there was a problem with **false doctrine**.

1 Timothy 2:9-15, *I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God. A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. But she will be restored through childbearing—if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety. (NIV)*

FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY

Three scriptures that help show us the way...

Galatians 3:28, *In Christ there is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male or female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. (NIV)*

1 Peter 4:10-11, *Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God*

provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen. (NIV)

2 Timothy 2:15, Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. (NIV)

Three guiding principles:

1. In Christ there is neither male nor female -- we are one.
2. Ministry in the church is determined by the spiritual gift given by the Holy Spirit
3. The Holy Spirit bestows his gifts as he wills. If he gives a woman the gift of the ministry of the Word or of leadership, we would do wrong to forbid her from exercising it simply because she is a woman.