

Women as Leaders in Churches

What God has NOT
Joined Together (5)

- We are continuing our 2026 theme.
- We have begun addressing what God has NOT joined together.
- Today, we want to address the most controversial subject so far this year
 - What does the Bible say about women as leaders in churches?

- Churches – a local congregation.
- Leaders – those taking public leadership within a congregation, either leading worship or roles in determining the affairs of a congregation (e.g., elders, deacons, preacher, etc.)

Introduction

- What makes this such a controversial subject is our society's views of what women's equality means. Equal rights for all today is the belief that everyone should be on equal footing in all areas regardless of biological distinctions.
- This is often accompanied by the belief that Bible teachings are oppressive to women and treat them as inferior to men.
- This is NOT what the Bible teaches – **Galatians 3:27-29**
- There is a big difference between discussion of value and the rules and limitations God has put in place.

Introduction

- This discussion has not been helped by:
 - 1) Abuse by men who have viewed women as inferior and treated their wives and daughters as property.
 - 2) Men who refuse to stand up and lead in godly ways
 - 3) Modern feminism which belittles women who seek to fulfill God's design for the home

Introduction

- I cannot in this lesson address all the political and societal implications of the roles of men and women in God's word.
Nor do I have time to present and answer every argument seeking to justify women in leadership roles.
- Our goal is simply to discern what God has said about WHO can be a leader in the church, including our worship.

Some observations as we begin

- This is NOT a question about the worth of women and men. **Galatians 3:28, 1 Peter 3:7**
- Submission is something we must ALL understand:
James 4:7, Hebrews 12:9
Romans 13:1-5 (government);
Ephesians 5:22-24 – Wives and husbands
Subjection does NOT mean of lesser value
- IF we love God we will submit to Him!

Some observations as we begin

- We ought to obey God rather than men –
Acts 5:28-29
- **John 17:17** – God's word has final say.
Cf. 1 Corinthians 4:6
- Obeying God does not depend on whether we like or agree with something. It is not determined by social trends or man's wisdom.

1 Timothy 2:11-15

- Let a woman learn in silence
 - Silence (quietness) – with respect and yielding
- **Cf. Acts 22:2, 2 Thessalonians 3:12**
- **Vs. 12** – I do not permit a woman to teach or have authority over a man – clarifies “silence”
- Why? Reason 1 – Adam was formed first
- Why? Reason 2 – Eve sinned first – **Gen. 3:16**

1 Timothy 2:11-15

- She will be “saved in childbearing”
- This is not about the ability to have children.
- It is a way of saying, she knows her place (role) in the family, including God’s family.
- NOTE: In today’s climate, consider that Paul mentions an action that ONLY a “biological woman” can fulfill.

1 Corinthians 11:1-3

- Paul has begun to address conduct in worship.
- *But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.*
- Paul clarifies God's intended order. In everything we do as we assemble (and possibly beyond) this order must be respected.

1 Corinthians 11:1-3

- **11:4-12** – He proceeds to illustrate this with men and women prophesying (when, where & how is not addressed). His point: ALL must know their place as we worship God and respect His boundaries.
- **NOTE:** This text addresses “the head covering” issue which we do not have time for. BUT consider what is underlying the discussion – respect for and submission to God in all we do.

1 Corinthians 11:1-3

- **11:4-12** – But what about the woman prophesying?
- This is one argument made to justify women in leadership roles in the church.
- Again, the details of when & how this was done is not fully developed.
- I do not have all the answers, but whatever interpretation we give must respect other clearer passages –
1 Timothy 2:11-15 & 1 Corinthians 14:34-35

1 Corinthians 11:1-3

- **11:11-12** – Of note, Paul reminds us that without women we would not be here!
EVERY role is needed to properly function and equally important.

1 Corinthians 14:34-35

- Paul in this chapter is dealing with teaching in the assembly – WHO may speak (leading) and when.
- In some way there were women who wanted to publicly address the assembly.
Paul was clear that the assembly was NO place for that!

1 Corinthians 14:34-35

- The word *silent* here is different and means to hold one's tongue.
- Found 9x in NT – 3x in our chapter (**Luke 9:36, Acts 15:12-13**)
 - **14:28** – no interpreter, keep silent
 - **14:30** – let the first keep silent
- Thus our text is dealing with speaking up in a leading role (teaching in the assembly)

1 Corinthians 14:34-35

- The word *speak* is found about 30x in this chapter.
- It is dealing with public speaking within the assembly.
- In the *churches* – elaborates on when a woman is not to speak (in the manner discussed). Shameful to speak in *church*.

1 Corinthians 14:34-35

- Finally, Paul declares that if she has questions, ask at home (distinguishing from the place Paul is addressing in this chapter).
- Point: Paul has identified a specific type of speaking – leading the congregation (teaching, praying, singing).
- He is not saying women can never utter a sound – cf. singing – **Ephesians 5:19**; Confessing Christ – **Matthew 10:32-33**; Confessing sins – **James 5:16**

- Consider the following passages about leadership:
- **Ephesians 1:22-23** – Christ is head of the body
- **Matthew 10:1-4** – the apostles were all men
- **Acts 6:1-6** – when a crisis arose, men were appointed to deal with it
- **Acts 15:6** – the apostles and elders consider the matter of false teaching

- Consider the following passages about leadership:
- **1 Timothy 3:1-2** – elders (bishops) are to be men
- **1 Timothy 3:8-12** – deacons (office) are to be men
- All NT writers were men (and so were OT writers)
- Preaching throughout **Acts** – men did the preaching in public

- As I conclude, let us notice the importance of women in the church
- **Ephesians 4:16** – She is part of the body
- **Romans 16:1** – She can be a servant (e.g., Phoebe)
- **Titus 2:3-5** – She can teach women (and children)
- **Ephesians 5:19** – She teaches as she sings

- As I conclude, let us notice the importance of women in the church
- **Acts 18:26** – she can assist in teaching others
- **1 Peter 3:1-6** – she can influence her family
- They can teach Bible classes for women & children
- Be reminded – her salvation depends on her fulfilling her role – **1 Timothy 2:15.**

Concluding remarks

- There is much to be said about this subject.
- I have not addressed the objections and arguments advocating women leading in the church, but what we have seen is what God has said, WHY He said it and various examples of what church leadership looks like.

Concluding remarks

- Society balks at this. And so do many religious institutions (many denominations, and some churches of Christ).
- What I have said is NOT politically correct and unpopular.
- But the teachings of man do not change the established teachings of God.

**Whose teachings
are you willing to
follow?**