

Systematic Theology, Chapter 47 part 2: Women and church leadership

The central question: → SHOULD SOME GOVERNING AND TEACHING ROLES IN THE CHURCH BE RESTRICTED TO MEN?

A. Reaffirmation of equality in personhood and importance, because of equality in the image of God

1. Gen. 1:27: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."
2. Reminder that in the New Testament church, the Holy Spirit is poured out in new fullness on both men and women: Acts 2:17-18; 1 Cor. 12:7, 11 (see Acts 18:26); 1 Pet. 4:10; Acts 8:12; Gal. 3:28
3. Note: Women's gifts and ministries have wrongly been stifled in many evangelical families and churches

B. But some governing and teaching roles in the church are restricted to men

1. 1 Timothy 2:11-15

ESV 1 Timothy 2:11 Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. 12 I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. 13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve; 14 and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. 15 Yet she will be saved through childbearing- if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.

- a. Setting: the assembled church
- b. In that setting, women could not teach (=Bible teaching) or have governing authority over the whole church
- c. Yet the NT views positively other kinds of teaching and other speaking by women
 - (1) Explaining the Bible to anyone in more informal settings:
Acts 18:26: [of Apollos:] ESV He began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him and explained to him the way of God more accurately.
 - (2) Bible teaching to other women:
Titus 2:3-5 ESV Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, 4 and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, 5 to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled.
 - (3) Evangelism in any context:
 - (4) Other speech activities in the assembled church:
- d. Conclusion: Bible teaching and governing over the assembled congregation was restricted to men in the early church
- e. How does this apply in practice? See article, "But what should women do in church...?"

f. Diagram

NO REQUIRES MATURE WISDOM YES

1 Tim. 2:11-14

Acts 18:26

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(1A). Objections to this view of 1 Tim. 2:11-15

- a. Objection #1: This is not a permanent prohibition, but was imposed because women were teaching false doctrine at Ephesus. Therefore, the verse is only for that situation.
- b. Objection #2: women were not well-educated and therefore could not teach or govern the church.
- c. Objection #3: this merely prohibits teaching "in a domineering way"
- d. Objection #4: this verb "have authority" (*authenteō*) means "domineer, misuse authority" [or: "murder," "instigate violence,"]
- e. Objection #5: this passage only applies to husbands and wives. "I do not permit a woman to teach or have authority over her husband."
- f. Objection #6: This is a temporary command because Paul uses a present tense verb
- g. Objection #7: It's OK for women to teach the whole church and have authority over men if the elders give her

permission (or: if she is under the authority of the pastor/ elders).

h. Objection #8: These commands are culturally relative, not applicable today. Paul's main point was to try not to give unnecessary offense to the culture. (so Keener, Osborne, others)

i. Objection #9: Paul was moving in a trajectory toward full equality of roles for women

j. Objection #10: Paul made a mistake in 1 Timothy, failed to rid himself of rabbinic background

k. All of these alternative views have come since 1969.

l. Note: can any egalitarian explain vs. 13?

m. verse 14: meaning?

n. verse 15: meaning?

o. CONCLUSION: No persuasive alternative interpretation of 1 Tim. 2 has yet been proposed.

2. 1 Corinthians 14:29-36:

a. SUMMARY: The passage prohibits women from speaking out and passing judgment on prophecies that were given in the Corinthian congregation.

b. Structural overview: 1 Cor. 14:29: "Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said"

PART 1: **Let two or three prophets speak**, and

PART 2: **let the others weigh what is said.**

EXPLANATION OF PART 1: (prophets speaking):

³⁰If a revelation is made to another sitting by, let the first be silent.

³¹For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged; ³²and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets.

For God is not a God of confusion but of peace.

EXPLANATION OF PART 2: (others judging prophecies):

As in all the churches of the saints, ³⁴the women should keep silence in the churches.

For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as even the law says. ³⁵If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home.

For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church. ³⁶What! Did the word of God originate with you, or are you the only ones it has reached?

c. Objection #1: this is a question, not a statement

d. Objection #2: Paul did not write vs. 34-35, and we should not consider them part of Scripture (so Gordon Fee, *1 Corinthians*)

e. Objection #3: this a quotation that Paul refutes in verse 36, indicated by his use of "What!", the Greek particle ' ("or")

3. 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9

1 Tim. 3:1-2 ESV The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. 2 Therefore an overseer¹ must be above reproach, the husband of one wife,² sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,

Titus 1:5-6 ESV This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you- 6 if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife,¹ and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination.

4. The relationship between the family and the church

ESV 1 Timothy 3:5 for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?

ESV 1 Timothy 5:1 Do not rebuke an older man but encourage him as you would a father. Treat younger men like brothers, 2 older women like mothers, younger women like sisters, in all purity.

Why is this whole issue important?

Male leadership in the home and the church ultimately will stand or fall together.

5. The example of the apostles

ESV Matthew 19:28 Jesus said to them, "Truly, I say to you, in the new world,¹ when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

ESV Revelation 21:14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

a. Objection: this was to represent the 12 tribes of Israel

b. Objection: there was a woman apostle, Junia (Rom. 16:7)

ESV Romans 16:7 Greet Andronicus and Junia,¹ my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners. They are well known

to the apostles,² and they were in Christ before me.

→ the most recent evidence: *episeimos* + dative here means "well known to the apostles" (see Dan Wallace & Michael Burer article in NTS 47 (2001): 76-91.)

6. The history of male teaching and leadership through the whole Bible

a. Where is even one example of a woman elder governing a NT church?

b. Where is even one example of a woman doing public Bible teaching to an assembled congregation? (in the whole OT and NT?)

7. The history of the church

8. General Objections

a. Ministry should be determined by gifts, not gender

b. If God has called a woman to be a pastor, who are we to stop her?

c. The NT emphasis is on servant leadership, not on authority

d. Just as the church finally realized that slavery was wrong, so it should recognize that exclusive male leadership in church and home is wrong

e. Deborah (Judges 4) provides an example that there can be exceptions in unusual circumstances

f. If women can prophesy publicly, they should also be able to teach publicly.

g. Just as we now recognize that head coverings (1 Cor. 11) were culturally relative commands, so male leadership and female submission are culturally relative commands: Here, the underlying principle is not giving offense to the culture.

h. The argument from experience: what about women who have been blessed by God in ministry? hasn't there been much genuine fruit from their ministries?

9. What about other offices within the church?

10. Why is this important?

For more information:

1. John Piper and Wayne Grudem, editors, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, edited by John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton: Crossway, 1991).

(27 chaps./ 22 authors – continues to be referred to as defining the "complementarian" position)

2. Wayne Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth: An Analysis of Over 100 Disputed Questions* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 2004) (856 pages – the most extensive treatment)

3. Wayne Grudem, *Countering the Claims of Evangelical Feminism: Over 40 Biblical Responses*. Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 2006. (318 pages – the best overview of the arguments)

4. Wayne Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism: A New Path to Liberalism?* Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006.

[argues that at least 25 egalitarian arguments undermine authority of Scripture and lead the church toward liberalism]

5. For the best statement of the alternative ("egalitarian") position see: *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity Without Hierarchy*, edited by Ronald W. Pierce, Rebecca Merrill Groothuis, Gordon D. Fee (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2005).

To order CD's e-mail Trent Poling ctpoling@msn.com or talk to Trent in the sound booth before or after class. Trent also has electronic copies of these outlines starting in about June, 2005, and the outlines are posted on the web site www.christianessentialsbc.com