

Bible and Gender

Importance of Hermeneutics

Biblical Theology vs Progressive Theology

- Ancient views on Jesus and faith vs currently acceptable views of Jesus and faith
- Beware how you use and interpret scripture

ACR Task Force Summary Position

Following a careful review of the Scriptures, the Task Force came to the following observations:

- Men and women are created in the image of God, fully equal in dignity and worth before God and one another (Genesis 1:26-27, Genesis 2).
- Both men and women are equal recipients of the saving grace found in the Gospel of Jesus Christ through exercising faith in him (Romans 1:16, Galatians 3:28).
- Through the Holy Spirit, men and women are to exercise the full range of their spiritual gifts in the Church (Romans 12:6-8, 1 Corinthians 12:7-11, 1 Peter 4:10-11).
- There are no gifts of the Spirit exclusively exercised by men. This means that men and women are to be partners in ministry, as designed by God in the beginning.
- There is no example in the Bible of women serving in the office of elder or evangelist. According to scriptures the qualifications for eldership indicate that it must be a man (Titus 1:6).
- Some scholars believe that a woman was recognized as a deacon/minister/servant.
- Paul uses the concept of “headship” to illustrate the roles of husbands and wives in the family and men and women in the church (Genesis 2:18-20; 1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 5:21; 1 Timothy 2:11-14). Our concept of headship should be informed by the beautiful relationship between Father and Son as well as Jesus and the church. As such, headship should not be used to lord over another person.

Therefore, among our family of churches in the ACR women should be empowered to fully participate in all ministry responsibilities except the offices of elder, evangelist, or church leader.

Five areas of gender role application

The Roles in Marriage

- Both Genders are in mutual submission under the headship of the husband
- Submit as Jesus to the Father. Headship as Jesus to the Church
 - Genesis 1:26-27 — Paul referenced the creation order “men were created first” (Genesis 2:7, 1 Timothy 2:13)
 - *The Bible teaches two genders active among all life including humanity
 - Genesis 2:18 proclaimed that “it is not good for man to be alone” and described that part of God’s vision included woman as a suitable helper.
 - Ephesians 5:21-33 and Colossians 3:18-19 — Role of Wives & Husbands
 - The concept of headship is described in several passages relating to households and the assembly, where the “husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church.” Headship should not be used to harmfully exercise authority over another but is an imitation of Christ’s headship of the Church, demonstrated by laying down his life in self-sacrifice.
 - Other “headship” scriptures include 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, Colossians 3:18-19, 1 Peter 3:1-7, and Titus 2:3-5.
 - The general principle in Ephesians 5 is mutual submission with specifics given to each gender to help them carry out that teaching (v.21).
 - Paul’s teaching was radical for the day in that he addressed men with specific teachings that corrected existing patriarchal practices.

- Wives should submit to their husbands, and husbands should “submit” to their wives through the lens of self-sacrificing love and respect (1 Peter 3). Decisions within the family should be made by after mutual consultation. Husbands should be willing to alter their decisions based on love and consideration.
- These scriptures have been misused to silence women in the household and sometimes even women in broader contexts. This practice needs to be corrected. Note that this passage is directed to wives and husbands and not men and women in general.
- 1 Peter 3:1-7 — Instructions for wives and husbands.
 - *Practical submission illustrated by Sarah’s example
 - *‘Weaker’ is no indicator of lesser value but possible reference to physical or positional strength

The Roles in Fellowship

- Both Genders are equally gifted by the Holy Spirit and co-heirs of salvation in mutual submission
 - Genesis 1:26-27 — Men and women were created in the image of God and given dominion over His creation.
 - Exodus 15:20 — Miriam acted as a prophet and song leader
 - Judges 4-5 — Deborah served as the Judge (political and spiritual leader); Jael was recognized as a hero.
 - 2 Chronicles 34:22 — Huldah the prophet was mentioned
 - Luke 2:36 — Anna the prophet proclaimed the Messiah to all who would listen.
 - Luke 8:1-3 — Women traveling with Jesus were followers with the apostles.
 - Men and women in the temple and synagogue were previously segregated, with men only serving as priests.
 - Note the transformation in the New Testament where both men and women were disciples (“sat at the feet”) of Jesus (Luke 10:38), shared in salvation (Galatians 3:29), participated in worship together (1 Corinthians 14:26), were considered priests (1 Peter 2:9), and had similar spiritual gifts (Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12).
 - Luke 10:38-42 — Mary “sat at the Lord’s feet” — the language used to describe a Rabbi’s disciples.
 - Luke 24:1-10 — Women were the first eyewitnesses of the resurrection and the first to proclaim the gospel.
 - Acts 2:17-18 — At Pentecost Peter described sons & daughters prophesying and God’s Spirit being poured out on women & men
 - Acts 21:8-9 — Philip’s four unmarried daughters prophesied.
 - Romans 16 — Paul equally commended women along with men.
 - Paul recognized women as co-workers, co-laborers, and house church leaders (Romans 16, 1 Corinthians 16:19, Colossians 4:15).
 - Galatians 3:26-29 — “There is neither Jew nor Gentile... male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”
 - “Oneness” is about solidarity and unity, not necessarily about roles; we become one in Christ regardless of whether we are Jew/Gentile, male/female, slave/free.
 - Gender distinction remains, yet we are now unified in solidarity with all.
 - The passage does not teach that we no longer have any ethnic heritage, gender distinctiveness, or social status in the church (The Bible and Gender, p.77).
 - Ephesians 5:21, Philippians 2:3* — Outside of the marriage relationship, mutual submission is the expectation.
 - *Other specific calls for submission should have biblical warrant i.e. Age (Leviticus 19:32*, 1 Timothy 5:1) and Leadership (Hebrews 13:17*)
 - In dating culture, there is no justification for instructing women to submit to men unless this is instructional, when marriage is in mind.

The Roles in Gatherings

(Leaders meetings, Workshops, Fellowship, Potlucks, Devotionals)

- Both Genders free to teach (as subject experts) and share as needed

Teaching is instruction that conforms to sound doctrine. (1 Timothy 6:2-4, Titus 2:1). Teaching is a very broad category and can contain theological teaching (Romans 1-8), authoritative teaching (Titus 2:15) and practical teaching (Titus 2:2-10).

- Sharing is:** Giving a personal testimony i.e. Samaritan woman (John 4:28-29)
 Responding to a message (Mark 12:32) i.e. Martha (John 11:21-27)
 Sharing of the gospel i.e. Bleeding woman (Mark 5:29-33), Samaritan woman (John 4:39)
- 2 Chronicles 34:22 — King Josiah consulted Prophetess Huldah her for leadership advice.
 - Luke 1:46-55 — Mary's song was an example of a woman proclaiming the message of God.
 - Acts 18:18-26* — Priscilla and Aquila better explained the word of God to Apollos
 - Titus 2:2-10* — Instructions for men and women by age and others
 - *Women are to teach other women in multiple areas of expertise
 - *Women can exercise their gift of teaching and other skills

The Roles in Leadership (Structure)

1. General teaching

- Leadership is need for order to operate in the church (Judges 17:6; 21:25, Titus 1:5)
 - 1 Timothy 3:1-12 — Instructions for elders, deacons, women
 - *Character and life qualifications
 - 1 Timothy 5:1-22 — Instructions for widows and elders

2. Men as church leaders (Elders and Evangelists)

Elders are Church leaders appointed by evangelists to direct the affairs of a congregation primarily focused on shepherding concerns (Acts 14:23, Titus 1:1-5)

- There is no example in the Bible of women serving in the office of elder or evangelist. According to scriptures the qualifications for eldership indicate that it must be a man (Titus 1:6).

Evangelists are Church leaders appointed by other evangelists to direct the affairs of a congregation primarily focused on advancing the Gospel outward (2 Timothy 4:1-5)

Church leaders are men holding ecclesiastical authority

- Matthew 20:25 — Jesus taught servant leadership, expecting all leaders to be submissive and not lording it over or exercising authority over others.
- Note that Jesus did not appoint any women to be one of the 12 Apostles

● Women as suitable leaders (Women's ministry leaders)

- Exodus 15:20 — Miriam was considered a great leader alongside Moses and Aaron (Micah 6:4).
- Judges 4-5 — Deborah served as the Judge (political and spiritual leader) alongside general Barak
- 2 Chronicles 34:22 — Prophetess Huldah was a contemporary of Jeremiah, and the king consulted her for leadership advice.
- Esther — Was the queen and spiritual hero of Israel!
- Paul recognized women as house church leaders (Romans 16, 1 Corinthians 16:19, Colossians 4:15).
 - Scholars dispute whether women bore the specific title of deacon. (Romans 16:1)

The Roles in Worship (Assembly)

(Sunday Service, Midweek, Bible Talk?)

- Both Genders free in most aspects

→ Singing, praying, teaching, sharing personal testimony, sharing the gospel, announcements

- **Leading in prayer** means go first during prayer groups

- **Song leaders/Worship leaders** direct the singing during worship

- **Reading Scripture?**

- Women limited from preaching & executing authority (Rebuking & correcting) to a mixed audience

Preaching is inspirational and authoritative direction given to the church. It includes the full spectrum of speaking available to exhort the church. This includes teaching, correcting, rebuking, commanding (1 Timothy 4:11, 2 Timothy 6:2, Titus 2:15)

- 1 Corinthians 11:3-16 — Women prayed and prophesied in the assembly; women wore head coverings; the concept of headship is explained in some detail.
- 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 — “women should remain silent in the churches”
 - Paul commanded order and propriety in worship services.
 - “Silent” here cannot indicate that women could not vocalize in church since they prayed, prophesied, sang, and shared publicly (14:26).
 - Three groups were told to be “silent” — wait your turn (be silent) when someone else was speaking in tongues or prophesying; women “be silent” meant waiting rather than disrupting the service when someone was speaking.
- 1 Timothy 2:11-12 — “A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man; she must be quiet.”
 - Paul was addressing propriety in worship: expecting women to be submissive and to abstain from being disrespectful or domineering in the assembly. Note that Jesus expected men to lead in a submissive manner, without “lording it over” or “exercising authority over” those they lead (Matthew 20:25).
 - This passage suggests some level of restriction on women in the areas of exercising authority and teaching.
 - To properly examine such a passage, one must look to other passages regarding headship balanced with the history of women serving in leadership positions to determine the application.
 - We know it is not saying that women should never teach or never have authority because of what is stated in other passages.
 - This scripture has been misused to silence the voice of women in the church. This practice needs to be corrected.

CONCLUSION

- Let us continue this discussion on gender
- Let the Bible inform and direct your views on gender