

Women in Church Leadership: Our View

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1. God's original intent and design was for men and women to be equally responsible before God and in the world. Equal does not mean identical or replaceable. (Genesis 1-2)
2. Sin ruptured God's intent as woman was placed below man. This is the root of patriarchy. (Genesis 3)
3. Jesus restored God's intent. We see this clearly in the way he treated women and allowed them to be his followers and disciples.
 - Jesus had women disciples who traveled with him and the 12. (Luke 8:1-3)
 - Jesus allowed women to learn from him as students to a rabbi. (Luke 10:38-42)
 - Jesus commissioned Mary Magdalene as the first person to proclaim his resurrection. (John 20:17-18; Luke 24:9-11)
4. The early church lived out God's original intent.
 - The Holy Spirit was poured out on men and women, old and young, even servants. God was revising the "older men only" rule—he was radically expanding the scope of who could speak for him. (Acts 2:17-18)
 - Priscilla and Aquila taught Apollos sound theology because his was lacking. (Acts 18:24-26)
 - Paul esteemed many women who held leadership roles in the early church—including deacon, "those who worked hard," house church host, and apostle. (Romans 16:1-16)
 - Paul listed spiritual gifts that are given in the Body of Christ, with the two most important being apostle (= church planter today) and prophet (= preacher today). He never mentions that males alone receive certain gifts, or that females don't. (Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12, 14; Ephesians 4:11-13)
 - Paul acknowledged the role of women prophesying in the church but places some limits on it. All scholars recognize that the limits are culturally informed and not to be universally interpreted or applied. (1 Corinthians 11:4-10)
 - Paul highlighted the broad scope of God's blessing on all people, underscoring their essential equality before God and others. (Galatians 3:28)
5. There are four passages where Paul limits the role of women in church leadership. (1 Corinthians 14:33-35; 1 Timothy 2:11-15; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9)
 - We believe these limitations reflect situational and/or cultural realities. They are not eternal principles to be practiced in every culture and every generation.
 - We believe the Gospel principle Paul followed was this: if the message of the Gospel is being muddied by a temporary cultural or situational reality, then the church should use wisdom in applying appropriate limits so the Gospel can shine brightly. In the first century Greco-Roman-Jewish worlds, this meant limiting the speaking roles of women. In the 21st century, we believe just the opposite is the case: the church must expand the speaking and leadership roles of women in order to reach more and more people with the Gospel.