

Women in Ministry

A Biblical and Theological Report for All Nations Worship Center

Prepared for church leadership and members | All Nations Worship Center | Walpole, Massachusetts

“There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” — Galatians 3:28

Executive Summary

All Nations Worship Center affirms women in ministry as a biblical conviction grounded in the full witness of Scripture. This report summarizes the theological basis for that position, addresses commonly cited objections, and clarifies how the church practices this conviction in leadership and ministry.

Report Focus	Summary Finding
Biblical witness	The New Testament and wider Scripture show women praying, prophesying, teaching, leading, serving as deacons, and bearing apostolic witness.
Restrictive texts	The most debated passages are best read in their immediate literary, historical, and linguistic contexts rather than as universal bans.
Church practice	All Nations recognizes Spirit-given calling and biblical qualification without making gender a barrier to ministry.

1. Our Commitment

All Nations Worship Center is committed to the full authority and sufficiency of Scripture. Our position on women in ministry comes from careful, contextual, prayerful study of God’s Word—not from cultural pressure, institutional tradition, or popular opinion.

We affirm that God calls both men and women into ministry. We do not defend this as a progressive cause, but as a biblical conviction. The standard for every minister is fidelity to Scripture; anyone who departs from that authority disqualifies themselves not by gender, but by theology.

2. What the New Testament Teaches

2.1 The Witness of Romans 16

Romans 16 gives one of the clearest pictures of women serving in the early church. Paul commends Phoebe as a *diakonos*—the same word used for male deacons—and as a *prostatis*, a patron, protector, and leader. She likely carried and presented the letter to the Romans.

Paul also greets Priscilla and Aquila as his *synergoi*, “co-workers in Christ Jesus.” He names Priscilla first, a significant marker of prominence, and Acts 18 shows Priscilla and Aquila instructing Apollos together.

Paul identifies Junia as “outstanding among the apostles” (Romans 16:7). The historic evidence overwhelmingly recognizes Junia as a woman, and Paul places her within the apostolic mission of the earliest church.

2.2 The Witness of Galatians and Acts

Galatians 3:28 is not merely about salvation; it declares the new creation order in Christ. In that body, gifts are distributed and callings are extended without gender-based restriction.

At Pentecost, Peter declares that sons and daughters, men and women, will prophesy (Acts 2:17). The Spirit is poured out without distinction, and the gifts are given without restriction.

3. The Wider Witness: Women Who Spoke for God

Romans 16 reflects a pattern found throughout Scripture: Miriam prophesied and led worship; Deborah judged Israel; Huldah authenticated the recovered Book of the Law for King Josiah; Isaiah called his wife “the prophetess”; Anna proclaimed Christ in the temple; and Philip’s four daughters prophesied without qualification or apology.

Most importantly, the risen Christ first entrusted the proclamation of the resurrection to women. Mary Magdalene carried that news to the apostles, earning the early title *apostola apostolorum*—apostle to the apostles.

4. Addressing the Commonly Cited Restrictions

Four passages are commonly cited to restrict women from ministry. We take them seriously by reading them in their language, context, and place within the whole counsel of Scripture.

4.1 1 Timothy 2:11–15 — The Central Text

1 Timothy 2 is often treated as a universal ban, but Paul wrote to Timothy during a specific crisis in Ephesus involving false teaching. The city’s Artemis cult gave women unusual religious authority, and Paul’s letter repeatedly addresses doctrinal confusion. The passage should be read inside that emergency, not in isolation.

The Greek uses singular terms that can mean either “woman/man” or “wife/husband,” depending on context. Many scholars therefore read Paul as correcting a particular relational abuse, not issuing a blanket rule against all women teaching in the church.

The word translated “have authority over,” *authentein*, appears only here in the New Testament and is not Paul’s normal word for legitimate authority. In wider Greek usage it often carries the sense of domineering or seizing power. Read this way, Paul is forbidding abusive authority, not Spirit-given ministry.

Paul’s appeals to creation and deception do not establish female inferiority. Scripture does not treat order of formation as hierarchy, and Paul’s doctrine of the Fall in Romans 5 places responsibility on Adam. The issue in 1 Timothy is deception among untaught believers, not women as a class.

The statement that “she will be saved through childbearing” is one of the most difficult lines in the New Testament. Whatever its precise meaning, no orthodox reading makes salvation depend on biology. A verse this difficult should not bear the weight of a permanent ministry ban.

4.2 1 Corinthians 14:34–35 — “Let the Women Keep Silent”

1 Corinthians 14:34–35 appears, at first glance, to silence women. Yet manuscript evidence and immediate context make the matter less simple.

In some early Western manuscripts, these verses appear after verse 40 rather than in their usual location, and they show unusual textual variation. That instability leads some scholars to treat them as a very early marginal note that entered the text.

Even if original, the verses cannot forbid all women from speaking, because 1 Corinthians 11 already assumes women pray and prophesy aloud in the gathered church. The better reading is that Paul addresses disruptive questioning during worship, not women’s ministry itself.

The appeal to “the law” is also unusual, since no Old Testament law commands women’s silence. Some scholars see Paul quoting and then rebuking a Corinthian slogan in verse 36: “What! Did the word of God originate with you?”

4.3 1 Corinthians 11:2–16 and the Meaning of “Head”

1 Corinthians 11 assumes women pray and prophesy publicly. Paul regulates the manner of their speech in a first-century honor context; he does not forbid the speech itself.

The meaning of *kephalē*, translated “head,” is genuinely debated. It may mean “source” or “origin,” echoing Genesis 2, rather than “authority over.” We hold this discussion with humility, but the passage’s clearest point remains that women spoke for God in the assembly.

4.4 Ephesians 5:21–33 and 1 Timothy 3 — Marriage Is Not Church Office

Ephesians 5 addresses marriage, not church office. Its household instructions begin with mutual submission and call husbands to sacrificial, Christlike love. It does not decide who may teach, lead, or hold ministry responsibility in the gathered church.

Likewise, “a one-woman man” in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 is a fidelity standard, not a gender clause. Paul requires moral integrity in a sexually permissive Roman world, and the same passage appears to address women deacons. Phoebe is also called a deacon by the same Greek title.

4.5 The Priesthood, the Twelve, and the First Witnesses

The Levitical priesthood was not a gender template; it was a hereditary office limited to Aaron’s line within Levi. It excluded most Israelite men as well as women, so it cannot be used selectively as a gender argument.

The twelve apostles symbolically reconstituted the twelve tribes of Israel. Their number and composition served that purpose. Yet Christ first commissioned women to proclaim the resurrection, the central fact of the gospel, to the apostles themselves.

4.6 Tradition Is Not Revelation

Scripture must interpret Scripture. A few contested passages should not override the broad witness of the New Testament. Tradition deserves respect, but it is not revelation. The text, read fully and in context, is our standard.

5. Greek Word Study at a Glance

Term	Transliteration	Reference	Meaning
διάκονος	diakonos	Romans 16:1; 1 Timothy 3:8–13	Deacon or minister; the same word used for Phoebe and for male deacons.
προστάτις	prostatis	Romans 16:2	Patron, protector, leader; a public sponsor and benefactor.
συνεργός	synergos	Romans 16:3	Co-worker; Paul’s high designation for a ministry partner.
αὐθεντεῖν	authenthein	1 Timothy 2:12	To domineer or seize authority improperly; distinct from Paul’s ordinary word for legitimate authority.
κεφαλή	kephalē	1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 5:23	Head; debated as “source/origin” or “authority over.”
μῖς γυναικὸς ἄνδρα	mias gynaikos andra	1 Timothy 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6	Literally “a one-woman man”; a fidelity standard, not a gender qualification.
ἀπόστολος	apostolos	Romans 16:7	Apostle or sent one; applied by Paul to Junia as “outstanding among” the apostles.

6. Theological Integrity

We recognize that some use women in ministry to justify broader theological revisionism. We reject that trajectory without reservation.

Scripture is final authority, and the gospel is non-negotiable. Any minister, male or female, who places ideology, cultural relevance, or institutional approval above God's Word has disqualified themselves—not by gender, but by departure from truth.

Our affirmation of women in ministry is not a concession to culture. It is a biblical correction to the opposite error: using contextual passages to build a wall of exclusion the full counsel of Scripture does not support.

7. Ministry Practice at All Nations

All Nations Worship Center is led by a Senior Pastor and a Co-Pastor. We recognize no ecclesiastical distinction between these roles based on gender. Both are called, both are ordained by God, and both are addressed as Pastor.

We affirm and release men and women into every area of ministry for which the Spirit has equipped them and the Word has affirmed them. The Great Commission is too urgent to sideline anyone God has called.

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion: The biblical evidence supports affirming women in ministry when they are called by God, faithful to Scripture, and qualified for service. All Nations Worship Center therefore recognizes men and women as full participants in the ministry of the gospel.

Recommendations: Continue teaching this position clearly, evaluating all ministers by biblical faithfulness and spiritual qualification rather than gender, and keeping the Great Commission at the center of church practice.

"The Great Commission is too urgent to sideline anyone God has called."

Frequently Asked Questions

Women in Ministry — What We Believe and Why

Q: Does All Nations Worship Center believe women can serve as pastors?

A: Yes. Scripture records women serving as deacons, co-workers, teachers, prophets, and apostles in the early church. Our Co-Pastor is a woman, and we call her Pastor because that is her God-given role and calling.

Q: What about 1 Timothy 2:12, which says women should not teach or have authority over men?

A: We take 1 Timothy 2 seriously and read it in context. Paul addressed a specific Ephesian crisis involving false teaching, not a universal prohibition that cancels the New Testament's wider witness of women serving in ministry.

Q: Doesn't "husband of one wife" in 1 Timothy 3 mean only men can be deacons or elders?

A: No. The phrase means "a one-woman man," a standard of sexual fidelity, not a gender requirement. Paul's concern is moral integrity, and he also commends Phoebe with the same Greek title used for deacons.

Q: Aren't many churches that affirm women in ministry also departing from biblical truth in other areas?

A: Some are, and we share that concern. But departure from Scripture is dangerous whether it accommodates culture or protects tradition. We affirm women in ministry because we believe the Bible supports it.

Q: Why does this matter enough to make a formal statement?

A: Because the Great Commission is too urgent to sideline anyone God has called. Every person the Spirit equips is a gift to the body of Christ. We choose to honor that calling and keep our focus on winning the lost and making disciples of all nations.