

WOMEN AS ELDERS, LEADERS, PASTORS, AND TEACHERS: A SUMMARY OF OUR POSITION

Introduction

As a local body, we are affirming of women in leadership.

Throughout church history, and especially in our generation, there has been much debate about women serving in ministry—particularly in roles such as Pastor or Elder. Faithful, God-fearing men and women have studied the Scriptures with prayerful hearts and brilliant minds, and yet some land on opposite sides of the issue.

This handout provides a concise overview of the Biblical support for our position, and is intended to be processed in conjunction with our Sunday morning teaching on Sept 28.

General Biblical Support

Equality in Creation

- Genesis 2–3: Man and woman were equals until sin disrupted the relationship. Subjection came as a result of the fall, not God's original design.
- Matthew 19:4–6: Jesus affirms the original theology of marriage.

Equality in the Kingdom

- John 17:11, 20–23: Believers are one, just as the Father and Son are one.
- Romans 12:4–5; 1 Corinthians 12:12–14; Ephesians 4:4–6: The Church is one body.
- Galatians 3:28: No distinction of male/female in the kingdom order.

Equality in Spiritual Gifts

- Romans 12:3–8; 1 Corinthians 12:4–11; Ephesians 4:7–13: Gifts are given without distinction of gender.
- 1 Peter 4:10–11: All believers are called to serve according to their gifts, with no mention of distinction between genders.

Old Testament Examples

- Judges 4:4: Deborah, a prophet and judge, led Israel with God's blessing.
- 2 Kings: Huldah interprets Scripture for the king and high priest.
- Psalm 68:11: Women proclaim the Word.
- Proverbs 31: A woman managing and leading her household with honor.
- Joel 2:28: Sons & daughters will prophesy.

New Testament Examples

- Jesus' treatment of women was counter-cultural:
 - Luke 10:39: Mary learning at His feet
 - John 4: His interaction with the Samaritan woman.
 - Mark 16: Women are His first resurrection witnesses.
- Romans 16:7: Junia is named among the Apostles.
- Titus 2:1–5: Paul references both "elder men" and "elder women."
- Additional women with significant influence: Priscilla, Chloe, Lydia, Phoebe

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Commonly Cited “Contrary” Passages

1 Timothy 2:11–15

- Context: Ephesus was home to a cult that encouraged (and was led by) domineering women, with authoritarian and sexualized practices.
- It is very likely that Paul’s instructions were meant to contrast the church with this cult.

1 Timothy 3; Titus 1; 1 Peter 5 (Leadership Qualifications)

- Taken literally, only married men with multiple believing children could serve.
- Since we apply wisdom (and some common sense) here for men, we must also for women.

1 Corinthians 14:34–35

- Context: Paul addresses disorder in worship and tells women to remain “silent.”
- But in the same chapter, he encourages both brothers AND sisters to prophesy and contribute—so the “silence” likely refers to order, not prohibition.

Our Conclusion

There are strong, compelling arguments on both sides.

There are brilliant, Jesus-loving, trustworthy people on both sides of this conversation.

But the central questions remain:

- **Is it a sin for a woman to teach?**
- **Is it a sin for a woman to serve as an elder or pastor?**

We do not believe Scripture demands a “yes” in response to these questions. In fact, we see many reasons to allow, and even celebrate, women in leadership.

Our posture as a church regarding this topic:

- **We will err on the side of freedom.**
- **We will err on the side of grace.**
- **We will affirm and encourage those who are gifted and called—men and women alike—to serve where God places them.**

In doing so, we pray that Jesus will be pleased and bless His Church, both local and global.