

Pastor Sheryl's Notes

Women in Ministry

Question: Are there biblical confirmations for women ministers and Pastors? Can women be over men in ministry?

BACKGROUND

This is one of the most hotly debated topics in Christianity even today. It's important for us to consider this question because obviously many of you are following a female minister even as you're listening to this lesson. Are you in error for following a woman? Am I in error for teaching and preaching?

As usual, I want us to look at scripture. I'm not a believer in going off of my feelings. Do you learn when you're on Learn N Lunch? Do you think I can preach? Your answer is probably yes if you follow me, but we all know that "there's a way that seems right to man that leads to destruction/death" according to scripture.

HOW IS DOCTRINE ESTABLISHED?

Let me first explain how doctrine is established. **Doctrine** is a belief or set of beliefs held and taught by a church, pastor, etc.

Doctrine is established thru revelation, scripture interpretation and consensus-building (meaning a group of people or theologians come to the same consensus or agreement).

Doctrine is also established by using scripture to corroborate your opinion. One of the key things I learned in becoming ordained is that you don't create doctrine from one thing said in scripture. In other words, there should be other references in the Bible to support your point of view.

THOSE AGAINST WOMEN PASTORS

1 Timothy 2:11-12 says, "Women should learn quietly and submissively. I do not let women teach men or have authority over them. Let them listen quietly." [The KJV says "in silence"]

- Many argue that this clearly prohibits women from leading churches.
- The argument is that this is a result of the way mankind was created and the way sin entered the world. (1 Timothy 2:13-14: For Adam was formed first, then Eve, and Adam was not deceived, but the woman and became a transgressor
- For many this scripture restricts women from serving as pastors over men, since pastoring definitely includes preaching, teaching publicly, and exercising spiritual authority.

Remember that I've taught that you must study the translations of the Word as well. Here's an example:

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Let a woman learn in silence: This unfortunate translation has led to some believing that it is forbidden for women to even speak in church meetings. Paul uses the same word translated **silence** in 1Timothy 2:2 and it is translated “*peaceable*” there. The idea is *without contention* instead of total silence.

- **1 Corinthians 11:5:** But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven. **[So we see in another part of scripture where women are specifically mentioned as praying and prophesying. So this demonstrates to me that God didn't intend for women to be silent in the church]**

With all submission: The word for **submissions** here literally means, “To be under in rank”. It has to do with respecting an acknowledged order of authority. ***It does not mean that men are more spiritual than women or that women are inferior to men.*** *[That's another teaching on what Biblical submission looks like. It's been widely misinterpreted and used to manipulate, control and dominate women for centuries]*

Some people who support women in leadership say that Paul only restricted women from being leaders because they were uneducated. (Remember our teaching about how Jewish children were raised? It was the boys who went to learn the scriptures and girls were raised to stay at home, be homemakers, etc. Girls were NOT allowed to go to temple and study)

The counter argument is that women still shouldn't teach because if education was a qualification, then most of Jesus' disciples would not have been qualified. (But again, Jewish men were ALL raised in the temple. The best students went on after Age 13 to study with a rabbi, but by virtue of being a man, the men would have been exposed to scripture as a part of their upbringing).

The second objection is that Paul only restricted the women of *Ephesus* from teaching men.

Ephesus was known for its temple to Arrtemis, and women were the authoritieis in that branch of paganism---therefore, Paul could have only been reacting against the female-led customs of Ephesian idolatry, and was emphasizing the church needed to be different

Another argument that comes up is that God used women in leadership in other parts of the Bible.

Specifically in the Old Testament we see Miriam, Deborah and Huldah being chosen by God for special service to Him and placed in leadership roles by God.

Those against women in leadership say that the O.T. is not relevant to the issue of pastors in the church, and that the N.T. presents a new paradigm for God's people and that paradigm involves an authority structure unique to the church, not for the nation of Israel or any other O.T. entity.

However, what does the New Testament show?

- Acts 18, Paul left Priscilla and Aquila in Ephesus to spread the Gospel to Apollo, meaning Paul depended on a woman to spread the Gospel.

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- Philippians 4, Paul pleaded to two heads of the church there, Euodia and Syntyche, two women.
- Romans 16, Paul referred to Phoebe as a deacon of the church of Cenchreae.

So women were central to spreading the early Gospels.

Many people believe that 1 Timothy 2:11-14 makes it very clear why women cannot teach or have authority over men. Because "Adam was created first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived". [My counter argument to this is that the woman was deceived, but she took the fruit to the man who did not exercise his spiritual authority, and he followed the woman. This was NOT all on Eve. Where was Adam's leadership??]

Proponents against women as teachers and preachers will say that nowhere in the Bible are women restricted from exercising the gifts of the Holy Spirit (**1 Corinthians 12:4-6**: Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in *everyone*)

Pastors in the New Testament

The English word "**pastor**" comes from the Latin word for **shepherd**. In the N.T., there is not a specific office of "pastor". But the Greek word for "shepherd" (poimen) is used to describe one of the roles of a church leader, shepherding the flock. (Eph. 4:11: The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers)

The Greek grammar in this verse suggests that **shepherd and teacher are linked as one role**, rather than two separate roles. **Pastor (shepherd-teacher) only describes one task of an elder.** *When people are drawing connections between modern pastors and scripture, they are usually referring to the office of elder or overseer.*

The office of elder (presbyteros) is mentioned many times in the New Testament, sometimes interchangeably with the term overseer or supervisor (episkopos).

The word elder was used to refer to the Jewish leaders of the synagogues, and the term was probably carried over into the church to refer to its leaders. The word literally means "an older person" but also specifically refers to an office in the church. [Go read the requirements for an Elder in 1 Timothy 3:1-7]

In short, an elder is a spiritually mature leader in the church with strong moral character, and a good reputation, who is able to teach others

Women Elders in the N.T. have already been mentioned but as a recap: Priscilla & Aquila hosted a church in Ephesus. She is listed first when they correct the teaching of Apollos in Ephesus (Acts 18:24-26), which would be the pastoral role (shepherd-teacher) of an elder. Other female church leaders: Phoebe the deacon (Romans 16:1), the mother of John Mark (Acts 12:12); Chloe (1 Corinthians 1:11), Nympha (Colossians 4:15) and Lydia (Acts 16:14, 15)

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Apostles in the New Testament

Apostles were not pastors or elders. The word apostle (apostolos) means "messenger" or "sent one". There were traveling missionaries. Even with this, after Pentecost, the apostles include Junia, who was a female apostle (Romans 16:7)

Cultural Influences on the Church

Cultural attitudes towards women in the first few centuries were largely negative. Women were seen as being of a lesser substance than men. Philosophers like Plato argued that men were superior to women. And Tertullian wrote that women "are the devil's gateway". Later, Augustine, went so far as to say that women on their own do not bear the image of God

So, Can Women Be Pastors?

It's misleading when people say there are no women pastors in the Bible because no pastors are listed by name, male or female. The role that most closely parallels our modern role of pastor is that of elder. And there is evidence that women in the Bible and in the first few centuries of the church served as elders.

PASTOR SHERYL'S CONCLUSION:

The title of this section gives you a hint as to where I land on this subject. I consider myself a Pastor and in line with the calling on my life that has been confirmed through prayer and by multiple men and women of God.

Secondly, when I go back and look at the word "doctrine", my doctrine or beliefs around this subject come from revelation that God has given me over the 60+ years I've walked with Him. I also believe that there is more support in the Word of God "for" women to be pastors than there is "against" this subject.

As always, I would say study the scriptures for yourself; pray and ask the Holy Spirit for revelation and act accordingly.

Go read Romans 14. Romans 14:5-23 says, "One person considers one day more sacred than another; another considers every day alike. Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind. Whoever regards one day as special does so to the Lord. Whoever eats meat does so to the Lord, for they give thanks to God; and whoever abstains does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God.....You, then, why do you judge your brother or sister? Or why do you treat them with contempt?.....Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another.....Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.....So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. But whoever has doubts is condemned if they eat, because their eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin