

Topic	Women in Ministry
Reference	1 Timothy 2:8-15
Date	13 October 2019
Speaker	Dr Peter Ng

Today, we are going to do a very controversial topic called Women in Ministry. If I am not careful, I won't leave the hall. Can I have the poll first? I need to know where this church stands. This is the Mentimeter, can you just click on the code which is 642112. Now it is so small, I can't read it but you can read it in your phones.

Which of the following do you subscribe to in general?

- A. Women should only minister and teach women or children
- B. Women should be allowed to be teaching in small groups that include men
- C. Women should be allowed to preach from the pulpit on Sunday in FBC
- D. Women should be allowed to be pastors or elders in FBC but not holding final authority over men
- E. Women should be allowed to be pastors or elders in FBC having authority over men

Can you just key in your response and see where this church is. Think for yourself, don't follow the crowd. ...we are going to end it in 5 seconds. Let's take a snapshot of that one.

So we find that FBC majority says everything goes. This is a very-very egalitarian church. It is not what I expected at all. Let's start with a word of prayer.

Prayer: Lord we ask this morning that you really guide us to live under the authority of scripture, not what society says, not what our heart says but what your word says and we ask for Jesus's sake. Amen.

So I think we are living in a society that is very egalitarian and I think the poll reflects that. The church is planted by the Southern Baptist Convention in United States and one of the luminaries of that convention is actually Beth Moore who is a very famous speaker. She has got one million Twitter followers and she was actually invited this year at Annual Messenger Conference to be part of the panel, which is a big thing and she was suggesting that on Twitter that she was spending Mother's Day giving a talk at a church. The moment she said that then social media controversy came out. Owen Strachan, professor at the Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary says,

"For a woman to teach and preach to adult men is to defy God's Word and God's design,"

"Women do not preach on Sunday to the church. Doing so is functional egalitarianism. We will not capitulate here "

R. Albert Mohler Jr., who is basically the president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville says,

"There's just something about the order of creation that means that God intends for the preaching voice to be a male voice,"

Then you have got Josh Bruce, pastor of a Southern Baptist church in Georgia. He says,

"Why the SBC Should Say 'No More' to Beth Moore."

Then on the other hand you have got Wade Burleson, former trustee of IMB,

"Beth does Christian ministry, She shouldn't need to defend her ministry to Southern Baptist Caucasian males who've fallen into the doctrinal trap of the eternal subordination of women."

And then Beth herself, I think she is a bit upset. She says,

"I am compelled to my bones by the Holy Spirit - I don't want to be, but I am - to draw attention to the sexism & misogyny that is rampant in segments of the SBC, cloaked by piety & bearing the stench of hypocrisy,"

That is very strong. So you see, for a woman to just suggest in a Baptist Convention to just share on a Sunday has drawn so much controversy, it is a big thing. There is a study from Harvard in Notre Dame, looking at Americans. The question was should women be allowed to be priests or clergy in my house of worship. And you can see among the entire sample, majority do agree, Catholics also and if you look at Southern Baptists. Actually the Southern Baptist, 65% will actually agree that they can actually minister. Here is the one with men and women, also female 73% and men about 58% are in favour of them being able to be pastors or ministers etc.

So here we actually have on one hand our leaders which is way to the right and on the other hand the people to the left, where do we stand. If you look at society, you look at Barbara Harris, the first female bishop of Anglican church in 1989, they are very progressive and Church of England Libby Lane, first female bishop in 2015. Southern Baptist Convention meeting, they write resolution on ordination on role of women in ministry,

WHEREAS, While Paul commends women and men alike in other roles of ministry and service Titus 2: 1-10 he excludes women from pastoral leadership 1 Tim 2:12 to preserve a submission God requires because the man was first in creation and the woman was first in the Edenic fall 1 Tim 2:13f

So today we are going to deal with this particular passage because most of the restrictions of women in ministry come from this particular passage and this particular passage only. I have preached on 1-Cor 11, 1-Cor 14 before and 1-Tim 2 is the last one, which we will tackle today. Let's look at the passage. This is actually squeezing a three-hour Bible study I had with mostly ladies and then now into 40 minutes. So forgive me if there are lot of issues. You can ask me afterwards or attend the next Bible study. I hope more man will join, as only three men attended. Your positions are at stake, you know man and only three men attended, I don't know why. So here we actually have,

1 Timothy 2:8-12 (ESV)

8 I desire then that in **every place** the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling; 9 likewise also that **women** should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and

gold or pearls or costly attire, 10 but with what is proper for women who profess godliness—with good works. 11 Let a **woman** learn quietly with all submissiveness. 12 I do not permit **a woman** to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet.

Here is a letter by Paul to Timothy and Timothy is in-charge of the Ephesian church and he writes an occasional letter in a letter where you actually have one half of a conversation and you are answering problems. So probably Timothy would have probably written to him, 'hey brother, you know I got problem, my people come to church everyday wear pearls and Birkin Bag and all these sort of thing. So Paul has to say, you know, write this, and the men come, they wallop each other outside but they come here and lift their hands and pray, you know. You can see that there is something going on. Some half of the conversation. So you have to understand that this is not a general letter you write and you want all the churches to follow. This is first of all an occasional letter. It is like walking into somebody's house and then the mother shouts, 'shut up, sit down, go to your bedroom' and you are the guest. She thought she was speaking to her son. So you are in the middle of a conversation. So that's one of the issues.

The issue is false teaching. This church in Ephesus is plagued by a lot of false teaching. They have got myths and fancy theories about theology. They have got people who said, no you shouldn't get married, you should stay single like a nun or a priest, even that is changing nowadays. Certain foods you cannot eat, prosperity gospel, godliness is the way to prosperity, over realized eschatology, some people believe that the resurrection has already occurred. Then you have got superior knowledge, some people know more and so therefore you will be safe to heaven faster probably.

So when Paul writes this letter, he is actually addressing all these issues here. And who is doing all the false teaching

2 Timothy 2:16-18 (ESV) *But avoid irreverent babble, for it will lead people into more and more ungodliness, 17 and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, 18 who have swerved from the truth, saying that the resurrection has already happened. They are upsetting the faith of some.*

2 Timothy 4:14-15 (ESV) Alexander the coppersmith did me great harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds. 15 Beware of him yourself, for he strongly opposed our message.

False teachers are men but why are women prohibited from teaching. All the bad actors are man and he picked the woman, why. It is very odd. Women were busy bodies

1 Timothy 5:11-13 (ESV) *But refuse to enroll younger widows, for when their passions draw them away from Christ, they desire to marry 12 and so incur condemnation for having abandoned their former faith. 13 Besides that, they learn to be idlers, going about from house to house, and not only idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying what they should not*

So this is like common. So this letter first of all in every place this is like worship setting, man should pray lifting holy hands, which means should live in peace and not fight with each other and live a life of integrity when you pray. Then women are asked to focus on their character, good works rather than external display

of your wealth and your self worth. Basically what is saying is that, the more diamonds you deck out the shallower you are as it were. You know, focus on your actual character itself.

Now lets to this part about women. This does not apply to wives, it applies to all women. This is the only tense which is basically

1 Timothy 2:11-12 (ESV) Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. 12 I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet.

So it is a manner of learning for women. Women must sit there quietly and learn, it applies to all women and not wives. Greek women are different from our women now. They are betrothed at 2 years and married at 14 years and grandmothers at 30 years. They had high mortality rate, a lot them die during childbirth, 50% of the children die by the age of 6 years old and those who survive till the mid 20s or 30s, that's all they can live and men live a decade longer. There is a big cult there where they actually worship Artemis, goddess of Ephesus who is actually a woman. Then pagan worship, women were actually participants and priests. They were allowed to take some leadership role there and the daughters and wives of some of the wealthy families held priesthoods. They actually had under the oversight of males authorities. The women were also educated if you are in the upper class. If you are in lower class you would not be educated. They were educated for their duties in managing large households. They did not get educated in philosophy, nor rhetoric or medicine, but they had their own opportunities for intellectual pursuits. So the women were not highly educated but the rich ones were. Demosthenes, one of their philosopher says,

"We have hetaerae for pleasure, pallakae to care for our daily body's needs and gynaekes to bear us legitimate children and to be faithful guardians of our households."

Hetaerae the mistresses are highly educated, they spend time talking to the men about politics.

1 Timothy 2:11-12 (ESV) Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness.

It applies to all women and not wives and the whole thing is that there are several Greek words that could have been used, gyne, gyne chera or partenon. The word here is gyne and it could be a female or a wife and is determined by context and the context here it is women. So it applies to all woman.

12 I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet.

So here we have the word, I do not permit. This is actually in the present active indicative tense, which some people argue because you use this tense and rather than imperative tense, it is a temporary junction but that is not really true because you look at the rest of literature you will find that Paul often uses the present active indicative tense to give commands as well. So that's not a very good argument. The thing is that **I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man;**

This is the biggest controversy in this passage. The word is authority. This word authority is authentein and it is a hapax, which means it is the only word in the entire New Testament. Why would Paul not use words like all the rest which actually describe authority, why must he use a word which nobody uses. In fact

this word is so rare, it is only used 114 times in all of the surviving Greek literature. It is a colloquial word. Before the birth of Christ, it was used for someone who murders his brother or sister. So it is not a good word and from the time of Paul until 312 BC or AD, it is only used five times that we actually have in literature and Paul is the only one who uses it on the sixth occasion and all of them indicates some sort of authority.

Now why would Paul use that, so there is this huge controversy over authority. It can be used authority in a positive way or negative way. So if you are a positive way, you say women shouldn't hold position of authority over men. If you are negative means, women must not dominate over men. So that word can have two nuances and it is so rare to use this word that we can now argue about it. So it is a little bit, why would Paul do that. Catherine Kroeger, one of the main people who actually did research in this area, she says it should be taken negatively, means women shouldn't dominate men. If you nicely have authority over him, it is okay but dominate him. If not the women will engage will fertility cults or proclaim herself as author or originator of man. Paul Wilshire says, women instigate violence.

So not a lot of evidence there but still something to think about. The best evidence I have seen is Andreas Customberger who actually looked at the grammar and he says 'to teach' is an infinite verb and exercise authority is also infinite, it is separate by or. If you look at all of Greek literature you will find, this is either both positive or both negative. So if it is both negative means I do not permit women to teach men falsely or to have authority over men and dominy over them, which is unlikely because you cannot translate teaching as teach falsely. So therefore it must be, I do not permit women to teach or to have authority over men. So you cannot run. This is exactly what Paul says. If you have to live under the authority of scripture, you cannot run, you cannot twist it. Early church fathers, Chrysostom and Origen also agreed with this translation.

Why can't they teach and have authority over men. There are three reasons given here and these reasons are very-very important because underlying reasons are the same for Paul everywhere. If you look at Ephesians or Corinthians, it is the same. So it believe it applies. Now if you look at, there are three passages that have commonalities, there are restrictions. Woman can pray but must use head covering, women cannot weigh the prophecy of man, Timothy 2 cannot teach or have authority over men. There are restrictions but the rationale is shame and gender distinction, because if they do that they call shame. So there is this idea of gender distinction and then shame and submission. Where does he get the theology from? This is from Genesis 2 and 3.

So it is the same. So Paul is not just talking about culture. Now if we say that it is cultural, if you look from creation AD55 or thereabouts where Paul wrote this letter in AD 219 today, here you have the culture that says men pray with lifted hands, women must not wear gold. Can you apply it today? Today in our culture, men pray but no hands lifted and then women must not wear gold. So obviously you are either very-very stubborn Christian who is sinning or you have reinterpreted in a different way, because what you do is contextual. But if Paul goes all the way back to creation it is no longer cultural, it is actually be design. That is rationale.

So lets look, Adam was formed first and then Eve. Adam created first, therefore there is intrinsic order in creation that's male leadership. Then people say animals are created first. Simba should be the boss. But

that is not a good argument as they are not created in the image of God. Some people also say John the Baptist is before Jesus, he should be first or Mary before Peter. How did Peter become the head of the church and not Mary. So there is an argument there to. Some people say it is not logical or just, just because you are first. The firstborn is the one that always gets the authority but God has shown he has overturned that, he chose Jacob rather than Esau. So these are some of the reasons. Now let me clarify. Men and women are equal, Genesis chapter 1

Genesis 1:27 (ESV) So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

They are equal and there is no doubt about that. So if you look in the scheme of Genesis 1, 2 and 3, I want to bring you there. Here we have the scheme of creation. The issue is on the sixth day mankind is made in the image of God and they are told to be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, subdue it and have dominion. That is the mandate. Divine mandate for us which applies even to today. Genesis chapter 2 and all this before that he says everything is every good, but then what happens in Genesis chapter 2, he homes in on the specifics of day 6. He reiterates this, expands this idea of mankind being made in the image and what do you mean by made in his image, be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth. So therefore Genesis chapter 2 starts off with Adam created first and then he has a mandate, vocational command, you must work and keep the garden, which is basically like worshipping God and fellowshiping and keeping the world in check. Number two, you cannot eat from the tree. So there is a moral command and there is a vocational command and at the end of all of that God said, not good. Why? He couldn't do it alone. He needed a helper fit for him and then Eve was created.

Now you have to understand that. When Adam was created first, it is created in this sort of fashion and Eve was created to help him and together they actually keep the vocational and the moral command. So for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. So He need to find a woman who is basically fearfully and wonderfully made. Ezer does not mean subordinate, does not less of a person, it could be used for God, also other people helping someone. Kenegedo means corresponding, which means it is very-very clear, a helper corresponding, not exactly the same. If you want homosexual marriage then you will say exactly the same. You create a sexual clone. It is not a clone. The word is very specific, it says it corresponds.

Contextual warrant for Eve assisting is that, you know He asked them to be fruitful, multiply and subdue earth and have dominion. You cannot do that unless you have a woman. No man can multiply by himself. So when they were actually punished for their sin, you can see how

Gen 3:16 To the woman he said, "I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children.

The difference, woman's role is crucial, it is childbearing, but when she gets cursed in the fall, she gets cursed in that most crucial function that she has, childbearing and Adam gets cursed in the vocational command, which is basically to earn a living as it were. Now Paul looks back to Genesis 1 and 2 in 1-Cor

1 Corinthians 11:7-9 (ESV) For a man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God, but woman is the glory of man. 8 For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. 9 Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man.

He looks back and says, after God created woman and she fulfilled the task together with him then only God said, it was very good. When God says very good it means it fulfills its function for what God created them to be. God created them to multiply, be fruitful and have dominion over world. They cannot do it alone, they have to do it together in a very unique pairing. So therefore when the woman come to life the man looks good because finally he can build, I can multiply and all those sort of things. Without the woman, he is no good. So therefore the woman is a glory of man, neither was the man created for woman but woman was created for man. So man can fulfil his destiny. Look at how Paul differentiates orders of pair

1 Corinthians 11:3 (ESV) But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God.

So therefore there is an arrangement where Christ is over man, man over woman, God over Christ. They don't function in the same way and they parallels the family design, submitting to one another out of reverence to Christ. A lot of people, famous theologians as well, take this out of context. They means they submit to each other. You know, today my wife drive the car, tomorrow I drive the car, we decide where to live, we take a equal vote and if both cannot agree then cannot agree. That's not how to look at it. Submitting to Christ is a general term and how it works it is,

Ephesians 5:21-26 (ESV) submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. 22 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. 25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,

So this is a family design. If you go on to Ephesian passage you can find even though he asked you to submit to one another, the woman have to submit to the man, children submit to the parents, slaves submit to the master. There is a direction. There is not a mutual direction. They don't submit to each other. So there is a natural order. This natural order is very-very important. Paul says

Ephesians 5:31-33 (ESV) "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." 32 This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. 33 However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

The reason why there is such difference, there is submission and order is because the relationship between husband and wife and family will reflect that of the church and the church reflects it off Christ. So it is not something that you can just do away, it is build in to our design. Male leadership is built in. For example, the woman is named. See the man goes and name all the animals. By naming you have authority, God names creation as he has authority. So in sense here, he says

Genesis 2:23 (ESV) Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."

He names here, so there is leadership there. When all hell breaks loose, when they sin.

Genesis 3:9-12 (ESV) But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?"

God calls man as he is the leader. He was responsible. If you look at Romans who gets blamed for the fall, Adam not Eve

Romans 5:12 (ESV) Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—

Romans 5:14 (ESV) Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.

Eve ate first but Adam is the guilty party as leadership is involved. Great leadership comes with responsibility, but there is equality too. Paul says,

1 Corinthians 11:11-12 (ESV) Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man **nor man of woman**; 12 for as woman was made from man, **so man is now born of woman**. And all things are from God.

Just in case if man are thinking they are superior, you are all equal. In fact this is the magnacarta of Egalitarianism.

Galatians 3:28 (ESV) There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Remember, you are equal but this verse is only about salvation, otherwise the homosexual says, there is no male, no female, so be careful about this verse. So therefore the male leadership is imprinted into the design of creation.

2nd reason why the woman cannot teach and have authority over

14 and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.

There are three possible interpretations for this.

- 1) Ephesian women were uneducated just like Eve taught command 2nd hand. So therefore she was deceived and so therefore she cannot teach but actually that's a bit odd, because Adam must be a very terrible teacher because he did not pass on the command very well. So that's a possibility.
- 2) All women like Eve ontologically gullible intellectually inferior, which means ontological design, less clever, less smart sort of things. So that is going to be problematic.

Now women were asked to teach other woman. Paul wouldn't have encouraged them to teach if they were so inferior. It goes against God's goodness in creation. We cannot say man is the best and woman is the

second best. I mean it doesn't fit the character of God. Given same educational opportunities research has shown women not more gullible. In fact under graduates women do better than men. It is for years that women were denied the opportunity to study. So I don't think you can prove scientifically that women are more gullible. We have to look at the woman's motivation. The woman saw the tree was good for food, it was a delight to the eyes, tree was desired to make one wise. The woman has a motive. This is deliberate desire to rebel. This is not accidental. She is not stupid. So therefore it is unlikely.

The third reason is more likely, Eve deceived first as serpent subverted male leadership and approach Eve.

Genesis 3:1 (ESV) Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made.

Now why did Moses write that the serpent is very clever.

He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?"

Genesis 3:6 (ESV) So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.

The serpent went straight to the woman, he is very clever. So he subverted male leadership and went straight to the woman. I think this sounds much much more logical, it happens because it subverted male leadership. The third reason

15 Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.

But you have to look back into the context of this letter. Why would all of a sudden cannot teach man because they should be busy, get pregnant. Because if you look in chapter 4

1 Timothy 4:1-3 (ESV) Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, 2 through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared, 3 who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods

If you forbid marriage what will happen to baby. Basically what they are forbidding is the family. So that is what he is countering and so therefore he says, the woman is saved through childbearing, which means salvation, the woman should stick to the divinely ordained role which makes her special, childbearing and as well as godly living, faith, love and holiness and self control which are all characteristics of a person who is saved by faith. So this is summary.

- Ephesian women should not arrogate an official teaching and authority role for themselves
- They should learn submissively and quietly from the elders
- Reason 1 : Creation order
- Reason 2: Eve usurped male leadership, beguiled by the Serpent, Paul assigned the responsibility for sin primarily to Adam (Rom. 5:12–19).

- Reason 3: Women will experience eschatological salvation by adhering to their proper role, which is exemplified in giving birth to children and expressing other Christian virtues as evidence of their salvation.

Remember this is written to Ephesian woman 2000 years ago. We need to work that through. So is this letter normative or situational. Shall we take this and apply it today. So you can see there is practise and principle. Men raising up their hands in prayer. So the principle is living in peace and integrity. The other one is clothing and adornment, modesty, emphasis on character, good works rather than outside. So therefore you have the third one here. If these two are basically practised, this is the principle, teaching and authority over man, I think the principle here is male leadership, which is important. So can woman teach in such a way that is not to undermine male leadership. Paul writes

Colossians 3:16 (ESV) Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

We are asked to teach one another. Timothy was taught by women.

2 Timothy 1:5 (ESV) I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well.

Pricilla and Aquilla

Acts 18:26-27 He began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.

So here is a woman teaching a famous preacher. In all the gifts of the holy spirit, there is no gender specification. Now if you look at the context of all Pauline letters, this is the only one that prohibits women from teaching. It is occasional letter which means there are issues that we don't know about and the meaning of authentia is disputed and there is uncertain cultural context.

Look at Jesus. The way Jesus dealt with women

- Women in genealogy
- Women healed.. Simon mother in law, women with menstrual bleed, Jairus daughter
- Prostitute who washed his feet Lk 7:36-50 (scandalous)
- His entourage included many women Luke 8:1-3 (scandalous)
- Mary at his feet learning Lk 10 (scandalous) posture of learning Torah which was forbidden for women
- John 4-Samaritan woman, resurrection witnesses
- Divorce teaching equal treatment of men and women

Jesus never embrace full fledged egalitarianism. He has got disciples on the outer edge which were all woman as well, nine apostles and the closest one, Peter, James and John they are all totally male. There is still a

pattern. If you look at women in ministry. You have got Phoebe, she is actually the deacon of the church. Pricilla taught Apollos. Junias is interesting

Romans 16 :7 Greet Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners, who are outstanding among the apostles

That means she is an apostle, but she is not apostle in the sense of the 12 apostles or the luminaries but Apostolos means the sent one, that means sent one on a missionary journey. So here we have a lady who sent out on a missionary journey who basically plants churches. How do you plant church without teaching people? And then the worse thing you go and plant church and the first thing you plant you get the first five converts and they are all men and they become elders over you. It's stupid. So basically there are woman in ministry and Paul commends in all his letters, all his coworkers.

The word diakanos is translated in various ways. You can translate it as a minister. Diakanos is also involved in the ministry of the word. Women are also ministers at work. Here if you look at 1-Timothy 3, now this is a passage that talks about elders and deacons

1 Timothy 3:8-11 (ESV) Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. 9 They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. 10 And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless. 11 Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things.

Now there is a problem here. The word 'their wives' is I think mistranslated because wives and women are the same word, Greek word, it is called gyne. So there they have actually translated their wives, actually it should be women likewise which therefore implies women deacons because the same Greek word gunaikas oosautoos is diakanos assautoos, is same construction. So it is more likely that he is talking about the women deacons. Now there is another Greek word which you use for wives. Now to support this interpretation, you look in verses 2 to 3,

Male elders

V 2-3 sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, 3 not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money.

Male deacons

V 8 be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain.

Female deacons

V 11 be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things

They are all similar because they hold office. The context supports it. Here you have got 1-Timothy chapter 3, it talks about elder's qualification, then it talks about deacon's qualification, then it talks about deacon's wife's qualifications. Why do bother about wife's qualification. It doesn't make sense. It make sense when you translate it as elder's qualifications, male deacons qualifications and female deacons qualifications. So therefore woman have a role in church and lets look at the Old Testament.

Prophetess; Miriam, Deborah, Huldah. They were not many but they all had the word of God given to them and the most common ministry of the word if by prophets, they minister God's words. They have authority too. The prophets had authority as well. Then you look at New Testament, you have got Anna, Philips daughters, Corinthian women. They are all believers because Acts chapter 2 says,

Acts 2:17a And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,

Lastly Deborah. Deborah was not only a prophetess, she was a judge, which means overall authority all over the land of Israel. Which means God in his wisdom at any specific time in history can also make the woman the overall leader of the entire nation. So you cannot read scripture from one perspective, you have got to take it on the whole. So where do we stand? Male, females, in life, in the life to come, we are completely equal, but when we are here we actually have to deal, there is a modulating effect with male leadership whether it is present or absent and there are restrictions in order to show that the male leadership is like the one in the family and the other modulating effect on the way we do church is the culture of society. If you are a very patriarchal society or a very egalitarian society, neither are correct but you have got to bring them to what scripture actually says.

Two different churches; in Corinth Paul says women you can pray in public, you can prophesy, you can do all that but wear the head covering. In Ephesus, women shut up, learn in submission, public silence. Same guy but two different opinions. So therefore what he does is that he takes the principle of male-female egalitarianism because he says there is no male or female and he takes male leadership and he takes society according to situation and then he applies the principles and comes up with those suggestions. So here we have a spectrum of ministry in our church. It is for us to decide where we are going to be as a people, knowing scripture, what we are going to do in church.

Martin Luther when he broke from the Catholic church he said

"It is the duty of every Christian to espouse the cause of the faith, to understand and defend it, and to denounce every error."

Did you know that reformation at that time, the women were front and centre heroes. Katharina Vin Bora was his wife who steadily helped him in his endeavours. Marie Dentiere was a reformed nun and she did Bible translation and theological writing. Argula von Grumbach was the first female lobbyist for reformation. She wrote a letter against all the leaders of the city council of Ingolstadt, defending the reformation and she wrote

However I suppressed my inclinations; heavy of heart, I did nothing. Because Paul says in 1 Timothy 2: "The women should keep silence, and should not speak in church." But now that I cannot see any man who is up to it, who is either willing or able to speak, I am constrained by the saying: "Whoever confesses me," as I said above. And I claim for myself Isaiah 3: "I will send children to be their princes; and women, or those who are womanish, shall rule over them."

This is the time of reformation when nobody supported Martin Luther, all the man kept quiet. It took a woman to write this letter and to support the cause of reformation. They have been fighting about women in leadership since the 17th century in England from Baptist. Fox Book of Martyrs write there are about at that particular time among the Baptist 930 martyrs. Did you know half of them were women. Women have a place in ministry but the Lord said, it is not good that a man should be alone. We cannot do this alone. We cannot dominate this world. We cannot spread the gospel alone. We need women who are fearfully and wonderfully made. There is equality and yet there is an order.

What is happening in the world today is you have got radical egalitarianism and got homosexuality. The feminist want to chop off this domination by the man but in doing so they chop off his head too. Men and women are not the same, there are gender differences. God did not create Adam and Steve. This is all destroying the image, you know why, because if you go, the other side of the coin is people like him who say, no more to Beth Moore. They are on the other extreme. On egalitarianism on one side all the same and the other one is man total domination. These are all not the right way to do things. You know what is behind the struggle. Behind the struggle is Romans chapter 1

Romans 1:18-20 (ESV) For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. 19 For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.

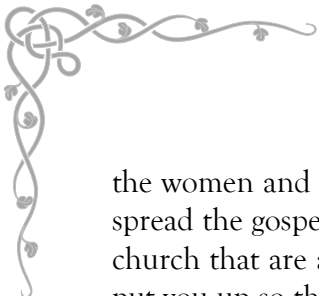
Egalitarianism, radical feminism or being very patriarchal, all these are basically a rebellion against the design which God has put into our hearts right from the beginning. We are equal, we have different roles which are complimentary. We are equal and we are mutual the way and the best way to describe this is Ephesians because the church is like a family and you look at the S word there. We are supposed to submit to one another

Ephesians 5:22-25 (ESV) Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

That happens in the church as well. When you have got male leadership. The male leadership sacrifices for the women and the women submit as it were and it maintains that eternal paradigm, the design that when the world looks at us they will see a pattern, long after the hoo haa has died down, whether it is home same sex marriage or everybody equal, no differences between men and women. When all that dies down, there is only one bedrock that keeps this society alive and that's the church of Jesus Christ where we love each other, we respect each other as equal partners and yet we have different roles that glorify God and great exposition of what the gospel really is.

So I hope and pray among us today that the women will feel empowered because we consider you our spiritual equal. That you have a role in the ministry of the word and all the men here will have to standby



the women and say, look whatever you need us to sacrifice we will do for you, because you will be able to spread the gospel as well as our partners. We cannot do it without you. There are so many women in the church that are afraid to speak up. They are afraid to do anything. If your man really love you, they will put you up so that you can be all that you are because in the end it is the gospel that goes ahead. So don't shrink back just because you are a women and yet don't go ahead and say all men and women are equal, no distinction, I can do whatever I want. It has to be worked out in a mutual submission and respect in a church like this. Lets end with a word of prayer.

PRAYER

Lord we thank you that we are fearfully and wonderfully made. Anyone of us here today Lord, we would not want to be a man if I am woman. If you are a woman, you wouldn't want to be a man. Because you have created us for a purpose, you have created us with a design. We pray as we interact in this church that the women be fully realised to minister in whatever capacity that will bring glory to you for which they were created to be and also men to be with them side by side, receiving their help, working with each other to build each other up, so that the gospel of Jesus Christ is spread and we become that shinny beacon that oasis in the midst of a storm outside where gender differences are totally obliterated and that when young people look they have no paradigm to look it. They have no example. We pray O Lord we will be that anchor in this society. We ask for Jesus sake. Amen..