

Women in Ministry

Pastor Art Hunt

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The **hierarchical view**: Women have important ministry to women and children; they should not exercise any ministry that includes teaching the corporate body or the exercising of authority or leadership over men. (Proponent: John MacArthur)

The **egalitarian view**: Not only are all **ministries** equally open to men and women, but also all **offices** of the church are equally open to all qualified men and women. (Proponents: Gordon Fee and F.F. Bruce)

The **complementarian view**: Men and women are not the same; they complement each other. While all **ministries**—including teaching—are given equally as gifts of the Spirit to men and women, **the role** of pastor/elder is exclusive to men. (Proponents: Ray Stedman and Craig Blomberg)

- *For God is not a God of confusion but of peace. As in all the churches of the saints, ³⁴the women should keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission, as the Law also says. ³⁵If there is anything they desire to learn, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church.*
1 Corinthians 14:33-35 (English Standard Version)

. . . Every wife who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head . . .
1 Corinthians 11:5a (ESV)

Bottom-line teaching: Wives should exercise self-control so as not to **disrupt worship** by defying cultural convention and bringing shame to your husbands.

- *I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling; 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, ¹⁰but with what is proper for women who profess godliness—with good works. ¹¹Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. ¹²I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. ¹³For Adam was formed first, then Eve; ¹⁴and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.*
1 Timothy 2:8-14 (ESV)

Bottom-line teaching: Women are prohibited from the office of pastor and/or elder and its inherent authority.

- **General Scripture about Women in Ministry**

- **Galatians 3:28-29:** Men and women have equal standing before God.

There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. Galatians 3:28-29 (New International Version)

- **1 Corinthians 12:7, 11:** God's Spirit dispenses His spiritual gifts as He wills, implying that He gives gifts irrespective of gender.

(See Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12-14; Ephesians 4:7-13; 1 Peter 4:10-11)

- **Acts 18:18-26:** Priscilla is an example of a woman using her teaching gift to help teach a man.

- **In Romans 16:** Paul makes a number of positive comments about women leaders in ministry and their partnership with him in ministry.

- **Conclusions:**

- The Bible restricts the office of pastor/elder to men.
- However, there are no tasks or ministry gifts women cannot exercise in the church.