

Should Women Have Leadership Roles In The Church?

One of the more controversial issues in the religious world today is over whether women may have leadership roles in the church. Should women preach from the pulpit? Can women be pastors or elders?

Let's begin to answer those questions by reading I Cor 14:34-35 "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church." Is there anything vague or hard to understand about that passage? No, the text very clearly shows women should not be preaching in the church. Now ask yourself this question. If the Bible is so clear on the issue, why do the great majority of churches allow women to preach from their pulpits? Is it possible that most churches have left the guidebook for the Christian religion, the Bible, and are just doing their own thing? I've heard many say there are so many different interpretations of the Bible because the Bible is hard to understand. But this passage illustrates how that idea is all wrong. There's nothing hard about this verse to understand. The real problem is - most just don't want to accept what the Bible plainly says, most don't have a proper "love of the truth" (II Thess 2:10).

Another passage that proves women should not be preachers is I Tim 2:11-12 "Let a woman learn in quietness with all subjection. But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to have dominion over a man, but to be in quietness" (ASV). Whenever a woman teaches in the church assembly, there are men present, so she is violating this text which tells her not to teach over the man. See my point?

And what about women being elders over a church? Wouldn't that also violate the text we just read forbidding a woman from having "dominion over a man"? That's why when I Tim 3 gives the qualifications for an elder, verse 2 says he must "the husband of one wife." A woman can't be an elder because she can't be a husband, she must not take the leadership role.

Men should take that leadership role ... at least according to two more key New Testament passages ...

I Cor 11:3 "... the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God." "Head" means "boss" in this text.

Eph 5:22-23 "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body." So the husband should be the leader of the family, not the wife.

If you go back several decades, hardly any congregations allowed women to be preachers or pastors. Now almost all of them do. What happened? Me thinks churches have started doing what they want, what they like, or what they think will bring in the biggest crowds - without regard for what the Bible says. Prov 14:12 describes this situation best – "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."

Do you think this loose attitude of disregarding what the Bible so plainly teaches might have spilled over into other issues – divorce, gay marriage, sprinkling for baptism, etc.? You better believe that it has.