

“Women Pastors – What does God Say?”

Based on 1 Corinthians 14:26-37 & 1 Timothy 3:1-7

July 9, 2000 (updated in 2021)

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ, my responsibility as a pastor in preaching is not to give you my opinion, but to carefully, clearly, and accurately proclaim to you the truth of God’s Word. Today’s topic is women pastors – what does the Bible say? We will focus on two key Scripture passages. Other important points include ♦divine inspiration, ♦the order of creation, ♦culture versus the Lord’s command, and ♦the order of redemption.

1. **Divine inspiration:** The Bible is God’s very Word. How? *By divine inspiration.* The Bible says this about itself in **2 Timothy**: “All Scripture is inspired by God...”¹ The Bible also makes this statement about the transmission of God’s Word from God Himself to the pages of the Bible: “Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”² Therefore, with every verse of the Bible, no matter what part of the Bible, please understand that it is God’s very Word to us. Paul himself reminded his readers of that reality in **1 Corinthians 14:37**: “If anybody thinks he is a prophet or spiritually gifted, let him acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord’s command.” In other words, Paul is stating that those who have special gifts from God to discern the truth from a lie will readily agree that the words of Paul are, indeed, *the very Words of God.*
2. **The order of creation:** Let’s begin with **1 Corinthians 11:3**: The Bible says that

“the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.”³ This is the order: ♦God the Father, ♦God the Son, ♦man, ♦woman. But don’t get the wrong impression, the man is no better than the woman, just as the Father is no better than the Son.⁴ So why did God place the man over the woman? The Bible identifies these four reasons: (1) Man was created first.⁵ (2) “Man did not come from woman, but woman from man; (3) neither was man created for woman, but woman for man.”⁶ (4) Woman was the first to fall into sin.⁷ Keep in mind that God has established a particular order for **the church** and **the home** (*not for the secular world*), and following God’s order is always best!

3. **Cultural practices versus the Lord’s command:** **1 Corinthians 11** talks about the wearing of hats and the length of one’s hair. Those were customs practiced in Corinth approximately 1950 years ago; however, those customs pointed to *unchangeable realities*. As the women had long hair and wore hats, while the men had short hair and did not wear hats, so practicing such a custom *visibly* demonstrated the reality of the man being over the woman in the order of creation. Today, it’s not necessary to follow the customs of the past; however, *the reality of the man being over the woman still stands.*
4. **1 Corinthians 14:26-37:** God spoke by the Spirit through Paul to tell the people how to behave when they come together; in other words, *together for*

¹ 3:16 NAS

² 2 Peter 1:20-21 NIV

³ NIV.

⁴ See the Athanasian Creed in the front of our hymnal.

⁵ Genesis 2:7

⁶ 1 Corinthians 11:8-9 NIV; Genesis 2:18-24

⁷ Genesis 3:6

worship. He explains to them how to do things in an orderly manner⁸ and “for the strengthening of the church.” He also made that clear in verses **33-35**: “As in all the congregations of the saints, women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says. If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church.” Again, that statement is not made on the basis of man being superior to woman or the Corinthian culture, *but rather upon the order of creation which has been established by God*. In the very next verse (36) Paul asked these questions: “Did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only people it has reached?” In other words, it seems the Corinthians were allowing women to speak in the church; therefore, Paul basically asked them: What right do you have to change what God has established; in fact, how is it that you have changed when no one else has? Similar questions could be asked of many churches in existence today. For example, we could ask: Why are you allowing women pastors? Who told you it was acceptable?

5. **1 Timothy 3:1-7**: “Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task. ² Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, ³ not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. ⁴ He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. ⁵ (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) ⁶ He must not be a recent convert, or he

may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. ⁷ He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.”⁹ Those are the qualifications for a pastor. Phrases like “husband of but one wife” and “manage his own family well” clearly point to men rather than women.

6. **The order of redemption**: That’s different than the order of creation. The order of redemption (in other words, our standing before God through faith in Jesus Christ) is summed up in these words from **Galatians chapter 3**: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”¹⁰ Just as all are eternally condemned who reject Jesus as Savior, so all – men, women, etc. – are fully forgiven and justified in God’s sight through faith in Jesus Christ.

Conclusion: Therefore, always remember:

- ➡ The Bible is God’s Word.
- ➡ God has established an order of creation which stands for all time.
- ➡ Cultural practices do not apply to all people of all time; however, in connection with woman pastors and women being silent in the churches, we have God’s command.
- ➡ When it comes to what is most important of all, our redemption, thus our eternal salvation, let us know for certain that all who have faith in Jesus Christ alone are also fully forgiven.

By God’s grace and power, may we understand His Word, believe it to be true, live according to it, and share it with others!

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⁸ “For God is not a God of disorder but of peace” (1 Corinthians 14:33 NIV).

⁹ NIV

¹⁰ Galatians 3:28 NIV