



Male and Female in Church

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Six basics to agree on

1. The Bible is the final authority.
2. Women are equal to men in their status before God.
3. Male and female are complementary, not identical.
4. Non-elders are still leaders, not second-class Christians.
5. Leaders are siblings and servants.
6. Elders are often grounded in early learning from Mom and Grandma.

1. The Bible is the final authority.

- Some who insist on male-only elders and pastors could not even say why from the Bible. They just have a bias against women.
- Some who want women elders and pastors say the Bible is against it, but they say the Bible is outdated and wrong about this.
- We must seek to understand what the Bible says, and then live by it, even if we wish the Bible taught a different position.

2. Women are equal to men in their status before God

- Equally created in God's image
- Equally guilty of sin
- Equally saved and adopted in Christ
- Equally indwelt by the Holy Spirit
- Equal in character, capability, and calling to serve God and influence others
- Equally royal and destined to reign

3. Male and female roles are complementary, not identical.

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... Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God. (1 Cor. 11:3, 11-12)

4. Non-elders are still leaders, not second-class Christians

- Many very godly, influential men do not have the gift or calling to teach and govern.
- A non-elder can still be a leader of leaders (e.g. father, mother, mentor, motivator).
- Every part of the body is vital for the whole body's health and happiness.

5. Official leaders are siblings and servants to help empower others.

For they preach, but do not practice. They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger... But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brothers. And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven. Neither be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Christ. The greatest among you shall be your servant. (Matt. 23:4-11)

6. Elders are often grounded in early learning from Mom and Grandma.

I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice... Continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures (2 Tim 1:5, 3:14-15)

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Why is the role of elder reserved for men only?

1. Practice
2. Precept
3. Principle

1. Practice: past precedent

- Israel had only men as priests.
- Jesus chose only men as apostles.
(even though women were vital, such as Anna, Mary, Mary Magdalene, and women who first witnessed the risen Lord)
- The church for 19+ centuries in every culture had only men as elders/pastors.
(even though women were co-workers with Paul and could prophesy, teach privately, and guide other women)

2. Precept: direct orders

- Appoint Aaron and his sons to serve as priests. (Numbers 3:10)
- I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet... an overseer must be... the husband of one wife (1 Tim. 2:12, 3:2)
- As in all the churches of the saints, the women should keep silent in the churches. (1 Cor. 14:33)

3. Principle: household headship

For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control. (1 Tim 2:13-15)

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. (Eph 5:23)

3. Principle: household headship

As **Christ's body**, the church honors marriage in which husband and wife display the relation of Christ, the head, to the church, his body.

As **God's household**, the church has male elders in order to uphold men's household headship.

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1. Practice: past precedent
2. Precept: direct orders
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