

Women's Ministry in the Local Church

Chapter 5: *Submission*

WHY A CHURCH NEEDS A WOMEN'S MINISTRY

In this chapter, Ligon Duncan explains more fully his first reason why a women's ministry is important in every healthy evangelical church. (This was first mentioned on page 37.) Women's ministry is important because:

- 1 *It presents opportunities to address helpfully the issue of the nature of manhood and womanhood.*
- 2 *It presents opportunities to address the male/female relationships, the definition of the family, etc.*

THE TEXT: 1 Timothy 2:9-15

The text for this chapter calls the church to adhere to the biblical teaching of male/female role relationships in the church.

Appropriate Apparel: Is a call to a purity of heart that is reflected in our outward appearance. Plain and drab doesn't equal godliness. RSB – "Paul is not concerned with clothing and jewelry as such, but with the attitude of the one wearing them. Greco-Roman society was characterized by extravagance in dress."

Serious Study: Women are invited to go beyond immature flamboyance to a serious study of God's Word. Women should have teachable, humble spirits that are ready to listen and learn. Women would have been "honoured by their responsibility to learn." (Stott) Are we?

Ecclesiastical Submission: Reflects the creation order, reflects the character of God, reflects the gospel. Is not a legalistic list of behaviors. It is an attitude of the heart that believes God's kingdom order is good because we trust Him. It is a passion of the heart that loves "the church our blest Redeemer saved" more than self.

Four things this passage does not do:

- 1 *This passage does not call women to submit to false teaching.*
- 2 *This passage does not address male leadership in arenas other than the family and church.*
- 3 *Women are not instructed to submit to each individual elder.*
- 4 *Women are not told to submit to domineering, controlling, mean-spirited men.*

This passage does:

- 1 *Call women to put the priority of the gospel above self-interest.*
- 2 *Call us to have the same passion as “God our Savior who desires all people to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.”*
- 3 *Calls us to be like Jesus “who though He was in the form of God did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the form of a servant.”*
- 4 *Tell us “how (we) ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth.”*

A Captivating Conclusion:

Every redeemed woman is called to have a life-giving ministry in God’s covenant family.

Note: *Commentators differ as to interpretation of this passage. RSB – “The interpretation “through the birth of Jesus” however attractive it might be theologically, is doubtful. Clearly, Paul intends another allusion to Genesis, this time to God’s statement to Eve after the Fall concerning her role in childbearing. (Gen 3:16) “Paul is not suggesting that childbearing is an act that merits salvation. Given his use of Gen 2:3 in his argument and the false teachers disparagement of marriage (4:3), Paul finds “childbearing” to be a convenient symbol for that role.” (5:14)*

Whenever the creation order is inverted, there is disorder, destruction, and death. When we tamper with this order, even a little, we become life-takers rather than life-givers.

Biblical Examples:

- 1 *Eve – Genesis 3: 1-7*
- 2 *Sarah – Genesis 12: 1-2; 15: 1-6; 16:1-6*
- 3 *Rebekah – Genesis 25: 21-26; 27: 1-13*
- 4 *Miriam – Numbers 12: 1-15*

THE TASK

Submission:

- 1 *is a watershed issue for a women’s ministry*
- 2 *frees us to accomplish our kingdom purpose*

THE TOOLS

The concept of ecclesiastical submission helps us answer two of the fundamental questions.

Who is responsible for the women's ministry in a church?

How does a women's ministry relate to the other ministries in the church?

- 1 *Ultimately the elders are responsible for the women's ministry. They are also responsible for how various ministries in the church relate to one another.*
- 2 *The elders should have final approval of the women who will serve in leadership capacity.*
- 3 *Elders should provide a process for women to report their plans and proposals for oversight.*
- 4 *Leaders of women's ministry should submit all study materials to the elders for approval.*
- 5 *Women's ministry should be diligent to keep elders informed.*
- 6 *Women should pray for submissive hearts if the elders reject a women's ministry proposal.*

Donna Dobbs comments on submission and the role of women's ministry:

- 1 *A true helper makes suggestions and volunteers service that men may never have thought of.*
- 2 *Submission in the structure of the church is one of the ways God encourages women to use their community building gifts to connect one part of the body to another.*
- 3 *Sharing ministry plans with male leaders builds bridges and gives them a vision for women's ministry.*
- 4 *There are benefits of protection and correction through submission to male leadership.*

Biblical Foundations for Womanhood resources:

1. Topic: *1 Peter 3:4*
Book: *The Legacy of Biblical Womanhood* (page 51-53)
2. Topic: *Submission*
Book: *The True Woman* (chapter 10)
The Legacy of Biblical Womanhood (chapter 1)
3. Topic: *Submission in marriage*
Book: *Your Home a Place of Grace* (chapter 4)
The Legacy of Biblical Womanhood (chapter 8)

4. Topic: *Life-giver*
Book: *The Legacy of Biblical Womanhood (chapter 1)*
5. Topic: *Miriam, Exodus 15*
Book: *The Legacy of Biblical Womanhood (page 58-59)*
6. Topic: *Miriam, Numbers 12*
Book: *The True Woman (page 170-180)*
7. Topic: *Christian Education Committee*
Book: *Heirs of the Covenant (page 63-64) (page 183-184)*
8. Topic: *Women encouraging unity*
Book: *Leadership for Women in the Church*