

Women in Ministry: Can a Woman serve as Pastor?



Christ Centered, Holy Spirit Empowered, Love Focused

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The Bible as Final Authority

1. The history and current practice of the many churches give demonstration that God can and does bless the public ministry of women. This appears true, even when we look at women serving as a Pastor.
2. However, our answer must come from the Holy Scriptures. The Christian holds the Bible to be the authoritative Word of God, so our beliefs and practices must not contradict its instruction. The Word of God alone must be the basis for our faith and practice. For us to answer this question by mere logic, humanistic reasoning, philosophy or popular opinion would be to depart from the Christian standard.
3. So we now have many questions to consider:
 - a. ***Should the fact that women Pastors get results and are blessed in ministry play a part in answering the question before us?***
 - b. ***If it does what weight does it hold?***
 - c. ***If it does not, then how can we explain by scripture that these blessing are evident?***
 - d. ***Do we have unquestionable scripture that support our conclusions? Is it possible to have all our conclusions 100% supported by scripture as it applies to this question?***
 - e. ***If it is not, should Church History, cultural settings of questionable scriptures aide us in rightly dividing the word of God?***
 - f. ***When the original language study indicates different meanings to the scripture in question, how do we know which meaning applies to the specific passage?***

- g. *Is it possible, since the Word of God is the "Living Word", that all potential definitions form the original language applied to the scripture passage?*
- h. *Is it possible that God, in his ultimate wisdom and knowledge had the writers of scripture use specific words in the original language for such purpose?*
- i. *if so, how much weight should we assign to multiple meanings of a given scripture in our quest to rightly divide the word?*
- j. *With this question being a topic of opposite viewpoint between scholars and Christian Elders for over 2000 years, can we come to a conclusive answer to this question?*
- k. *If we cannot, then how much weight, if any should we add to the fact that scripture states that whatever we bind on earth or loose on earth is so in heaven? Matt. 16:19*

The Office of Pastor / Elder

1. The Bible says that the bishop/overseer is to be the husband of one wife (1 Tim. 3:2). This is again found, in Titus 1:5-7, Notice that Paul interchanges the word 'elder' and 'overseer'. It is God who gives gifts to the Church and one of the gifts is the pastor/elder. By definition, a pastor is an elder.
2. Take a look at God's word concerning eldership.
 - a. *Should we not know what God's Word says specifically about pastors/elders before we draw our conclusions?*
3. The Term "Elder" The Greek term is presbuteros and depending on context means elder, an old man, a leader in the church. The term is used. It is used of the elder of two persons (Luke 15:25, or more, John 8:9); of a person advanced in age (Acts 2:17; in Heb. 11:2); of the forefathers in Israel (Matt. 15:2; Mark 7:3,5); of members of the Sanhedrin (Matt. 16:21; 26:47); of those who managed public affairs in the various cities (Luke 7:3); of those who were the heads or leaders of the tribes and families, as of the seventy who helped Moses (Num. 11:16; Deut. 27:1).
4. Regarding the Office:
 - a. The pastor is an elder who preaches and/or teaches (1 Tim. 5:17).
 - b. The pastor (elder) is to equip the body of Christ (Eph. 4:11-13).
 - c. **Must be a man?** 1 Tim. 2:9-13).
 - d. All uses of "elder" are in the masculine except for 1 Tim. 5:2 where it means older women.
5. The Responsibilities of Elders in the NT Church:
 - a. Must shepherd the flock (1 Peter 5:2).
 - b. They have the tasks of teaching (1 Tim. 5:17; Titus 1:5,9).

c. They have the tasks of acting as judges (Acts 15:2,6,22-29; 16:4).

6. Qualifications for an elder

a. Must be above reproach (Titus 1:6; 1 Tim. 3:2)

b. Husband of one wife (Titus 1:6; 1 Tim. 3:2).

i. Some have used Titus 1:6-7, "If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children.

ii. If God called a single man with no children to be a Bishop, as Paul was.

1. Then does this verse mean that a male serving as an Elder have to be married?

2. If not, then would this scripture oppose a woman if she was called of God for the work?

3. What about the Pastor who was married but never had any children, would this scripture then refer to sin in his life and thereby disqualify him?

iii. **Could it be that what this verse does teach is that a person who is to be a Bishop must not have two living companions, either husbands or wives?**

iv. Household must be in order with children who believe (Titus 1:6; 1 Tim. 3:4).

v. Not a new convert (1 Tim. 3:6).

vi. Self controlled and temperate (Titus 1:7; 1 Tim. 3:2).

vii. Honorable, hospitable, seeking good (Titus 1:7).

viii. Have a good reputation (1 Tim. 3:7).

ix. Able to exhort (teach) sound doctrine (Titus 1:9; 1 Tim. 3:2).

x. Able to refute false teaching (Titus 1:9).

c. The pastor/elder is one who teaches. A pastor of a church stands in the pulpit, the place of authority and teaches from God's word. By nature, the teaching of God's word, in the pulpit, is an authoritative act. This is why it is to be done by an elder who is appointed in the Church and qualifies according to scripture.

d. Elders should Sheppard the flock. 1 Peter 5:1-3

i. Note that in 1 Peter 5:1-3, every occurrence of the word "elder(s)" is in the masculine form in the original Greek.

1. What significance does this fact hold in answering the question before us?

2. Since many scriptures (and secular writings for that matter) are commonly written in the male aspect yet often times refer to male or female, is this the case in this scripture?

e. The elder is to shepherd the flock. A pastor is a shepherd. The elder/pastor oversees the flock. Therefore, the pastor is the Elder of Elder of the local fellowship.

f. Do women qualify scripturally for ministry offices?

- i. The Scriptures reveal that five ministry gifts and offices were given by Christ to the church. “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers” (Eph. 4:11).
- ii. These offices are often referred to as the “five-fold ministry” since they are five in number. They are the ministry offices of the Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor and Teacher.
- iii. The Original Language Speaks More Clearly
 1. Absolutely fundamental to Koine Greek (the original language of the New Testament) is its system of agreement between nouns and their modifiers. Nouns in Greek can only be masculine, feminine, or neuter, and the articles which precede and modify them must agree in gender. In fact, at times the article will actually help determine the gender of the noun it modifies. It is, therefore, very significant that in each of the five-fold ministry offices listed in Ephesians 4:11, the Greek nouns and the articles that modify them are all in the masculine gender. This fact must be considered when rightly dividing the Word of God as to the doctrinal standing on the office of Pastor.

A Modern Phenomenon

1. In the past century America has witnessed the emergence of women to various positions of prominence and authority. It is no longer unusual to find women serving in the fire department, carrying a gun as a police officer, or sitting behind a desk as a judge in a courtroom. Women serve in every branch of the military and even in local and national political office. This emergence of women to various positions of authority has not been confined to the secular realm, but has penetrated more and more into the Christian Church as well.
2. Many churches now have women serving in a broad diversity of ministry offices, from deacon to pastor, and several denominations commonly ordain women as pastors, priests, or ministers. Even those churches which function with the traditional male pastor, now frequently designate their wives as “co-pastor.” Additionally, some women have become traveling evangelists and hold conferences and seminars, teach from behind church pulpits, and over their own regular radio and television programs.
3. ***While these practices are now commonplace and widely accepted in our society, the big question is, are they scriptural?***

Biblical Examples of Women in Ministry

1. Old Testament history includes accounts of strong female leadership.
 - a. Miriam was a prophet, one of the triumvirate of leaders God sent to Israel during the Exodus period (Exodus 15:20).

- i. Miriam was a prophetess, not an elder or a pastor. However, the New Testament list the office of Prophet as one of the five-fold ministry offices.
 - 1. ***With this fact in mind, should we use this fact to lean towards a decision that women can serve as a Pastor, or in any of the other 4 ministry offices?***
- ii. Miriam is once called a “prophetess” in Exodus 15:20. That verse and verse 21 following it describe the nature of her ministry as primarily that of leading the Israelite women. Moses was God’s leader of the nation as a whole, but others ministered and “judged” under his authority (Ex. 18:21-26).
 - 1. Some claim that Miriam’s task was fundamentally a ministry to the women. And a ministry to women by women is not inconsistent with New Testament teaching. Titus 2:3-5 instructs the older women in the Lord to teach the newer ones. ***However, if this is so, does scripture conclusively tell us that she did not minister to men at times? Does Old Testament examples have significance in answering our question for the church of today? If it does, how much should this weigh in our conclusions? If it does not, then how can we use Old Testament scriptures at all in evidence for supporting our conclusions?***
- iii. Clearly then, women are not only allowed but encouraged to teach other women (and undoubtedly children as well).
- iv. Some find it interesting to note that Miriam sinned when she became insubordinate to God’s will and incited Aaron against Moses. Objecting to Moses’ prominence and respected position, she obviously became a leader in the rebellion against his authority (since she was the one God punished, not Aaron). As a result of her involvement in instigating the rebellion, God smote her with leprosy. She was healed when she and Aaron repented and Moses prayed for her healing (Num. 12:1-15). Yet we also see examples of male leadership falling into sin. Consider David and Bathsheba. ***So does this fact really have any bearing in our quest to rightly divide the Word? 2 Tim. 2:15***
- b. Deborah, as prophet and judge, led the army of the Lord into successful combat (Judges 4 to 5). (We studied Deborah in study # 3)
 - i. The other reason why Deborah is used to shepherd (lead) Israel is because she was a prophetess - that is she heard and spoke for God. She was a prophet just as Moses, Samuel, Elijah and Daniel were prophets. Hence, because of her "spiritual gift," the people looked to her for counsel, direction and arbitration.
 - 1. ***While this is a true statement. Does that mean that she is qualified to be an elder in the New Testament Christian church context?***

- c. We know that many people would like to include these in the Scriptures so as to make more palatable the idea of equality among the sexes. However, the male and female each have their respective roles as stated in scripture, and it is scripture that must lead us.
- d. **The ultimate questions are :**
 - i. **Does the Bible support the doctrine for a woman to serve as a Pastor or any of the other 4 ministry offices?**
 - ii. **Does the Bible have any scripture that restrict a woman from serving in any of the five-fold offices?**
 - iii. **If it does, does these restrictions apply to all five offices or only some?**

- 2. The New Testament also records ministering women in the Church Age.
 - a. Tabitha (Dorcas) is called a disciple and had a ministry of helps (Acts 9:36).
 - i. Yet this is not specified as one of the five-fold offices.
 - b. Philip had four virgin daughters who prophesied (Act s 21:8,9).
 - i. **Can we accurately interpret this to mean that they served in the office as a Prophet?**
 - c. Euodia and Syntyche were Paul's coworkers who shared in his struggle to spread the gospel (Philippians 4:2,3)
 - i. But this does not state they served in any particular five-fold office. At best it implies that they served in the emerging office as a Deaconess.
 - d. Priscilla was another of Paul's fellow workers in Christ Jesus" (Romans 16:3,4).
 - i. Yet again this does not specify that she served in any of the five ministry offices.
 - e. In Romans 16, Paul greets a multitude of ministering persons, a large number of them women.
 - i. **Even so, what significance does this hold in answering our question?**
 - f. Phoebe, a leader in the church at Cenchrrea, was highly commended to the church at Rome by Paul (Romans 16:1,2). It became obvious to us in our study on that she was indeed a deacon of the church at Cenchrrea. (We studied Phoebe in study # 4). **But, does this therefore apply to any of the five ministry offices?**
 - g. According to some, Junia was identified by Paul as an apostle (Romans 16:7). But many translators and scholars, have since the 13th century masculinized her name to Junias. However, while some take this scripture to mean that she was an apostle, it would appear that the correct interpretation is that she was of note among the apostles. In other words, that the apostles knew of her and her gifts and that they recognized her to be empowered by the Holy Spirit. We cannot have confirmation from this scripture that she was considered an apostle.

A Biblical Survey of the Role of Women in Ministry

Woman created as a helper Genesis 2:18-25

1. Some expositors have taught that all women should be subordinate to any and all adult men because Eve was created after Adam to be his helper ("help meet", KJV). Yet the word ezer ("helper") is never used in the Hebrew Bible with a subordinate meaning. Became apparent in our first two studies that women was not created to be under the rule of her husband. It also should be noted that we have not discussed any scriptures yet that support the conclusion that this meant for women to be subject to any man, we only found that she is subject to her husband. Seventeen out of the twenty times it is used, it refers to God as the helper. Instead of being created as a subordinate, Eve was created to be a "suitable" (kenegdo) helper, or one "corresponding to" Adam. (We studied this in our first study). It ***Even so, what significance does this hold concerning a woman serving in the office of a Pastor? Do we have any scripture that quantifies that any woman is subject to any man? Does this subjective command only apply to the marriage relationship? What about the woman that is not, and never was married. What about the signal parent? What about the women married to an unbeliever?***

Paul's Emphasis on Charismatic Ministry

2. Ministry in the New Testament is charismatic in nature. It is made possible and energized as the Holy Spirit sovereignty distributes spiritual gifts (charismata) to each member of the body of Christ (Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:7-11,27,28; Ephesians 4:7-12; 1 Peter 4:10,11). While some gifts are a spontaneous work of the Spirit and others are recognized ministry gifts to the Body, all are given for service without regard to gender differentiation. For example, the gift of prophecy is explicitly for both men and women: "Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy" (Acts 2:17). That women received and exercised this gift of the Spirit is well attested in the New Testament (Acts 21:9; 1 Corinthians 11:5)
 - a. ***While this is true, can we use this alone to answer the question before us?***
 - b. ***Should everyone that has a gift of prophecy be considered as operating in the office of a Prophet? If not, how do we determine which ones with the gift did, or should, serve in the office of Prophet?***
3. Aquila and Priscilla, whose home served as the church at Colosse, along with Phoebe who served in Cencrea, makes it quite clear that women were certainly given official responsibilities under the authority of men who were appointed as Elders. Paul's letters continually place Priscilla's name in front of her husband's, quite possibly, because she was the "type A" personality in the relationship (Acts 18; Romans 16:3-5) whose gifts were not only recognized by her husband but by the church at large.
 - a. However, they are not specifically designated as pastors or elders.

4. There are many examples in the New Testament of godly women who evangelized unbelievers and encouraged believers, including men. Priscilla and her husband, Aquila, even explained proper doctrine to the preacher, Apollos (Acts 18:26), and the woman at the well in Samaria was largely responsible for the evangelization of her community due to her own personal testimony of Christ (John 4:28-29, 39). However, scripture does not specifically state that these women functioned in any authoritative five-fold ministry office in the church.
 - a. ***So how do we determine if they held one of the offices or if they just evangelized?***
 - b. ***Does scripture have this same vagueness when pointing out men who served or does scripture specifically identify a male serving in the office of Evangelist?***

5. Head of the woman is man, head of man is Christ & head of Christ is God: First Corinthians 11:3-12
 - a. Two alternative translations for kephale ("head"), debated widely by contemporary evangelical scholars, are (1) "authority over" and (2) "source" or "origin." Both meanings can be found in literature of Paul's time. First Corinthians 14:34-36

6. Neither Male nor Female in the Kingdom of God: Galatians 3:28
 - a. Some interpreters restrict the meaning of this triad to salvation by faith or oneness in Christ. This truth is certainly articulated throughout Scripture. ***Yet, can this verse carry a ring of universal application for all our relationships, not just an assurance that anyone can come to Christ?***
 - b. This scripture does not specifically speak to the leadership positions in the Lord's Church. In fact, within its context, it specifically refers to salvation. While it is true that The God of the Bible has "no respect of persons" (Romans 2:11; cf. also 2 Samuel 14:14; 2 Chronicles 19:7; Acts 10:34; Ephesians 6:9). He calls whom He will and gives gifts and ministries as He chooses. ***Does this fact towards a determination that the Bible does not have different Ministry offices reserved for man that exclude women serving in the same position?***
 - c. This verse does teach that all are equal in the sight of God. No one race, social status, or sex is superior. Gentiles are not inferior to Jews; the poor are not inferior to the rich, and; women are not inferior to men. Every believer has access by faith into the very same presence of God through the blood of Christ (Heb. 10:19), and all believers can equally receive the promise of the Holy Spirit and manifest spiritual gifts (Acts 1:13-14 with 2:1-4, 17; 1 Cor. 12:7; 14:26,31; cf. 1 Cor. 11:5). So all believers are equally children of God regardless of sex, race, or social status.
 - d. Obviously, Galatians 3:28 neither changes nor contradicts the qualifications for ministry God established elsewhere in the New Testament. God does not contradict Himself. ***If we use this scripture to***

justify women serving in ministry office on the basis of Galatians 3:28, is this rightly dividing the Word of God? The teaching and instruction of God is consistent throughout the entire New Testament. ***So, how do we bring all these questions into focus and rightly divide the Word?***

- e. Equal but Different: Though all believers are equal in God's sight and He is no respecter of persons, yet the roles and functions of male and female remain forever separate and distinct. Obviously, male and female differences did not cease at the cross, and though equal, God ordained that the woman take a submissive and subordinate role in her relationship to her husband (Eph. 5:22; Col. 3:18). Women play a vital part in the church assembly, and Paul identifies several of them as his "fellow laborers" (Rom. 16:3-5; Phil. 4:2-3).

Yet, the man's functions, while similar, do differ in certain aspects. He is the spiritual head of his house. He is to "love his wife as Christ loved the church" (Eph. 5:25; Col. 3:19), and raise his children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). ***With this noted, does the New Testament, in the church assembly, only permit men to function in five-fold ministry offices?***

- f. God shows no partiality: Acts 10:34
- i. This passage states that God is no respecter of persons is quite clear when taken in its context. God had shown Peter a vision of animals previously considered unclean by Jews, and instructed him to "kill and eat" them (cf. Acts 10:9-16). When Peter refused to eat what was unclean, God responded, "What God has cleansed, that call not thou common" (vs. 14-15). Actually, through this vision God was preparing Peter to accept Gentiles into their fellowship. Previously, Gentiles had been considered unclean by the Jews, and no fellowship with them was allowed: (Acts 10:28).
- God had prepared the heart of Cornelius, a devout Gentile, with his family and friends to receive the message of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. When God sent Peter to the house of Cornelius the full realization of God's grace being extended to the Gentiles dawned upon him. "The Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:"
- The apostle had then realized the full significance of the vision. He understood that the distinction between clean and unclean foods had an application to human beings, and that, contrary to Jewish belief, no people were to be thought of as common or unclean in the sight of God. When Peter said, "God is no respecter of persons," he was stating that God shows no partiality to any one people or nation. Any person who trusts Christ and does what is right, whether he be Jew or Gentile, is accepted by God! God had extended saving grace to the Gentiles!

1. **Would God be a “respector of persons” because He forbids the woman to function in roles He intended for man? Or would he rather be a respector of order?**
 2. The divine order He established must be followed in order for Him to bless. There is confusion in the home when a wife rejects her God mandated subordinate role to her husband and “wears the pants” in the family (cf. Eph. 5:22-24; Col. 3:18; 1 Cor. 11:3, 8-9). Even “secular” statistics have revealed that homes dominated by women make for unhappier marriages, more insecure children, and higher divorce rates. How can God bless a home, a marriage or a family, when either the husband or the wife refuse to submit to the roles in which God intended for them to function? ***But this refers to Gods’ order in the home, so now a new question, does scripture differentiate between the role of men and women in the home verses their role in ministry? If so, what are the differences and how do we apply these to rightly dividing the word of God?***
 3. There is confusion in the church when divine order is not followed. Paul wrote his epistles to the Corinthian church at least in part, to correct their lack of order in their exercise of spiritual gifts (cf. 1 Cor. 12:1; 1 Cor. 14:40). They had a zeal and enthusiasm for God, and undoubtedly the supernatural gifts flowed freely in their services (1 Cor. 12:7-10). However, Paul knew that unless divine order was followed the inevitable confusion would result in the spiritual decline of the whole church. God does not respect persons (Eph. 6:9), but He does respect and require ORDER in the church assembly. ***Why else would He go through so much trouble to make it perfectly clear? So another new question. What is the divine order of God in this matter?***
7. New Testament passage that do restrict women:
- a. There are only two passages in the entire New Testament which might seem to contain a prohibition against the ministry of women (1 Corinthians 14:34 and 1 Timothy 2:12). Since these must be placed alongside Paul's other statements and practices, they can hardly be absolute, unequivocal prohibitions of the ministry of women. Instead, there has to be principles of interpretation outlined within scripture that leads us to how we can rightly divide the Word of God in this matter. ***So more new questions:***
 - i. ***What does the Bible tell us about interpretation of scripture?***
 - ii. ***What can we glean from using original language study to answer these difficult questions.***

- b. There are various interpretations of what Paul was limiting when he said, "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak" (1 Cor. 14:34).
- i. Options include (1) chatter in public services, (2) ecstatic disruptions, (3) certain authoritative ministries (such as judging prophecies), and (4) asking questions during the service. Yet, Paul does allow women to pray and prophesy in the corporate service in other passages. (1 Corinthians 11:5). ***Should not this fact alone beg that we look deeply into the questions before us to rightly divide the Word of God?***
 - ii. Although Paul told the women in the Corinthian church to keep silent, he certainly did not give those instructions to Priscilla. ***Why, was it because both of these woman understood the word of God and were able to explain it with accuracy. (2 Tim 2:15) If the Holy Spirit allowed Deborah to govern a nation and Priscilla to serve as helpers in ministry in Corinth, would it not behoove us to fully understand and follow the New Testament pattern of ministry?***
 - iii. ***Could it be that the reason Paul told the women in the Corinthian church to be quiet was most probably due to lack of proper order and the gathering of believers in the Corinthian context? Does it not seem obvious that Paul would not make the blatant mistake of saying to some women be quiet while encouraging others to speak if there was not a contextual reason for both instructions? Does the Word of God tell us specifically what the context, setting or cultural specifics surrounding these opposing instructions? If it does not, then should we not look into history of the culture and the early Church to aid in the study?***
 - iv. There is no problem at all with woman being able to understand and teach the word of God. And we have seen the Scriptures clearly teach, the pastor is an elder who teaches (1 Tim. 5:17). ***So this brings us back to the question – Does scripture support a woman serving as a Elder or serving in any of the other five-fold offices?***
- c. If we understand that these verses do not constitute a prohibition of women ministries, then still more questions arise. For example, if we base our understanding that this prohibition applied only to the unlearned women in a particular city and time, who were unqualified to teach due to their lack of education and the prevalent cultural sense of propriety that existed at that time. ***Then how do we reconcile that Paul's prohibition is linked to the very order of creation and that he does not mention that this was a local problem? Can we assume that since Paul was writing to the Church at Corinth that these instructions spoke to problems within that assembly? Would it not be reasonable to do so?***

- i. This question can be partially answered by seeing the subject as a whole. We can qualify the prohibition in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 with 1 Corinthians 11:5. Here, the context deals with the church assembly and ordinances (vs.2; 17-ff), and reveals that a woman is allowed to pray and prophesy in the church if she covers her head as a symbol of her willing submission to the headship and authority of the man (vs.3-16), and as long as she does not try to teach or in any way usurp that authority (1 Tim. 2:11-12). Although the Bible doesn't specifically state that women are allowed to share testimonies (of God's provision, healing, blessings, etc.) in the assembly, neither does there appear to be any apparent wrongdoing in it, especially when a special time for sharing testimonies is designated, and as long as all things are done "decently and in order" (1 Cor. 14:40). But yet again we encounter some of the same questions and even get a new question to consider in our quest for rightly dividing the Word of God. ***What significance does Paul's instructions for a women to have her head covered have and how does it apply to the God ordained ministry roles of women according to the New Testament? And, can this scripture be used as evidence that women do have NT provision for serving in one of the five-fold ministry offices?***

- 8. Women cannot usurp authority over a man: First Timothy 2:11-15
 - a. ***What is the meaning and application of Paul's statement, "I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man" (1 Timothy 2:12)?***
 - b. Continuing from Paul's prohibition in 1 Timothy 2:11-12, verse 13 explains why the woman is forbidden to teach or hold an authoritative position over men: "For (because) Adam was first formed, then Eve." God, in His divine scheme, never intended for women to function in roles He delegated to men. Though created equal, each sex was to function in the role God intended. It violated divine order for the women to usurp male authority in their homes. ***Yet again, with this being truth, do we rightly divide the Word of God if we apply this mandate to order between a husband and wife in their home to the good order within the leadership roles of the Church? How does the fact that women were not created to be under the rule of her husband but instead this became a requirement once sin entered in the Garden of Eden apply in answer to these questions? What part, if any, does the redeeming sacrifice of Jesus for sin and the curse of sin play in answering this question?***
- 9. Bishop – husband of one wife: First Timothy 3:1-13
 - a. The word *gunaikas* can be translated as either "wives" or "women," depending on the translator's assumptions concerning the context. One rendering leaves the impression that these are qualifications for deacons' wives; the other suggests this exhortation is addressed to female spiritual leaders.

- b. Although the first-century cultural milieu produced a primarily male church leadership, this passage along with other biblical evidence of female spiritual callings (e.g., Acts 21:9; Romans 16:1-15 ; Philippians 4:2,3) demonstrates that female leadership to some degree was not prohibited, either for Paul's day or for today. ***Should we therefore determine that passages which imply that most leaders were male to indicate that women cannot be leaders of any sort? How can we take these scriptures along with the others we consider and rightly divide the word of truth?***

10. Other thoughts:

- g. It is obvious through our study that women who have spiritual gifts should not be denied a place in ministry because they are woman. The church can be enriched by the spiritual gifts God gives to women. Women have insights and natural intuitions that are peculiar to their gender - their contribution to the church, like the home, is invaluable. Again, the caution is to make sure those gifts are used in the role God has defined. God places every gift in context.
- h. ***Should we then say that women should be denied a place in ministry because they are women? Scripture shows us that believe that women are greatly gifted and underutilized in the church. Even though we may personally believe that many women may be far better than many male pastors, what we feel and what we want have no bearing whatsoever on what the word of God says. So then we are back to the question what does the rightly divided Word of God teach?***
- i. There are no undisputable examples of women serving in any of the five-fold ministry offices in the entire New Testament. However at the same time there is not any undisputable scriptures that indicate that a woman cannot serve in any of the five-fold offices. Several apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers are mentioned and named in the New Testament. ***We do have scriptures that imply women served in evangelistic roles, but were these in the calling and office as an evangelist? We do have the office of evangelist identified in scripture but do we have specific scripture that specifically identify a male that worked in the office of evangelist? Are there undeniable differences between male and female workers in evangelism that would specifically limit the office of evangelist to males? We have scriptures that indicate women served as prophetess and as teachers – can we apply these same questions to the office of prophet and undeniably identify differences that limit the office to males only? We have no specific scripture that references a female working as an apostle or a pastor, are there scriptures that would limit these offices to males that do not limit the other three of the five offices to males?***
- j. Jesus ordained twelve apostles to function in ministry and none were women. ***Can we safely assume that if Jesus intended for us to ordain women to ministry offices He would have set the example by ordaining***

at least one woman as a disciple among the 12? Did Jesus appoint other disciples besides the 12, and if so were any of these women? Is there a difference between the office of the 12 and the other disciples of Jesus? What significance, if any, does the fact that Jesus had many women followers that ministered and bore the message of the messiah have in answering the questions before us? The Bible mentions more than twelve apostles! God also ordained as apostles James (the Lord's brother) (Gal. 1:19), Paul (Rom. 1:1), probably Barnabas (1 Cor. 9:1-6; Gal. 2:9; cf. Acts 14:4,14), and several others (Rom. 16:7). Does the bible identify any women that were identified as disciples?

- k. Is there any evidence that women were among the 70 that Jesus sent out in ministry (Lu. 10:1,17).*
- l. Does early Church history identify women appointed to any of the five-fold ministry offices? If so, what significance, if any, does this fact bear in our quest to rightly divide the word of God.*

Final considerations before we come to a conclusion:

Wow, it seems that we now have more questions than answers.

So how should we proceed from here? This only leads to more questions.

- a. Is it necessary for us to study each of the individual New Testament passages that are highly controversial at this point?*
- b. Is it even possible to get 100% answers to this question?*
- c. If it is, why has a conclusive answer not been decided in 2000 years and what evidence do we have that we can obtain the answer that so many other Godly scholars and Elders of times past were not able to do so?*
- d. Could it be because the answer is somewhere in the middle and most scholars and Elders try to determine that it is either all or nothing?*
- e. Or could it be that the path is narrow and that men seek to define that narrow path off center and thereby lead us astray?*
- f. Could it be that in Gods' revelation to us that he has not given us 100% guidance on this topic in scripture and therefore will honor our decision, if we rely upon the direction of the Holy Spirit, either way?*
- g. Does this study need a conclusion before we can complete the initial ratification of our Church Constitution?*
- h. Can we therefore resolve that we will submit to the elders to make this determination in our behalf once they are duly appointed and have the mandate of the congregation to due diligence to the matter?*