

The Village Church of Barrington Elders developed this paper to clarify the Biblical understanding of women's ministry roles for our church. In regard to this issue we have several perspectives which need to be addressed.

1. What position does the Bible take in the definition of the woman's role in the Church
2. How should men respond to the woman's role in the Church
3. How should women respond to men with respect to their role in the Church

Biblical definition of the woman's role in the Church

The position of male headship is clearly defined in the Bible. Man is given the position as the head of his family. (Eph 5:22-24) Christ is the head of the Church (Eph 2:19-22) and Elders are given the position of administering spiritual leadership over the Church on earth. (1 Pet 5:1-4) One of the many Elder qualifications specifically states that they are to be a man with one wife (1 Tim 3:2), thus the Elder position as well as the leadership of the Church has been designed to be male. God has designed complimentary roles for men and women which results in a partnership working in harmony. We believe the Bible clearly states that Elders are to be exclusively qualified men. Headship is part of the created design and not a cultural interpretation. (1 Tim 2:11-13) A church staff designation of Pastor is also given the designation of Elder which means women are not given the designation of Pastor. A staff designation of Director would be given to qualified women on the ministerial staff.

We believe that women can serve in any ministry role except those specific to the office of Pastor and Elder. We believe that woman can serve in ministry roles given the following criteria are met:

1. She feels led by the Holy Spirit
2. She is submissive to Christ, her husband (if applicable) and church leadership
3. She has affirmation and support of her husband (if applicable) and church leadership
4. There is male leadership/headship within the given ministry and context.

We believe qualified women can be deacons under the authority and protection of the Elders of the Church. We believe qualified women have the ability to teach men under the authority and protection of the Elders of the Church. Phoebe was a deacon and did teach men. (Romans 16:1-2) Priscilla was also recorded as teaching men. (Acts 18:26)

Since headship is clearly defined as God's design in the Bible we need to be aware of the opposition to it which would be our sinful nature tendencies. For men this would be apathy, complacency and abdicating the leadership role to women or to use the authority harshly. For women this would be the pursuit and desire to usurp man's role as leader or rebel against their authority.

How men should respond to qualified women teachers.

Men need to understand that God has gifted many teachers. Each teacher has unique insight and talents which need to be used for God's glory. Women teachers need to be allowed to fulfill what they have been called to do. Men need to be sensitive, understanding and accept their calling. Men need to humble themselves and realize that God can use women teachers to give them perspective and understanding of spiritual insight.

This does not mean that men should become apathetic or lazy when it comes to exercising their own leadership abilities. All men should realize the position they have been called to in leading their families as well as their own role in the Church. Men should be focused and dedicated to their own relationship with God. They should strive to understand what God has called them to do in the Church. Men should never abdicate their God given role of headship to women simply because it is the path of least resistance.

How women should respond to teaching men in the Church

Women need to be sensitive to their role when teaching men. They should understand and accept man's position of headship. Women should be humble and respectful to the men they teach. When possible they should be encouraging men to exercise their God given role of headship.