

Footprints



CHRISTIAN RESOURCES



IN THE
LOCAL CHURCH



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Footprints into Africa

Summary of questions

WOMEN'S MINISTRY IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

1. **OUR STAND BEFORE GOD, HIS WORD AND HIS WILL**
2. **WOMEN'S ROLL IN THE LOCAL CHURCH**

Issues regarding the roles of men and women within the church.

1. Why is the issue of male and female roles so important?
2. What is meant by "unbiblical" female leadership in the church?
3. Where is the Biblical reference that only men should be the pastors and elders of the church?

The theme of God's household runs through I Timothy.

- (a) God's household in I Timothy
 - (b) Male leadership in the church
 - (c) The unavoidable conclusion concerning people's distinctive roles
 - (d) The temporary character of modern doubts.
 - (e) Household management contrasted with simple communication
 - (f) Evil effects arising from disrupting the order of God's household.
4. Should marriage portray the relationship between Christ and the Church?
 5. What is meant by submission?
 6. What is meant by calling the husband head?
 7. Where is the Biblical reference for husbands to be leaders in the home?
 8. If the wife should not follow her husband into sin, what is left of headship? Who determines which acts of his are sinful enough to justify her refusal to follow?
 9. Doesn't headship and submission give impetus to the epidemic of wife abuse.
 10. What about "natural submission" (**Eph 5:21**)?
 11. Some claim that "head" (Greek) "kephale", in **Eph.5:23**, means "source" or "origin" or even "pre-eminence", not "leader"
 12. Doesn't servant hood cancel out headship?
 13. What is meant by "primary" responsibility?
 14. Should the wife clear all details of her life with her husband?
 15. Doesn't Scripture lean towards equality of gender-based roles?
 16. Aren't the arguments for the excluding of women in the pastorate the same as those Christians used to defend slavery in the nineteenth century.
 17. Isn't the submission of wives part of a first-century culture of which the Bible is teaching us to conform to and not offend?
 18. Didn't Jesus break our hierarchical traditions and open the way for women to be given access to all ministries?
 19. Since Paul engaged women in the role of the ministry doesn't it show that his teachings do not mean that women should be excluded from ministry?
 20. But Priscilla taught Apollos, didn't she (**Acts 18:26**)? And she is even mentioned before her husband Aquilla. Doesn't that show that the practice of the early church did not exclude women teaching in the church?
 21. Is it alright for women to teach men under some circumstances?

22. May a pastor authorize a woman to teach Scripture in the church and then continue to oversee her teaching?
23. Why are women said to be able to prophesy in the church, yet are disallowed the role of pastor/elder? Isn't prophecy at the very heart of those roles?
24. What about the freedom of women to publicly prophecy as in:
 - (a) Joel's prophecy recorded in **Acts 2:17** **"In the last days God says 'I will pour out my spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophecy'?"**
 - (b) **Acts 21:9** - As Philip's four daughters prophesied.
 - (c) **1 Cor.11:5** - Women prophesying with her head covered?
(The context here is actually submitting to dignity)
25. What does it mean in **(1Cor.14:34)** that **"women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says"**?
26. Doesn't gender as a basis for distinction of roles in the church fall away with the statement that **"There is neither male nor female – for you are all one in Christ Jesus"** (**Gal. 3:28**)?
27. How is it that God appears to endorse the prophetic or leadership roles of some women in the Old Testament?
28. Are women then more gullible than men, if **1 Timothy 2:14** says that, **"Adam was not the one deceived, it was the women who was deceived and became a sinner"**?
29. Was Paul prone to male chauvinism, having singled out Eve (the women) as more vulnerable to deception than Adam?
30. If a woman is not allowed to teach men in a regular official way, why is it permissible for her to teach children, who are far more impressionable and defenseless?
31. Doesn't selective literalism take place when some commands are permanently valid and others are culturally conditioned?
Factors which help to discern a permanently valid command would depend upon:
 - a) The context of the command
 - b) Comparing other Scriptures relating to the same subject.
 - c) Does it have a limited application or is its requirement rooted in the nature of God, the gospel or creation as God ordered it?
32. Doesn't Paul argue for a head covering for women in worship by appealing to the created order in **1 Cor. 11:13-15**. Why is the head covering not binding today while the teaching concerning submission and headship is?
33. Is it not inconsistent to forbid eldership to women in the church yet send them out as missionaries who tend to assume that very role?
34. If God gives a spiritual gift doesn't He endorse it for the edification of the church and aren't women then being denied the right to use their gifts?
35. If God has genuinely called a woman to be a pastor, then why should she not be called to the position?
36. What is the meaning of authority in relation to the home and the church?
37. If a church does not have elders and it adopts a congregation form of government as the highest authority under Christ and Scripture should the women be allowed to vote?

38. If Junias was a woman and outstanding among the apostles (**Rom 16:7**) doesn't it mean that Paul was willing to acknowledge the authority of women over men in the church?
39. How is it that man leads and teaches because he was created first, before woman (**1 Tim.2:13**) and yet the animals were created before man and they don't have primary responsibility for leading him?
40. Because women are as well educated as men today shouldn't women and men be allowed to be pastors?
41. With reference to Q.1. Why is homosexuality mentioned when discussing gender roles in the home and church.
42. How do we know whether Scripture interpretation is not more influenced by background and culture than by what the authors of Scripture intended?
43. Why is it acceptable to sing hymns and read recommended books written by women, but not permit then to say the same things audibly?
44. Isn't giving women access to all positions and roles a simple matter of justice that even today's society recognizes?
45. If, in the Bible, God is referred to as our "helper" (**Heb.13:6**), and the same word is used to describe Eve as the suitable "helper" of man (**Gen 2:19-21**), doesn't the uniquely submissive role of the woman fall away or even make her more authoritative than the man?
46. Does the husband have unilateral authority with regard to the sexual issue of, (**1 Cor.7:3-4**), **"The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife"**?
47. Are the Biblical roles of men and women also applicable to secular society?
48. How can a Christian single woman enter into the mystery of Christ and the church if she never experiences marriage?
49. Since many leading evangelical scholars disagree on the question of manhood and womanhood, how can any lay person even hope to come to a clear conviction of these questions?
50. If a group of texts is hotly disputed, would it not be a good principle of interpretation not to allow those Scriptures to have any significant influence over our views of manhood and womanhood?
51. Since there is significant disagreement in the church over the roles of men and women, should we not view the issue as relatively unimportant in specifying denominational, institutional and congregational standards of belief and practice.

OUTLINE

WOMAN'S MINISTRY IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

1. OUR STAND BEFORE GOD, HIS WORD AND HIS WILL

2. WOMEN'S ROLE IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

Issues regarding the roles of men and women within the church

Questions about ministering ladies in the Bible

Contemporary issues in the church

3. WHY HAVE A WOMEN'S MINISTRY?

Organising for ministry

The inner life of the believer

Equipped for ministry

Starting a women's ministry

Staffing a woman's ministry

Structure and programmes for women's ministries

WOMEN'S MINISTRY IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

1. OUR STAND BEFORE GOD, HIS WORD AND HIS WILL.

First and foremost, we need to be absolutely certain that if we were to die now we would be accepted into heaven

(1 John. 5:13) “I write these things to you who in the name of the Son of God so that you may that you have life”.

We also need to know the basis on which we will be allowed entry into heaven. Has God reconciled us to Himself?

(2 Cor.5:17,18) “...if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this if from who reconciled us to Himself through Christ..”

Have we, by faith, accepted Jesus as our personal Saviour?

(Eph 2:8,9) “For it is by you have been saved, through.....and this not from yourselves, it is the of God - not by works, so that no one can boast.”

Being reconciles to God will determine what we understand about the Word of God and this determines all our other doctrinal beliefs.

(Mark 4:11,12) “The secret of the Kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on theeverything is said in parables so that, ‘they may be ever seeing but never, and ever hearing but never otherwise they might turn and be forgiven.’ ”

Before we begin we must be sure that the Bible is our absolute authority. That it is the infallible, inerrant, and inspired Word of God. We therefore, see the Bible as consistent and significant in every detail

(2 Tim. 3:16,17) All scripture is God and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

(1 Thes. 2:13) “And we also thank God continually because, when you the Word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the Word of, which is at work in you who believe.”

With regard to the canonicity of Scripture (that is, the list of accepted books which make up the Bible, the Holy Spirit has by the instrumentation of His church, both preserved and selected that of which is the theophneustos (breath of God) and overseen its incorporation in today's Holy Bible.

Tests used to determine canonicity:

- i) authoritative - does it contain the Word of God?
- ii) prophetic - was it written under the authority of an apostle?
- iii) authentic - historically reliable?
- iv) dynamic - does it have life changing power?
- v) acceptable - to the church, the body of Christ?

The 39 books of the Old Testament were completed by the time of Jesus (**Read Matt 5:17, Luke 11:50,51**) Historian, Josephus affirmed the Old Testament.

The New Testament was accepted on the basis of the five canonicity tests.

The Third Council of Carthage (397 A.D.) accepted the 27 present day New Testament books. These were confirmed by the Council of Hippo (419 A. D.) The selection of the canon was thus a spontaneous process that went on in the church till each book proved its own worth.

Translations over the years have done it no harm. Persecutions have caused the canon to flourish and criticisms have been ineffectual.

Sir Frederick Kenyon “The Christian can take the whole Bible in his hand and say without fear or hesitation that he holds in it the true Word of God, handed down without essential loss through the centuries”.

2. WOMEN’S ROLE IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

There is a lot of dissention and division over the role of women in modern church thought. *It generally boils down to women’s God-given talents versus the biblical role of the women.*

Studying the word of God we realize that the root of our blessings lie in obedience. Obedience with *humility* whether we are **male** or **female**,

Jesus Christ assumed a role of **humility** though He was eligible for greater earthly recognition. He chose a far lesser **role to fulfill the will of the Father (Phil. 2:5-11)**

John Piper and Wayne Gruden in their book “*Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood - A response to evangelical feminism*”, overview central concerns regarding the roles of men and women within the church.

Issues regarding the roles of men and women within the church.

1. *Why is the issue of male and female roles so important?*

God created us male and female (**Gen.2:22,23**).

In modern society the separate roles of men and women are disappearing though they are needed. Human gender/sexuality is the very fabric of life and God wills it to be for the holiness of His people and for their saving mission to the world.

Error in sexual identity leads to:

- a) Marriage patterns that do not portray the relationship between Christ and the church (**Eph.5:31-32**).
- b) Parenting practices that do not train boys to be masculine or girls to be feminine.
- c) Homosexual tendencies and increasing attempts to justify homosexuality alliances (ref. also to Q.41).
- d) patterns of unbiblical female leadership in the church that reflect and promote the confusion over the true meaning of manhood and womanhood.

2. What is meant by “unbiblical female leadership in the church?”

Men should bear **primary** responsibility for Christ like leadership and teaching in the church as stated in the Bible. (Further ref. Q13)

3. Where is the Biblical reference that only men should be the pastors and elders of the church?

The Biblical connection between family and church strongly suggests that the headship of the husband at home leads naturally to the primary leadership of spiritual men in the church.

“If anyone does not know how to manage his own, how can he take care of God’s.....?” (1 Tim.3:5)

Just as husbands and fathers ought to exercise godly leadership in their families, so wise mature men ought to be appointed as fatherly leaders in the church (**1 Tim. 3:1-7**). A particularly important role also belongs to more mature women (**1Tim. 5:9-16**), **Titus 2:2-5**). Like wise mothers of the church are to train their spiritual daughters by example and word. But just as in the case of marriage (**Eph.5:22-33**), the respective functions of men and women are **not reversible in all respects**. For example, men – not women – are called on to exercise the decisive fatherly leadership as elders.

(a) God’s household in 1 Timothy.

(1Timothy 3:14-15) “.....I am writing you these instructions so that, if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to themselves in household, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.

These verses summarize the thrust of the whole letter. In the context of **1Tim**, the idea of household order and arrangements is obviously the most prominent. An analogy is presented whereby the order of the church is likened to the order of a human household. (**Read 1 Tim. 3:4-5**).

Indirectly Timothy is presumably even being invited to use the same argument himself, if someone else should have doubts about who should lead in the church.

The theme of God's household, therefore, runs through 1 Timothy and it should not merely be a casual illustration but from **the basis of Christian behaviour.**

- (b) **Male leadership in the church - 1 Timothy** There is a **parallel, authoritative leadership in the church** and authoritative **leadership in the home.**

The church is God's household and needs wise and competent leadership. Male leadership in the home is given by God, to the husband and father (**Eph. 5:22- 6:4**). Church leadership is therefore, sought among men able to lead their families (**1 Tim. 3:5-7**).

Women, by contrast, are not to be placed in authority in the church, their role would not harmonize with the roles of men and women in marriage, as established at creation. **Read 1Tim.2:11-14.** So, the differences between men and women within the context of marriage and family carry over into the church.

But....

- (i) Is there a God-ordained structure of leadership and authority for the family? Should husbands have a unique responsibility for leadership within the family? (**Eph. 5:22 – 6:4; Col. 3:18-21**), indicate they do!(ii) Are these irreversible roles of leadership and submission within the church? **1 Tim. 3:1** – uses “overseer” which indicates a position involving the **exercise of leadership** (verb) “Overseers” are described as “elders” (noun) (**Titus 1:5; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Acts 20:28-31**). Leaders are worthy of honour, when they lead competently (**1 Tim 5:17**); and leaders deserve respect (**Heb 13:17**)

...The principles of submission should operate more broadly in the relations between older people and younger. Younger men are particularly called to submit to older men (1 Peter 5:5a) Humility should characterize everyone (1 Peter 5:5b-6). Clearly, there is a hierarchy of relationships whereby people are to be treated differently each according to their position in relation to the Word of God.

All of us enjoy the same privileges in matters which affect our relationship with the Lord. (Forgiven, justified, sanctified, heavenly inheritance...)

The basic privilege of belonging to the family of God should enhance rather than eliminate the distinctiveness of our gifts. (**1 Cor.12:12-31**).

We too, should **stimulate** rather than destroy our concern to treat each person in the church with the sensitivity and respect due to that person according to gifts, age, sex, leadership status and personality. (**1Tim. 5:1-2**).

Must the church leaders be men? **1Tim 3:2**, assumes the elders to be men as Paul describes the elders as being “the husband of but one wife”. (This could be incidental, but carefully studied, it seems to be absolute.)

According to Paul, the fundamental principles regarding the structures of the family are to be applied to the church as God’s household (1 Tim 3:15)

In particular the structure of family leadership is to be carried over into God’s household: Qualified men are to be appointed as overseers – fathers of the church.

A woman, however capable and gifted she may be, can **never become a father** of a family - she is simply not created as such.

Likewise, a woman may never become a father in God’s household. She may indeed become a “mother” in God’s household, and exercise the roles indicated in (**1 Tim. 5:2; 3:11; 5:9 -10,14; Titus 2:3-5; 2 Tim 1:5**).

The life of the church never overthrows but rather enhances the life of the family, based on God’s design from creation

Distinctive responsibilities are set out in Paul’s teaching in **1 Tim. 2:8-15 (v.8 men - v.9 - 15 women)**. These are best understood from the fact that **men and women are not interchangeable within God’s household, just as they are not within human families**.

In **v.12** the “**women are not to teach or to have authority over a man**”, this being the natural outcome of the analogy between the church and the human family, in which the wife is not to have authority over the husband (**Eph 5:22-24**).

Paul appeals to the background of the order of creation (**1Tim 2:13**), in which the pattern for a husband’s headship is initially established.

In **1 Tim 2:14** Paul appeals to the fall where male and female roles were not identical.

Is this then not perpetuating a sinful post-fall relationship where a marriage should be experiencing Christian liberation?

It certainly would seem that way, but what was it like before the fall? Adam and Eve were created equally before God. Eve was given the role of helper to Adam. The role of helper was intended to be a supportive role. It was never the intention of God that we should regard one role as inferior to another. Different parts of the body are supportive of the main. People, not God, have labeled a person’s worth or status!

Paul reminds us that the central role of women is child-bearing (**2:15**), but today, culture dictates that child-bearing is inferior.

Paul draws his general principles from **Gen. Chap. 2 & 3**. He understands God’s purposes in creating marriage and the family and **excludes women from being overseers** on the basis of general Biblical principles concerning the family, not on the basis of some temporary cultural circumstances.

(c) **The unavoidable conclusion concerning people's distinctive roles.**

- There will always be those who will resist the Biblical fact that the role of the husband and wife is irreversible. The Bible clearly contradicts radical **egalitarian philosophy**.

(Egalitarian philosophy teaches the equality of mankind:- saying that men and women are in virtually all respects interchangeable and that their roles ought to have no relation to their sexual constitution.)

- **Christian love transforms the family.**

Husbands and wives begin to practice the Word of God in **(Eph.5:22-23)**, and begin to imitate the love that Christ has for the church and the submission that the church ought to practice to Christ. As our love for Christ deepens so does our imitation of His example intensify. Christian love transforms the family

- **Christ led in submission to God, His Father, (Phil. 2:7,8).**

In **(Eph 5: 22-23)**, husbands have responsibilities like those of Christ while wives have responsibilities like those of the church. Their respective responsibilities are not simply interchangeable, any more than the roles of Christ and the church are interchangeable.

- **Church leadership should resemble that of the intimate family.**

God demands the observance of household order. Quarrels, heresies and immaturity must be dealt with rather than simply ignoring and tolerating them. The home requires loving involvement where there are sins and difficulties, not mere withdrawal or tolerance. This responsibility lies with the God appointed father of the family. His leadership is not just a matter of laying down formal rules but of setting a good example that naturally engenders admiration and that people attempt to emulate.

The natural qualifications for an overseer points the church away from looking for woman towards looking for men who according to Biblical hierarchy are able to lead their families well **(1 Tim.3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9)**.

(d) **The temporary character of modern doubts.**

Doubts and oppositions seem to arise from temporary moral error and weaknesses in the church and society at large.

- (i) When the Bible is no longer acknowledged to be the Word of God, it is no longer clear that there is a divine standard for the church to obey, and love for Christ grow cold. This is often present in modern liberal theology.
- (ii) Modern technology and social change cause us to question the life of previous generations, especially the role of the woman.

- (iii) Radical philosophical and political egalitarianism, coupled with sin and envy, has generated hatred of all differences of mankind. Many today think that the rich, the powerful, the gifted, and the possessors of official authority must be brought down to the level of the masses, even if they obtained their situation and functions righteously.
- (iv) Sincere concern exists about past and present oppression of women and unnecessary restrictions on the use of the gifts of women. Such evils do exist and should be opposed, but they do not justify radical egalitarian conclusions
- (v) Evangelical churches today are seen primary as places for hearing sermons or enjoying religious entertainment, thus identification is with the church building in contrast to the Biblical emphasis that those united to Christ are the real church. This then leaves an impoverished communal life as Christians.

The problem is....

- is that we have too little experience of the Biblical practice of common family life.
- There may also be no regard for the necessity of church discipline

Often church “leaders” are brought into prominence because of their useful gifts and are nothing more than:

- Gifted speakers
- Counsellors (paid ministers),
- Managers of church property and/or programmes

Understandably, people then may fail to see why appropriately qualified women may not exercise the key functions they associate with leadership. In fact Christians will not fully understand the logic leading to male overseers until they come to grips with what the church should really be as God’s household.

(e) **Household management contrasted with simple communication.**

The man’s encouraging leadership properly understood within the context of the family should enhance and not threaten the rest of the family.

Apart from exercising **authority over the children** the married woman manages **her home environment, (1 Tim 5:14)**. The clothing food, money, fields, charitable gifts, purchases and sales, and her servants. Management can also be exercised within **society** particularly the marketing of her domestic produce. (**Prov. 31:10-31**, the food, clothing and linen.

- But what about Christian women with gifts and skills in communication and management?

Then they should be exercised for the benefit of the family and similarly in the extended family - the church (1 Peter 4:10)

Wise leaders should encourage the use of gifts, but their use should not

overthrow the God-given leadership of the men. He needs to lead his family using the fullest conversation and consultation to delegate authority. The managerial hierarchy is fixed by God in **Eph. 5:22 – 6:4**, and there emerges a **leader where the buck stops**. The roles of men and women in marriage are at this point irreversible; not interchangeable. (All mankind, though, has management of the subhuman creation)

(Husbands who selfishly abuse their authority will naturally reap a reaction from oppressed women. They will consider a pattern of complete interchangeable responsibilities the only reasonable alternative consistent with the freedom given in Christ, yet the actual goal of Scripture is richer.)

- **But what about the proven ability of women to lead?**

Several factors need consideration here:

1. For women the types of leadership and management in **Prov.31:10-31** are those which harmonise with the husbands, **Prov. 31:23**.
2. Bold but humble communication of the truth by wives to their husbands need not undermine their husbands' authority, any more than Paul intended to undermine general state authority by his criticisms of the actions of particular state authorities. (see **Acts 16:37, 22:25: 23:3-5**, meaning that a true high priest would not give such an order; **25:10-11**)
3. Widows, divorcees and absent fathers sometimes impel women to assume roles of leadership though this is far from the ideal.
4. Cases involving domineering wives show that by the grace of God some good can be accomplished even though people and actions are contaminated by sin.

None of these cases, though excuses the biblical authority of the man

In particular, we must avoid confusing leadership with ability to understand the Bible and ability to communicate its teaching to others.

(f) **Evil effects arising from disrupting the order of God's household**

Evil inevitably arises when we deviate from God's pattern. Disintegration of household order within the church adversely affects both our consciousness of being in God's family and the quality of love within the Christian families. The absence of godly, fatherly leadership within the church makes mockery of God being the Father and author of the great deed of redemption, which embodies His fatherly rule, care and discipline.

Church order deviates from the ideal by:

- lacking overseers
- lacking qualified overseers
- appointing women overseers
- by redefining the office of overseers

The above tends to distort people's experience of the Church as a family and so God's fatherhood is misunderstood.

Radical egalitarianism desensitizes Christians towards the age, sex and position of others spoken of in (1Tim.5:1-2, 17).

Relationships become more detached, and the realities of being a member of the family of God recede out of the Christians consciousness and their practice. Christian family is also adversely affected. The whole process becomes confused when the distinction between men and women and fathers and mothers are overlooked. There are no models to build on.

Externally the feminist movement aims at freeing women from oppression, but such freedom in the true sense can come only through the divine powers of liberation and love contained in Jesus Christ; anything else only constitutes some form of slavery to sin.

Today's society desperately needs freedom and renewal through the love of Christ. That freedom comes most effectively when we are able, under God to harness the full, rich resources that He provides. We are to teach people, above all, to embody in their families the model of Christ set out in (Eph. 5:22-23

We hinder true liberation if we deviate from the pattern of male overseers because it would hinder the liberating power of God working in His household.

Blindly obeying a formal rule is insufficient. Our common life should be richly embodied in the life of the church. Only Christ's love, fully expressed, in the Christian community will bring to realization the freedom, power and beauty derived from the manifestation of the glory of God in His household, (Eph. 3:10)

3. **WHY HAVE A WOMEN'S MINISTRY?**

To create a climate where acceptance does not have to be achieved, but is automatically granted. Church-hoppers are likely to stop looking when they find a genuine love, combined with sound teaching.

E.g. - Supplying enough food to those who are new to the town and are looking for a new church.

- Supplying a basket of needs:

Maps, restaurant guides, public transportation schedules, shopping bargain areas etc.

Woman of all ages are looking for women who are ahead of them in life experiences.

E.g. - Young business woman need input from the career woman on how to be a Christian in the market place.

Working Women

Some are '**Late mothers**' and haven't time to participate in women's ministries. If she returns to work immediately then time is a precious commodity and she will want to spend it with the child and husband. **She will need specifically tailored programmes to draw her in.**

Suggestion: An open house at which she can sit and talk to several women. It should require little from her intellectually or emotionally, but replenish her soul. She must be able to take without giving back.

Educated Women

They are not necessarily spiritual but **they expect higher quality programming.** Everything must be well done. Upgrade to a standard of excellence to reach her need for spiritual growth.

Singles and Single Women

They are **hungry for fellowship and have little time to receive it.** Evening programmes of high value will attract her. She is driven by her need for Christian **adult** company.

Senior Women

They generally **need a day time programme of fellowship.** Having older children these mothers can encourage the new mothers to stay at home and care for their babies even though it may mean a reduced standard of living.

Some empty-nested women need reassuring of the natural pressures and tension of the mid-life period.

How can they rely on God from one who has a transparent formula.

ORGANISING FOR MINISTRY

We shall organize but not to the extent of organizing out the Holy Spirit.

For **small churches** arrangements can be made by phone and announced at the Sunday services.

For **larger congregations** planning is necessary.

Planning means getting organized. A group of empowered ladies must come together and plan. There must be a Biblically based motive for the existence of the meeting. It must meet a felt need.

Should the church's stated purpose be to "exalt the Lord, evangelize the community, and edify and equip believers" then the women ministries should embody the same principles.

Women are not to usurp men's leadership but to work along side them and build up God's Kingdom together.

THE INNER LIFE OF THE BELIEVER

A Heart For God

Time must be spent with God for the original fire we had for Him to be well tended and the flame kindled for our sakes and for the sakes of those whose lives we impact.

Communication with God involves listening, talking and times of silence. **As a leader, that life must be centred in God.** His Word speaks to us, we speak back in prayer.

It may include reading, memorizing, and meditating on the Word of God as well as praying and singing. The goal is to worship God and set the stage for obeying His voice.

Establishing God's Word in Your Life

1. Pray - Ask for passage understanding
2. Read - With concentration on the Word of God
3. Study - Use of commentary E.g. Matthew Henry

The Source of Power

Prayer is the source of power. A leader's life must be characterized by communication with God through prayer.

Daniel 2:14-19 For God to reveal the mystery of the king's dream to him **Neh.1:4**

Prayed his way through the rebuilding of the wall

In addition to prayer, meeting with God should involve thanks giving, confession and especially worship.

Beware of shopping list prayers.

Satan will fight to keep us from daily worship and deliberate intercession.

The difference that prayer makes is the impact of that ministry on the lives of others.

Journaling

Useful for assisting others in need as well as to record daily activities, thoughts, battles, victories, people met, lessons learned, sins recognized and confessed.

Choices

God has given us the responsibility of making choices that can determine our eternal future and to a great extent, the direction of lives on earth.

The most important decision we make concerns our relationship with God.

- Have I been born into His family?
- Have I been filled with His Spirit?
- Does my life reveal that I belong to the Lord?

- Will I be fully available to God to be all that He wants me to be and all that I need to be for the women around me?

EQUIPPED FOR MINISTRY
PART ONE

(Temperament, life experiences and spiritual gifts)

God's preparation for us:

Jer.1:5 “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you”

Ps.139:13-16 “My frame was hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in Your book..... One of them came to be”

To further mould us God has given us ‘good’ and ‘bad’ experiences.

At the new birth - a new creature

Having made us God wants to use our temperament.

He gave us a personality which would mesh with the spiritual gift we would receive at our new birth.

3 Cor 5:17. “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new; the old has gone, the new has come!”

Then at the new birth there is an indwelling of the Holy Spirit

1 Cor 3:16 “Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit.....in you?”

**In Christ, all our future potential is realized
through the sanctifying process of the Holy Spirit**

EQUIPPED FOR MINISTRY

PART TWO

(Goals, priorities and time management)

Our Part:

How we select our goals and priorities and manage our time will control the extent to which God can use us.

Our desire to be available to God for His use can be a great motivation in letting God make the most of who He has made us.

Setting Goals

This determines the direction of our lives.

We can be like **Js 1:6-8** - “**tossed by the wind.**” (not fully trusting God)

Luke 2:52 - While Jesus was going about His father’s business

“He grew inandand in favour with.....and.....”

Jesus grew intellectually (in the Word of God), physically (grew up) spiritually (with God) and socially (with people)

If goals are to be reached they must be measurable.

Set a time for reaching such goals and be realistic to avoid discouragement.

E.g., if witnessing is a spiritual goal decide on how many people to be reached within a week, month, year etc.

Our behaviour will determine our ability to perform. If a goal is really a goal it will affect our priorities and how we use our time

Don’t make goals for others to achieve make them for yourself

Selecting priorities

Jesus’ priority was **doing the will of God (Jn 5:30)**

This meant making people a priority (**Matt.9:26** - “**like sheep without a shepherd**”)

There is no flawless priority list. It’s not always possible to put God first, family second and others last.

Envisage 3 spheres:

Inner core

Middle layer

Outer crust

(Each free to move in relation to the other.)

Inner core:-

Our personal relationship with God, (**Matt 6:33**)

“Seek.....His kingdom and His righteousness.”

When the core is solid it provides strength for the outer layers.
The inner core leave no resilience if the outer layers are dented.

Middle layer:- Family and home. This includes self, husband and children needing to be well cared for. Single people fit in here too. Without the core of self and those close to you, physically, emotionally and spiritually, there is nothing we can give to others.

Outer crust:- the world around us. Each person's outer layer is unique. It is made up of job, friends and ministry contacts.

Managing Our Time.

Jesus Christ had perfect control of time. He was never hurried or harried!
He had time: for teaching (**Matt 5:1,2**).

For solitude and praying (**Mk. 1:35-37**) and

For ministry (**Jn. Chp 13-16**)

God has given us time. We should allocate it wisely, balancing our day - not wasting it nor over-exhausting ourselves. God may want to bring people into our lives who either need Him as Saviour or for spiritual growth.

To have time for ministry we have to identify the important and decide to proceed whether we feel like it not. The essence of self-discipline is putting off self-gratification until later. The first step in arranging time better is being willing to deny yourself things that in themselves might be acceptable. Women's ministries should not be a frenzied job but time well managed. Start where you are and don't become overwhelmed or discouraged. Allow God to work in your life so that your time is His time.

Carry a calendar notebook. A month-at-glance format encourages spreading the load out more evenly. Look at your calendar or check with others before agreeing to do something.

Prayerfully plan a days activities. Take into account the 80/20 principle - 80% of the job is done in the first 20% if the time. Don't waste time over-completing a task.

With numerous tasks - make a list.

A = major priorities, B = medium priorities C = lowest - these may be delegated or shelved. Delegate items you can't do, items that others can do better, or things you shouldn't be doing.

Discipline telephone time

Monitor calls. If too busy reschedule a call for a better date. Make phone appointments just as other things are scheduled (If you are the caller always ask whether it is a good time to call)

Schedule relaxation days.

Possibly use them positively as days of reflective solitude with God. **Make Him Lord of your Sabbaths.** Do whatever charges your batteries, even if it means cleaning out the spare room junk. Whatever relaxes.

Regularly exercise.

This is important to well being and gives higher energy levels.

Note natural energy highs and lows.

Utilize the high moments to full advantage

Keep clothing in good repair and ready to wear

Co-ordinate colour schemes. Seek advice if necessary on what looks best. Thin out what is not worn.

Define “neatness” in each area of your house

Establish a goal when cleaning so as not to over-clean.

Replace items in their set places after use.

Plan menus.

Avoids last minute trips to the supermarket. Clean the fridge before shopping. Arrange shopping lists according to the supermarket layout.

Shop alone. Don't shop when hungry and avoid busy shops and hours, if possible.

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Recap

Why have a women's ministry?

To create a climate where acceptance does not have to be achieved, but automatically granted and how all the different stages of women need to be catered for within the church.

Organizing for ministry

Well organized but not to the extent of excluding the Holy Spirit.

The inner life of the believer

Need for a heart for God and His source of power

Equipped for ministry

Our temperate, life experiences and spiritual gifts.

Equipped for ministry - part one

Our temperament, life experiences and spiritual gifts.

Equipped for ministry - part two

Our goals, priorities and time management.

STARTING A WOMEN'S MINISTRY

Lay the Foundation

The body of women's ministries is to function to the glory of God. Begin by selecting gifted people in the church to associate with those who have needs. Choose about 3 - 7 women to represent the main council which should be made in agreement with the pastoral leadership.

Qualification for Council members

Consider character, experience, leadership ability, and age.

Give people a chance even if they lack spiritual maturity!

Have a variety of temperaments. Similar temperaments may get along well but the council will lack balance.

Council structure

Select a leader/coordinator

Choose responsibilities according to interests and experience.

Appoint a secretary

Call a treasurer

The Work of the Council

Prayer in planning. Begin and end with prayer. This is not a business venture. Pray in between if you lack wisdom (**Jn 1:5**)

If there is resistance, pray and wait don't waste fruitless time and effort..

The Council Meetings.

Plan a convenient time. Informal or formal. With or without food.

Assign a portion of each meeting to leadership training.

Managing Meetings

Essential for communication and team building. To avoid frustration and the wasting of valuable time:

- Set an Agenda
- Prioritise the agenda: and always deal with A first, then B, then C. etc (deal with F later, even if it won't take a minute!)
- Set a time limit for each item to be discussed
- Appoint a time keeper
- Assign tasks and follow up with report backs
- Note unfinished business
- Build in a balance with those who are cautious, they keep a committee from making hasty, excessive decisions, while those who are specific help a committee take action.
- Don't force every issue to a conclusion
- Give clear summaries often and draw to a close on a constructive note.

- End on time, thank everyone and set the next meeting date. If there is a deadlock and extra time is needed allow grace to those who have to leave or schedule another meeting date.

Ministry descriptions

When ministry descriptions are written their contents can be crystalised as they are the product of revised thought. Written descriptions also help in the recruitment of volunteers and recruits find it easier to fit their gifts and abilities into required jobs. Writing provides a standard for evaluating performance.

STAFFING A WOMEN'S MINISTRY

Survey the women in the church

It will help identify their needs and locate those who can meet the needs but don't do a survey until ready to use the results.

Stages in a women's life and how they affect her ministry

Take into account the many stages in a women's life when considering programmes, recruiting leadership and encouraging attendance. While wanting to include everyone, there should be no guilt attached to women if their stage of life does not permit involvement.

To recruit the best possible leadership.

1. Pray earnestly before recruiting
2. Observe the women in the church - **some grow into maturity by serving.**
3. Interview the prospective candidate - personally seek her needs and goals over coffee. Let her know that she is valuable whether she volunteers or not.
4. Give her time to respond. She may need help in discovering her gift. *Allow her to have and to check her family commitments.*

When a volunteer commits herself

1. Define expectations - especially **length of service**, job description, responsibilities, and authority.
2. Support her with praise. Supply her with adequate information to fully prepare her. Thank her.
3. Make meetings efficient - set agendas.
4. Annually evaluate on overall impressions of the ministry and specific roles in it, whether there was any fruit or personal blessing, any discoveries or affirmation of gifting and abilities? Enquire about helpful input or effective training received. Discuss current personal and ministry goals, Discover their family's response to the demands of their ministry Whether God is leading them to serve longer. If not what has been learned for the passing on to others. Discuss whether there is a different ministry they would like to try the following year.

Summary.

It is not how many women are ready for high levels of ministry today, but what is being done to prepare tomorrow's leaders? How many women can be trained before going "down"? Train as many as possible in low levels of ministry. Use two when perhaps one is doing the work and ten instead of one or two (for book reviews) Develop a reservoir of experienced leadership to avoid a dying ministry. Have an understudy – second- in-charge. Always choose with the future in view.

STRUCTURE AND PROGRAMMES FOR WOMEN'S MINISTRIES.

Three factors affect the development of women's ministry

- age of the church
- it's context,
- it's size

The age factor:

Infant churches: (up to 3yrs old)

Have basic levels of programming. Change is easy to effect

3 - 12 years:

Planning is often by trial and error. Learn from experienced ladies

12 - 20 years

Struggle with identity crisis. Tension between pioneers and those who joined within last 5 years. Enthusiasm for new programmes diminishes with the age of the church. In this church time is needed to win the support of all the women before instituting new programmes or unfamiliar practices.

20 - 40 years

Programmes could be fixed in place whether they work or not. By significantly restructuring the women you can open new paths of entry into the church. Women can be a vital force for growth at this stage of development.

+ 40 years and historical churches over two full generations old:

Almost plateaued or declining in membership. These churches can grow and be exciting if they have new and dynamic leadership or if they have experienced a spiritual renewal or a sociological transfusion.

The context factor

The geological location and church's image change within the urban suburban or rural context and affects women in ministry.

Urban churches Generally under 300 people, and have slow to moderate growth. It's ministries reflect the need of the community: food, clothes, support, counseling. Special attention will be needed to keep the programmes Bible centred, evangelistic and committed to discipleship. Beware of being side-tracked from the major mission of proclaiming salvation through Jesus Christ.

The Suburban church: Depending on the age of the community, ministry is often to the baby boomers ('born 1946 - 1964') These people are a large segment of the population of

today with little time to give or receive ministry. They are selective consumers who usually participate only in what meets their needs since most are at least part-time workers outside the home.

Rural church: Their location is in small towns or within agricultural communities. Minimal growth takes place unless there is drastic land development. Changes should be made slowly and the women should be prepared in advance for it. Whatever the location, be cautious and fight the tendency to minister only to the known flock.

Size factor

Small church: (up to 30 women)

Generally controlled by lay people or part-time staff. Functions as one big happy, casual family. Programming is intimate, little advance publicity is needed but small churches still need organization.

1. **Structure**

A women's ministry director to oversee all the women's activities. A Bible Study co-ordinator. An evangelism co-ordinator and a service co-ordinator (for practical needs) This four-member team should meet monthly for prayer, planning and evaluation.

2. **Programmes**

Bible study and encouragement.

Plan one weekly meeting to include Bible study, prayer and fellowship. Use published Bible study material. Add special monthly features, demonstrations or crafts. Provide child care.

3. **Evangelism**

Develop seasonal outreach. Use Christmas and Mother's Day, Easter, etc.

4. **Service**

Delegate nursery work, kitchen, meals, baby showers, wedding showers etc., to where talents lie.

Church plant. Hold meetings in an informal place - school hall etc. Work together as a unit without specific job descriptions with perhaps one coordinator and a secretary. Look to Outreach (doll making trip to a historic town, Christmas craft mission.)

Build believers after an evangelistic thrust, or a morning Bible study, or personal discipling, or a Day of Prayer or after a yearly retreat.

Care Help in the local Crises Pregnancy Centre, showers for new mothers, meals services, refreshment after Sunday service.

Midsized church

100-175 in Sunday attendance. A manageable size. Hands on leadership with an emphasis on shepherding. Use about seven women ranging between the ages of 20 and 70.

- to meet monthly to oversee two circle studies (am and pm) which meet weekly.
- have a yearly outreach dinner
- support activities with a Christian bias.

- organize a dinner for college students
- encourage women in EE111 and its follow-ups
- have a monthly news letter with book reviews.

(175 – 255 can be known as an awkward size. Too large for multiple leadership and too small for two worship services)

Large Church

225-450 congregation; (**women numbering 100 to 349**) Here women's ministries can become part-time staff position. Leaders need to work through other leaders. Training leaders and trusting others with the ministry. Ministry must be done through committees without losing touch with individual women.

Programming structure:

Bible Study - meet weekly for formal teaching and prayers and includes informal fellowship. Support, Encouragement and Service and Missions coordinators will be needed in this church structure too.

Huge Church (400 – 750) and **Mega Church** (+1500)
(over 350 women)

Women's ministries are important and more difficult in huge and mega churches - a full time staff position would be called for. Mega churches should liaise with each other as they face similar problems. A published handbook including job descriptions and ministry suggestions are profitable to Mega churches. These churches are pacesetters and are able to offer multiple ministry and service options. These churches can reach a wide range of needs among women.

Problems arise in:

- recruitment of volunteers;
- squabbles over space
- lack of spontaneity
- scheduling events which conflict with other ministries

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The staffing structure and programmes of each church will vary according to the size of the church and the needs of the community involved.