

Small Group Discussion + Leader Guide

Sunday - August 30, 2026

Preached By: Matt Alexander

“God’s Order for Men and Women in the Church”

Message #4

“Set In Order: God’s Design for His Church” 1 Timothy Series

1 Timothy 2:8-15

Homiletical Bridge:

CIT: Paul set the distinct roles of men and women in order for the Ephesian church.

Thesis: We must set the distinct roles of men and women in order for our church.

Proposition: I want Fusion Church to set the distinct roles of men and women in order.

Probing Question: How do we set the distinct roles of men and women in order for the church?

- 1. The Conduct of Men — v. 8**
- 2. The Character of Women — vv. 9–10**
- 3. The Calling of Women — vv. 11–12**
- 4. The Creation Order — vv. 13–14**
- 5. The Continuance of Faithfulness — v. 15**

How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed to help your group move from hearing the Word to living it. Work through the sections at a pace that fits your group. Not every question needs to be answered — choose what will generate the most honest and helpful conversation.

Opening Question

Before diving into the sermon content, start with this question to get everyone talking:

- *Think of a time when you followed instructions you did not fully understand at first, and they turned out to be exactly right. What was that experience like?*

Key Takeaways

These are the central truths from the sermon your group should walk away holding:

1. Jesus Christ is the Head of His church, and He orders His church through His Word — not through culture, tradition, or personal preference.
2. Men and women possess equal dignity before God, but equal worth does not require identical roles.
3. Biblical male leadership begins not with privilege but with spiritual responsibility — specifically, with prayer and holiness.
4. God values women adorned not primarily with outward appearance but with godliness and good works.
5. Paul's instructions about the roles of men and women are grounded in the creation order, not in first-century culture — making them applicable across every generation.

6. A woman does not need the pastoral teaching office to possess tremendous spiritual significance in God's kingdom.
7. God's order is not something we obey in order to be saved. It is something we increasingly desire to obey because Christ has saved us.
8. Our role is not our Savior. Christ saves. Our calling is to faithfully walk in whatever assignment He gives us.

Scripture Reading

Read 1 Timothy 2:8–15 aloud together as a group before beginning the discussion questions.

Discussion Questions

Section 1 — Setting the Table

These questions address the foundation the pastor laid before moving into the text.

1. The pastor opened by asking: "Who has the authority to order Christ's church?" How would you have answered that question before hearing this sermon? Has your answer changed or sharpened at all?
2. The sermon established that equal worth does not require identical roles. Do you find that distinction easy or difficult to hold? Why do you think our culture struggles with it?
3. Thomas Schreiner was quoted as saying our hearts and minds must be captive to the Word of God. What does it look like practically when someone approaches a difficult passage with that posture — and what does it look like when they do not?

Section 2 — The Conduct of Men (v. 8)

4. Paul's first instruction to men is to pray — not to take charge or assert authority. What does it say about biblical leadership that it begins with prayer rather than position?
5. The pastor described a father who is physically present at the family table but spiritually absent — his chair is "empty." Have you seen this in your own experience, either in your family of origin or in the church? What does a spiritually present man actually look like in day-to-day life?
6. Paul connects holy hands with the absence of anger and quarreling. Why do you think unresolved conflict or a pattern of anger would undermine a man's spiritual leadership? What does this challenge you to address personally?

Section 3 — The Character of Women (vv. 9–10)

7. Paul's concern is not about braids or jewelry specifically but about what we are trying to display. What are some ways — beyond outward appearance — that people in our culture seek to display status, worth, or importance?
8. The sermon offered this contrast: the world says "make sure they notice how you look," while God says "let them notice what grace has done in your life." What does it look like for that shift to happen in a person's actual life?
9. Charles Spurgeon was quoted: "The adornment of a Christian here below, is his holiness, his piety, his consistency." Which of those three words — holiness, piety, or consistency — do you find most challenging to maintain, and why?

Section 4 — The Calling of Women (vv. 11–12)

10. The pastor identified two errors the church must reject: one that says there are no distinctions between men and women in the church,

and one that says women are not important to ministry. Which error do you think is more common in evangelical churches today? Which is more dangerous?

11. The sermon asked not only "What can women not do?" but also "Are we equipping women to do everything Scripture calls them to do?" How would you honestly assess Fusion Church — or your previous church experience — against that second question?
12. The orchestra illustration described beauty coming when different instruments follow the same score under the same conductor. How does that image help you think about the relationship between men and women in the church? Where does the illustration feel most helpful, and where does it feel incomplete?

Section 5 — The Creation Order (vv. 13–14)

13. Paul grounds his instructions not in Ephesian culture but in Genesis. Why does it matter that his reasoning goes back to creation rather than to a specific cultural moment? What difference does that make for how we apply this passage today?
14. The sermon noted that Romans 5 places the responsibility for humanity's fall on Adam, even though Eve was the one deceived. What does that tell us about how God views the weight of responsibility that comes with leadership?
15. The blueprint illustration described what happens when load-bearing walls are moved — the house is not improved but compromised. Where have you seen the church attempt to "redraw the blueprint" on gender roles? What were the results?

Section 6 — The Continuance of Faithfulness (v. 15)

16. The pastor was careful to explain what verse 15 cannot mean — that a woman earns salvation through childbearing. Why is it important to establish what a difficult passage does not mean before exploring what it does mean?

17. The sermon emphasized that Paul lands on "faith, love, holiness, and self-control" as the real emphasis of verse 15. How do those four qualities speak to both men and women equally, regardless of role?
18. The Susanna Wesley story closed the sermon. She could not see the full impact of her faithfulness while she was living it. How does that reality — that we rarely see the full fruit of our obedience — affect how you think about your own calling and assignment from God?

Practical Applications

Choose one or two of these to discuss as a group, or encourage individuals to select one to act on before your next meeting.

For Men:

- Identify one specific area where you have been spiritually passive — in your home, your friendships, or your church involvement. Write down one concrete step you will take this week to assume responsibility rather than avoid it.
- Evaluate your prayer life honestly. Is prayer the foundation of your leadership, or is it an afterthought? Commit to a specific time and place to pray daily this week.
- Ask someone close to you — a spouse, a close friend, or a family member — whether they experience you as spiritually present. Listen without defending yourself.

For Women:

- Reflect on where you are investing your spiritual energy. Are you investing in the things Scripture calls you to — discipling, teaching other women, serving, praying, showing hospitality? Identify one area to grow in.
- Consider whether you are allowing the world's mirror — appearance, success, comparison — to define your worth more than God's Word does. Bring that honestly before God in prayer this week.

- Think of a younger woman in your life who could benefit from your spiritual investment. Take one step toward that relationship this week.

For the Whole Group:

- Discuss together: Is your group — and your church — a place where both men and women are being equipped and encouraged to flourish within God's design? What is one thing your group could do to strengthen that?
- Memorize Colossians 1:18 together this week as a reminder that Christ — not culture, not preference, not tradition — is the Head of His church.

Closing Reflection

The pastor closed with this prayer:

"Lord, whatever You have called me to be, wherever You have called me to serve — help me be faithful."

Take a moment of silence. Then invite each group member to complete this sentence before closing in prayer:

"Lord, You have called me to _____. Help me be faithful."

Closing Prayer

Close your time by praying together — thanking God that His design is not a burden but a gift, asking Him to give each person clarity about their calling, and surrendering the desire to rewrite what He has already written.

Series: Set in Order — God's Design for His Church | Fusion Church Madison