

Title: A Mature Church Knows Their God-Given Roles

Text: 1 Timothy 2:8-15

We live in an age of gender discontent.

Why do I say this? Because gender has gone from a singular definition meaning the sex of a human (male and female) to a spectrum of gender identity.

We now culturally accept that a man dressing as a woman is to be called and treated as a woman.

Or a woman dressing and acting as a man, is to be referred to as a man. And any variation in between.

My wife and I love to watch singing competitions. The recent winner of one of these competitions is an open homosexual who has a combined look of male and female.

This person is an amazing vocalist and frankly deserving of the win he achieved.

I am careful not to judge this gentlemen because I am called to not judge, but to pray for his rescue. And I do hope the Lord grabs his heart for salvation.

But I couldn't help but notice that his confusing look with both male and female components, is indicative of the culture we live in.

I have a deep sorrow for this man and for our culture who has turned its back on the beautiful order that God has, in His goodness, created for our world.

Of course, this is to be expected from the world who doesn't desire the things of God. Paul makes this clear in...

Romans 1:18 (ESV)

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

The world is not interested in God's plan or what God has to say.

They need to be rescued and given a new heart so they can believe and receive truth.

But the church, on the other hand has been rescued and has been given a new heart and should be in a place to hear His word and conform her life to what God says rather than what the world says.

We, as the **church** have a new master now.

A benevolent God who desires what is best for His people the church.

You must understand something as we journey through this important letter.

Remember the title of this series is - **God's Blueprint for a Mature Church**. Paul wrote this letter to give instructions to his son in the faith on how to "do church." In other words how to function within the assembly of believers.

While there is a lot of latitude on how every local church can function, there are some nonnegotiables in the structure and roles within her.

And so Paul wants to instruct Timothy and Ephesus on how best to function in a way that pleases the Lord while not accommodating the world's philosophies.

Paul tells Timothy this in...

1 Timothy 3:14-15 (ESV)

*I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, if I delay, you may know how one ought to **behave** in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth.*

Chapters 2 and 3 deal with specific roles within the church and how they are to function.

Again, some of what we cover today will feel counter cultural.

But let's not worry about how we feel about it.

Let's just try to understand what our Creator says through the Apostle Paul.

Main Idea: In A Mature Church, Everyone Plays Their Part By Living Out The Role Uniquely Crafted For Them By God

Paul starts this discussion with the roles of men and women. But there is one more role in the mix and hopefully you will see that it is the role of Jesus.

Let's focus our attention on the first role mentioned in verse 8. Men! And look at how the men of the church are to function within the church.

1. Men Are Holy Prayer Warriors (vs. 8)

1 Timothy 2:8 (ESV)

I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling;

Paul's starts this section by letting Timothy know what he wants. To be clear, Paul is not simply giving his wishes with a vague hope that they will accomplish what he desires.

No way. We see it here with the men and we will see it again with the women.

Paul is giving an apostolic injunction. He is speaking from an authoritative position as an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ. And they had better listen.

By the way, the church today should listen to this instruction as well.

We cannot pick and choose what we want to hear and do not want to hear from God's Word.

This is what Paul means when he says *"in every place."*

In other words, in every local church, I want the men of the congregation to lead in prayer.

In every nook and every corner of the local church prayer should be the first and most important activity taking place.

It should not be something that is forgotten about or simply tagged on the beginning or the end of a service.

It is telling that the command to pray is what the apostle starts with and that this command starts with the men.

After all, a good and godly Christian man should not only be the leader in his home, but the SPIRITUAL leader.

1 Corinthians 11:3 (ESV)

But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God.

So it is in the church.

The men of the church (I argue starting with the Elders of the church) must take the initiative to pray.

Notice from the text how the men are to pray - and please notice the attitude they are to possess.

1 Timothy 2:8 (ESV)

I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling;

Do you know what will split a church? Unbridled anger and fussing and fighting about anything and everything. Kinda sounds like what happens on FaceBook or any given news channel.

By the way, do you know how the news business makes money? Through fear and anger.

But the church should not be known by what she is against, or what she is angry about. The church should be known by her love.

John 13:35 (ESV)

By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

The men of the church in Ephesus were to not be angry and quarrelsome, but as the text says men who lift HOLY hands.

Do you see this?

What are HOLY hands?

These are hands that are washed in the blood of Christ.

These are hands that are undefiled and unstained from the world.

These are hands that Christ can use to move the church forward for His Glory.

These hands are determined to be set apart for the service of God and His will.

We think it is anger that moves things forward. That's just dumb and not biblical...

James 1:20 (ESV)

for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

What does produce the righteousness of God?

James 5:16 (ESV)

*Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed.
The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.*

This is the primary and essential responsibility of every believing man in the Church of Jesus Christ.

Pastor Larry and Prayer

Men of ABC. Are you known for your passionate prayer?

Do you invite people to pray with you at church?

Have you ever showed up at youth group and offered to pray over our teens?

Are you part of a Connection Group where you are intentionally connecting with others from this body in prayer.

You can pray for someone you don't know, but you can pray more effectively and powerfully when you do know them.

Or are you known in your family and in this church as a man of anger?

Do people walk on eggshells around you because of your explosive anger?

Are you known for always quarreling, picking a fight, telling people how they are wrong or how they don't measure up to your expectations?

Are you always finding fault and judging your brothers and sisters in Christ?

Which man do you want to be? A man who raises his hands in holy prayer or a man who raises Cain with his angry, cantankerous, curmudgeonly wicked attitude?

Men, I am begging you to be men who lift their HOLY (pure and righteous) hands in prayer. And if you do God will accomplish MUCH through you!

This is your primary role in this local church!

And elders, it starts with us!

Review - In A Mature Church, Everyone Plays Their Part By Living Out The Role Uniquely Crafted For Them By God

- Men Are Holy Prayer Warriors

2. Women Are Important Too (vs. 9-12)

Before I read the text, I want you to understand something about Jesus, Paul, and even Peter.

In a culture that subjugated women, these men, the leaders of biblical Christianity not only valued women, they elevated them.

Sometimes when we read passages like we are about to study, we read our world into the text.

Please resist that urge and instead look at it through the lens of first century Judaism and also the Roman world where Patriarchy was strong.

The church culture back then and, ideally now should not be rooted in the prevailing culture of the day, but in the Bible which is the mind of God.

Take a look at how Paul says the women of the church should function.

1 Timothy 2:9–12 (ESV)

likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, but with what is proper for women who profess godliness—with good works. Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet.

In the culture of Timothy's day, the women were admired for their hair. They received a great amount of attention especially if their hair was braided with gold and pearls and they were wearing the best of the best.

The MacArthur Study Bible (Chapter 2)

Women in the first century often wove "gold, pearls," or other jewelry into their hair styles ("braided hair") to call attention to themselves and their wealth or beauty. The same was true of those women who wore "costly clothing." By doing so they would draw attention to themselves and away from the Lord, likely causing the poorer women to be envious. Paul's point was to forbid the preoccupation of certain women with flaunting their wealth and distracting people from worshiping the Lord.

These external dressings were not to be the focus of a godly woman, but instead they were to wear something much different.

They were to wear what was proper for godly, Christian women - And that is, according to Paul, good works!

Isn't that interesting?

The ladies in the church of Ephesus were apparently focused on their outward appearance but instead, the beauty of a Christian woman was doing works that brought honor to God and good to their fellow Christians at church.

Unfortunately even today appearance can take priority as we gather to worship. If this is the priority, what is the inevitable result?

Envy, jealousy, gossip, judgmentalism.

Basically, it becomes an episode of Mean Girls.

This may be the focus in the world around us, but the church is a respite from all of that.

The real beauty of a woman is displayed through good works, selfless sacrifice, kindness to everyone - even those whom we struggle with.

This, according to Paul, is real beauty. Peter says something very similar.

1 Peter 3:3-4 (ESV)

Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear— but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious.

Ladies, with this definition in mind, would those around you declare that you are beautiful or ugly?

By God's grace we must have a church of beautiful women! Not judgmental, envious, outward focused women.

But there is more that Paul has to say to women in their role in the church. Look again at the text.

1 Timothy 2:11-12 (ESV)

Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet.

Do you remember when I said Jesus, Paul, and Peter elevate the women of their culture. I would like you to notice a great example of this fact.

Paul starts this verse with these words - ***"Let a woman learn"***

I'm not sure if you can, in our culture, truly appreciate the profound nature of these words. Woman simply were not part of the learning culture like they are today.

"Most men considered intellectual activity a predominantly male exercise. The was true even though exceptions were made for elite women...Greek men often married women over a decade younger than they were, so it is not surprising that Plutarch observed that most husbands doubted that their wives could learn...Women were less likely to be literate than men. More relevant for the NT was Jewish education in Scripture. Jewish culture reared boys, but not normally girls, to recite the Torah (the law). Granted, women listened and learned in synagogues; a few even attended rabbis' lectures. Yet they were not taught to recite Torah, and rabbis did not train them as disciples." NIVCBSB 2109

But Rabbi Paul commanded Pastor Timothy to let women learn.

By the way, this is the only greek imperative (command) in all of verses 11-15.

Women therefore are to fully participate in all Christian education.

Now, there is a qualifier in this command. And that qualifier is that *"she learn quietly and with all submissiveness."*

In other words, she isn't to be standing up in the middle of a service, wagging her finger at the pastor and correcting him publically.

Believe it or not, I have seen this in action and it is not pretty.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary (2:11-12)

They should not attempt to turn the tables by clamoring for the office of congregational teacher or by grasping for authority over men. Rather they should, literally, "be in quietness." The word, hēsychia, translated "quietness" in 1 Timothy 2:11 and silent in verse 12, does not mean complete silence or no talking. It is clearly used elsewhere (Acts 22:2; 2 Thes. 3:12) to mean "settled down, undisturbed, not unruly." A different word (sigaō) means "to be silent, to say nothing" (cf. Luke 18:39; 1 Cor. 14:34).

So to be clear, it's not that Paul is commanding women not to speak - that would be exceedingly strange and unrealistic.

It is more about the posture of their heart being one of humility and grace.

But there is more we must see and understand. Look again at Paul's text...

1 Timothy 2:12 (ESV)

I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet.

Here is the next example of Paul's apostolic authority in action. This is not just Paul's personal opinion for this particular church in this particular time.

To be clear, this is only referring to authoritative preaching and teaching in the church, not general speaking and communication. This is his consistent apostolic ruling throughout his writings in the New Testament.

1 Corinthians 14:33–35 (ESV)

For God is not a God of confusion but of peace. As in all the churches of the saints, the women should keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission, as the Law also says. If there is anything they desire to learn, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church.

Titus 2:3–5 (ESV)

Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled.

Again, this is not because of some unique problem in Ephesus, this is an apostolic command for the church throughout the generations.

Just as a point of reminder, Paul wanted women to learn in the church.

He did not desire for women to be out of sight, out of mind and only used for birthing babies and kitchen duty.

One reason is that women can teach and preach in other contexts such as women's meetings or teaching children and youth.

They are expected in the church to exercise their gifts.

I personally believe that women can do anything in the church except what Paul says in this passage.

Women can and should do anything in the body of Christ except be an elder.

In the last point we will see why Paul makes his case.

Lindsey Carlson from 9Marks emphasizes the importance of scriptural authority and God's design for church leadership. She states,

Like it or not, these verses are no less valuable than the ones we scribble on post-its and frame in our living rooms. They are pieces of God's unchanging word and He declares them good and worthy of being studied, understood, and embraced... Because God's created order is bigger than any particular time or culture, God still expects me to serve Him with my silence and submission within the church's structure of doctrinal authority. By God's design, men are called as pastors, overseers, and elders to guard the gospel; protecting and caring for the church as Adam cared for Eve. Women are exhorted toward gentleness and submission to allow these men the governing authority established by God (9Marks). - Lindsey Carlson

Please remember something church. This passage has nothing to do with equality.

Men and women are 100% equal. But it does have to do with the roles God has DESIGNED us to play in the assembly of believers for the worship service in particular.

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- Men Are Holy Prayer Warriors
- Women Are Important Too

3. Why Are These Roles Crucial (vs. 13-15)

In verses 13-15 we see the why of Paul's commands...

1 Timothy 2:13-15 (ESV)

For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.

This is one of the most difficult passages in the bible to understand. There are 5 various views of which I've learned while preparing for this sermon.

There is a lot of greek grammar stuff involved and frankly if I gave you all five views this morning you would probably fall asleep or your head would be spinning.

But lets tear this apart and see what Paul is saying.

Remember, Paul is giving us the why of his command - especially for the women of the church.

And the quiet and submissive attitude is rooted not in the circumstances of Ephesus or Corinth, but creation. Paul takes us all the way back to creation and the created order for his rationale with the roles in the church.

Adam was formed first and considered the head of humanity.

Genesis 1:26 (ESV)

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

Then Eve was formed from Adam.

Genesis 2:15-18 (ESV)

The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it

you shall surely die.” Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.”

Genesis 2:20–22 (ESV)

The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.

Eve, according to this passage was created for Adam to complete him. To make him better than he would have been otherwise. To complement him, not compete with him.

But what happens next? Paul succinctly retells the most horrific event in human history other than the crucifixion of Christ - The fall of humanity. Paul says, **“Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.”**

It is important that you notice Paul calls Eve **“the woman”** and it was Eve that had two things happen to her specifically.

She was **deceived** by Satan and, consequently, she became a **transgressor** - It is important that you see this for the rest of the passage to make sense.

Also, just because Paul says that “Adam was not deceived” that He was any less culpable.

In fact throughout Scripture, Adam is the one held responsible for the Fall of humanity.

Paul goes on to say, **“Yet she will be saved through childbearing...”**

What in the world does this mean? As I said before, there are a lot of views about this.

One of the most terrible views is that women will be eternally saved through bearing earthly children.

Well this flies in the face of the gospel that Paul passionately preaches.

Not to mention that in [1 Corinthians 7](#) Paul commends people who have the gift of singleness because they can dedicate more time to then gospel ministry.

So would those single people who do not bear children be doomed to Hell?

Of course not. So lets reject that one right away.

So what is Paul saying here? Remember, context is king when it comes to proper interpretation. And the context is the Genesis account that Paul references.

Let me read the verse again...

“Yet she will be saved through childbearing...”

Who do you think the “she” is that Paul mentions?

Well, it makes good sense to go back to the last woman Paul was talking about - Eve.

The deceived woman was Eve who was also the transgressor. And what does a transgressor need? She needs salvation.

Paul is setting his readers up for Eve’s part in the Fall of humanity but also her part and ours in redemption!!

Let me explain...

Have you ever come across the genealogies in the Gospel of Matthew and the Gospel of Luke?

Be honest, you kinda blow through them quickly when you are reading them.

Well, there is a powerful gold nugget in the gospel of Luke. In [Luke 3](#) is the start of Jesus ministry.

And Dr. Luke uses the genealogies to prove the humanity of Christ.

[Luke 3:23–24 \(ESV\)](#)

Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years of age, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Melchi, the son of Jannai, the son of Joseph,

Now Luke’s genealogy goes backward, on and on for generations until verse 38...

[Luke 3:38 \(ESV\)](#)

the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.

Why am I showing you this?

Because Jesus’ genealogy through Mary goes all the way back to Adam and Eve!

Who birthed Jesus? Mary.

Who is Mary’s lineage connected to? According to Luke, Her lineage goes all the way back to Adam and Eve!

Who is the mother of all that live?

[Genesis 3:20 \(ESV\)](#)

The man called his wife’s name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.

Eve to Mary. Mary to Jesus. Jesus to salvation!

Check out the first Messianic prophecy found in the bible.

[Genesis 3:15 \(NIV84\)](#)

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”

This verse was part of the curse God spoke on the serpent.

He is promising that the Messiah, Jesus, will destroy the work of the devil even though there will be a deadly strike the evil one will have against the Son of God.

What is the point? Paul is clearly providing two powerful truths.

1. The gospel of redemption through the Messiah is part of God’s plan from the beginning.
2. Eve was an integral part of the Messiah coming into the world to rescue humanity.

Look back at verse 15...

1 Timothy 2:15 (ESV)

Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.

Eve was saved through childbearing because it was through Her childbearing the Messiah eventually entered the world.

And, all who profess Christ since Eve will enjoy the promise of salvation

Notice one more thing - The text says, “If they...” - It’s a conditional clause.

Who are the “**They?**”

Anyone who professes the Messiah as Savior!

And **they** will be saved like Eve was saved...

IF they prove their salvation true by continuing *“in faith and love and holiness, with self control.”*

This is the gospel, folks!!

Let’s review...

Eve is responsible in part for the fall of humanity and yet a crucial part for the rescue and redemption of humanity.

Eve brought sin into the world through her being deceived.

And yet Eve brought salvation into the world by being the mother of humanity that would eventually bring the redeemer into the world.

Eve was saved by the eventual birth of the Messiah and so are we if we have persevering faith in that same Messiah!

Isn't it amazing to see the Apostle Paul, in the middle of a discussion about roles within the church remind us all of the beautiful plan of redemption and how God used women powerfully because of their unique capacity to bear children.

A woman's ability to birth children and nurture them is NOT a negative!

It is the most awe inspiring thing I have ever personally witnessed.

When I watched my wife carry and birth our children (without drugs or epidural) I was in awe and have had respect for her ability.

When I consider that our three children have had their children because of Angie's ability to reproduce, I am in awe and incredibly thankful.

And I am even more thankful that even though Eve was deceived and a part of plunging humanity into sin, God in His mercy and grace still used her to assist in bringing about our redemption.

Did God have to use broken humanity? No! But isn't it wonderful that he did?

Men and women of this church would you purpose to praise God for His unique design of men and women? His design is beautiful and He knows what He is doing! We are each fearfully and wonderfully made!

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- Men Are Holy Prayer Warriors
- Women Are Important Too
- Why Are These Roles Crucial

Conclusion

Friends, the evil one wants us, the church to be discontent with how He has created us and the roles He has for us. Discontentment for God's good ways has been the card that Satan has played since the beginning. Let's not fall into that trap.

Men of the church, take up prayerful, loving, and gentle leadership within this church. Let God work through you to keep generation after generation loving and serving Christ. You MUST lead in this.

Women of the church, take up your responsibilities within this church with humility and kindness, modeling a gentle and quiet spirit. Don't be discontent in what you can't do, revel instead in what God has call you to!

All of us should be thankful that God works through our brokenness to bring us redemption. If God can rescue the couple that plunged humanity into sin, He certainly can rescue the most broken and sinful among us!

Friends, if we play our roles well in the church, mark my words, you will see this church be a beacon of hope for a world that is trying to find hope in everything but God and his ways.

Let show them that there is no regret in following the roles God has laid out for us.