

## 1 Timothy 2 and Men & Women in the Church

### Prayer

### Introductory Questions

- What do men and women share in common? How can we actively recognize and celebrate these commonalities when the church gathers?
- In what ways are men and women different? How can we actively recognize and celebrate these differences when the church gathers?

### Introduction

First Timothy 2 outlines godly conduct in the church—including instructions about prayer, and instructions for men and women (whether single or married). The Bible outlines *functional differences* between men and women: 1 Cor. 11:2–16; 14:29–36; Eph. 5:22–33, Col. 3:18–19; 1 Tim. 2:12–15; Titus 2:3–5; 1 Pet. 3:1–7. However, many professing Christians claim that these teachings were specific to the first century, and therefore we do not need to follow them. But the Bible grounds these teachings in *universal (transcending culture) categories*.

1. **Gender roles in marriage are grounded in the relationship between Christ and the Church:** “22 Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord, 23 because the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of the body. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives are to submit to their husbands in everything” (Eph. 5:22–24; cf. 1 Pet. 3:5–6, where Sarah submitted to Abraham).
2. **Gender roles in the church are grounded in the relationship between God the Father and Jesus Christ:** “3 But I want you to know that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of the woman [wife], and God is the head of Christ” (1 Cor. 11:3). God the Father and Jesus Christ share the same essence (they are both fully God), and yet God is the head (authority) of Christ. In a similar way, men and women are equal in personhood and value, and yet men have a unique responsibility to lead in the home and the church. Differing roles do not imply inferiority (Gen. 1:26–28; 1 Cor. 11:11–12).
3. **Gender roles in the church are also grounded in creation and the fall:** “12 I do not allow a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; instead, she is to remain quiet. 13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve. 14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and transgressed” (1 Tim. 2:12–14; cf. 1 Cor. 11:7–9).

Therefore, the Bible’s teachings about different roles for men and women are binding in the church across cultures and across time. We organize 1 Timothy 2 into two sections: (1) Praying for Everyone (vv. 1–7) and (2) Men and Women in the Gathered Body (vv. 8–15). We conclude this lesson by summarizing how men and women function together.

## 1. Praying for Everyone

- “1 First of all, then, I urge that petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, 2 for kings and all those who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. 3 This is good, and it pleases God our Savior, 4 who wants everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (1 Tim. 2:1–4)
- “5 For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave himself as a ransom for all, a testimony at the proper time. 7 For this I was appointed a herald, an apostle (I am telling the truth; I am not lying), and a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.” (1 Tim. 2:5–7)

Paul calls us to intercede for all people in light of God’s will (vv. 1–4). Paul highlights praying for those in authority, who have the ability to create an orderly society, which allows us to lead peaceful, godly lives (vv. 1–2). Such order pleases God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved, though people resist him (vv. 3–4). Paul then outlines how people can be saved—through Jesus. There is one God (the Father) and one mediator between God and humanity, Jesus Christ (v. 5)—the one who gave himself as a ransom to pay our debts and release us from the power of sin (v. 6). Paul was a herald, apostle, and teacher of those truths (v. 7).

- How can you apply the truths of verses 1–4 to your prayer life?
- How should the truths of verses 5–7 impact our thoughts, words, and actions?

## 2. Men and Women in the Gathered Body

- “8 Therefore, I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or argument.” (1 Tim. 2:8)
- “9 Also, the women are to dress themselves in modest clothing, with decency and good sense, not with elaborate hairstyles, gold, pearls, or expensive apparel, 10 but with good works, as is proper for women who profess to worship God.” (1 Tim. 2:9–10)
- “11 A woman is to learn quietly with full submission. 12 I do not allow a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; instead, she is to remain quiet. 13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve. 14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and transgressed. 15 But she will be saved through childbearing, if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with good sense.” (1 Tim. 2:11–15)

Note Paul’s transition in verse 8: “therefore.” In light of verses 1–7 (particularly the call for us to pray and to help people to know God through Jesus), Paul instructs men and women how to conduct themselves in corporate worship. “By taking up the issues of 1 Tim. 2:8–15 immediately following vv. 1–7, Paul suggests that the way the church conducts itself in corporate worship (unity, modesty, proper submission) bears significantly on its effectiveness in world evangelization” (*ESV Study Bible*, 2328).

In verse 8, Paul teaches that men who pray should lift up their hands (a typical posture for prayer) in holiness. Men are tempted to sin against God in various ways, but here Paul calls them to resist the temptations to be angry and to argue. In verses 9–10, Paul instructs women to dress modestly, with decency and good sense (or careful consideration). They should not draw attention to their physical appearance, whether through elaborate hairstyles, jewelry, or clothes (v. 9). Instead, they should dress themselves with good works, as is fitting for women who professes to worship God (v. 10).

In verses 11–15, Paul instructs men and women how to conduct themselves in corporate worship according to God’s design for them. A woman should learn quietly and in submission to male leadership—particularly to the pastors/elders/overseers (which is one office in the New Testament) (v. 11; cf. 2:12–14; 3:1–7). *Paul then lists two separate but related prohibitions for women* (v. 12). First, a woman is not allowed to teach God’s Word publicly to men in the gathered body, where “a man” in Paul’s day referred to a male who was past puberty. Second, a woman is not allowed to exercise authority over men. God also forbids women to serve as pastors, in part because teaching and exercising authority are two of the primary functions of that office (Acts 20:28; 1 Tim. 3:1–7; Titus 1:5–9; 1 Pet. 5:1–4). How can a woman be a pastor if she is not allowed to perform the primary functions of a pastor? She is not allowed to perform what the office requires. What does it mean for a woman to “remain quiet” (v. 12)? It does *not* forbid women from praying, prophesying, correcting a man privately, teaching women, or teaching children (Acts 18:26; 1 Cor. 11:2–16; Titus 2:3–5). Here “remain quiet” is restricted to Paul’s prohibitions in verse 12: women are not allowed to teach publicly or exercise authority over men.

Some people claim that these two prohibitions (a woman cannot teach over men or exercise authority over men) in verse 12 no longer apply today, since, they argue, women were less educated than men, disruptive women were a problem in Ephesus (not in all places), Paul did not want to offend the culture, and/or (shockingly) Paul was wrong and need not be obeyed. Two issues oppose arguments like those. First, there is nothing in the immediate context to support those reasons for dismissing Paul’s teaching (see 2 Tim. 3:16!). Second and much more importantly, Paul outlines his own two reasons why he prohibits a woman from teaching or exercising authority over a man. He grounds his teaching in the order of creation (v. 13) and the deception of Eve at the fall of humanity into sin (v. 14), a tragic example of how Satan attacks God’s design and order. How can women avoid the sin of Eve? They should focus on their God-given roles, such as bearing children (v. 15). Women are not literally saved by giving birth, for we are saved by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8–9). Instead, women will be saved (delivered or preserved) if they accept their God-given place, whether in the home or the church—which is a matter of the heart, a matter of faith (Köstenberger, *1–2 Timothy and Titus*).

- In this passage, what are the main instructions for men? For women?
- What makes verses 11–15 so difficult for people to accept and obey?

## Sound Doctrine: Men and Women in the Church

Below we outline ways that men and women (whether single or married) should conduct themselves, with an emphasis on their interactions in corporate worship.

1. **Men and women must remember the things they share in common so they do not overemphasize the differences and so they will treat one another with respect.**
  - Men and women possess great value and dignity (Gen. 1:26–28).
  - Men and women have a sinful disposition and commit sins (Rom. 3:9–20).
  - Men and women have equal access to know God through Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:25–29).
  - Men and women can pray, prophesy, and sing in the gathered body (1 Cor. 11:2–16; 1 Cor. 14:29–33; Rev. 5:13).
  - Men and women can minister together or separately to both men and women, though they should be wise when engaging in private, cross-gender interactions (Acts 18:26).
2. **Men should think, speak, and act in accordance with their God-determined gender and responsibilities.**
  - Men should resist the temptations to dominate others (acting like dictators), or shrink away from what needs to be said or done in the home and church (being wimps).
  - Men should dress like men, not like women, and men should refrain from *intentionally* talking like a woman (though there are natural variations in men’s voices). Because marriage consists of one man and one woman, men must not engage in romantic or sexual relationships with other men (Rom. 1:27).
  - Men should lead in the gathered body, which will include teaching, exercising authority, and weighing/evaluating prophesy (1 Cor. 11:2–16; 14:29–36; 1 Tim. 2:12).
3. **Women should think, speak, and act in accordance with their God-determined gender and responsibilities.**
  - Women should resist the temptations to take leadership away from men (seizing their authority) or allow men to abuse them (being doormats).
  - Women should dress like women, not like men, and women should refrain from *intentionally* talking like a man (though there are natural variations in women’s voices). Because marriage consists of one man and one woman, women must not engage in romantic or sexual relationships with other women (Rom. 1:26).
  - Women should support men as they exercise godly leadership in the church, such as when men teach publicly, exercise authority, and weigh/evaluate prophesy.

- What comments and questions do you have about this lesson?
- What is one thing you can do in response to this lesson?

## Prayer