

PERSPECTIVE

MAY 2025

SERVING THE CHURCH AS MEN & WOMEN



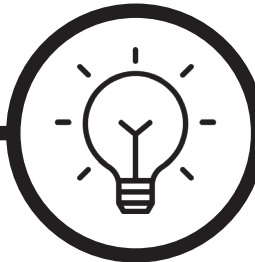
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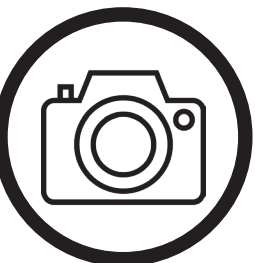
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Serving the Church as Men and Women

A Healthy Church?

While preparing to write this piece for the *Perspective*, I came across an article entitled, “How to Find a Church that Empowers Women.” It probably won’t surprise you to learn that the author, Ruth Martin, is an evangelical egalitarian—a Christian who believes there are no gender-based limitations on the roles of men and women. What might surprise you is that she encourages her readers to look for “healthy churches.”

What, according to Martin, makes a church healthy? She explains, “Healthy churches enthusiastically affirm women and men who serve the church in their callings, whatever they may be.”¹ At first glance, that might not sound too bad. To some, it might even sound appealing. But is it really a picture of health?

Consider her definition applied to some real-life scenarios.

Josiah is convinced that God is calling² him to be an elder in his church. He is the CEO of his company and is a strong, charismatic leader. He’s also a gifted communicator. However, he doesn’t meet the character qualifications of an elder. He’s immature, selfish, and has a serious anger problem. Would Josiah’s church be healthy if it enthusiastically affirmed him as an elder?

What about this scenario? Cassandra is a godly woman, a gifted leader, and, arguably, the best Bible teacher in her church. She’s also the only person in the congregation with a seminary degree. Given all that, she believes God is calling her to fill the pulpit while the church searches for a new pastor. Would Cassandra’s church be healthy if it enthusiastically affirmed her calling?

To be fair, I trust Ruth Martin wasn’t thinking about men like Josiah when she penned her definition of healthy churches. She had women like Cassandra on her mind—godly, gifted women who long to use their gifts for the good of the church. But, still, I would argue that to embrace her definition of “healthy” in *either* of the above scenarios is to embrace something short of biblical health.

True health comes from embracing God’s good design for his church, and that design includes different roles for men and women. When it comes to men and women serving the body, it’s better to define church health like this:

Healthy churches enthusiastically encourage godly men and women to use their gifts to serve the church in ways that accord with their God-given roles.

In what follows, I want to unpack this biblically and practically.

Rooted in Creation

God’s design for men and women in the church is rooted in creation. Kevin DeYoung explains, “Whatever ‘rules’ there are for men and women in the church are never mere rules; they reflect the sort of differentiated and complementary image bearers God designed us to be from the beginning.”³ Let’s briefly consider four things we learn in the opening pages of Genesis that ought to inform and guide our understanding of men’s and women’s roles in the church.

First, men and women equally bear the image of God (Gen. 1:26–28). They are of equal worth and dignity. Both serve as God’s representatives on earth and are called to exercise dominion over the created order (Gen. 1:28). This creation reality now finds its fullest expression in the church, where equal worth and dignity are assigned to all who belong to Christ, regardless of gender, social status, or ethnicity (Gal. 3:26–29).

Second, though the man and woman were given joint rule over creation, they were given different, complementary tasks. God tasked Adam with working, keeping, and protecting the holiness of the garden (Gen. 2:15–17). Eve was tasked with helping Adam and was uniquely endowed with the ability to bear children that they might fill the earth and subdue it (Gen. 1:28; 2:18). It should not surprise us to turn to the pages of the New Testament and find God assigning tasks to men and women in the church that align with the pattern found in Genesis—godly men leading, shepherding, guarding, and teaching the flock while godly women help in a variety of ways, pour into other women, and nurture the faith of children (e.g., 1 Tim. 2:8–3:13; Titus 1:5–2:5).

Third, Adam was created first (Gen. 2:7). As the first man, Adam was the head of the human race, representing all humanity. The children’s rhyme, “In Adam’s fall, we sinned all,” drives home the weight of that responsibility (Rom. 5:12). He was also the head of his family. After Eve sinned, God addressed Adam first, highlighting his failed leadership (Gen. 3:9–12). Being created first didn’t make Adam better than Eve, but it did place the burden of leadership on his shoulders—a burden God created him to bear. The fact that men are called to bear the weight of leadership in the church flows from this reality (1 Tim. 2:12–13).

Fourth, the relational effects of the fall were devastating. In Genesis 3, God's good design for men and women was upended. Satan undermined Adam's leadership, and Eve took the bait (Gen. 3:1–6). All the while, Adam sat idly by, neglecting his God-given responsibility to protect his wife and the holiness of the garden (Gen. 3:6b). And when confronted, he even dared to blame Eve for his failed leadership (Gen. 3:12). Post-fall, things have only gotten worse. The desire to rule over one another is baked into the DNA of every man and woman, and we are willing to resort to everything from manipulation to passivity to physical violence to get what we want (Gen. 3:16b; cf. 4:7). Even in the church, the relational residue of the curse remains in our hearts. Men in leadership can be harsh and domineering. Women can feel underappreciated and underutilized. Brothers who should be stepping up to lead can passively hand their God-given responsibility over to sisters who are more than happy to take the reins.

These four realities are foundational for understanding men's and women's roles in the church. Even when they aren't referencing Genesis 1–3, the authors of the New Testament are rooted there as they discuss how men and women ought to behave in the household of God. So, with our roots now planted in the same soil as theirs, let's consider how one of them, the Apostle Paul, pictured church health when it comes to men and women serving the body.

Pictured by Paul

Paul's letters are filled with instruction for the church. He addresses matters of doctrine, discipline, and discipleship. He offers correction, consolation, and encouragement. And in the process, he paints a beautiful picture of life in the local church as God intends. It is a picture of godly men and women using their gifts to serve the church in ways that accord with their God-given roles. Consider the two major brushstrokes Paul uses to paint this picture.

1 Corinthians 12

⁴ Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; ⁵ and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; ⁶ and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. ⁷ To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. . .

Every Christian, whether male or female, is uniquely gifted by God (vv. 4–6, 11). We all have spiritual gifts. And, God intends us to employ them for "the common good" (v. 7). God is most glorified and the local church is at its best when

every member uses their gifts to serve one another. Men serving men and women. Women serving women and men. The strong serving the weak. Everyone gladly and humbly working together as one to ensure the health and growth of the body (vv. 24b–26; cf. Rom. 12:3–8; Eph. 4:7–16).

How has God gifted you? If you struggle to answer that question, I'd encourage you to find the church member who knows you best. Ask that brother or sister how they think God has gifted you. I'd also encourage you to humbly receive what they say, even if it isn't what you want to hear. You may long to have gifts that place you in the public eye—the gift of teaching, for example. While it isn't wrong to desire those gifts (see v. 31), the Lord calls you to use the gifts he has given you to serve the body. He is just as pleased with the brother faithfully using his relational gifts to greet visitors and encourage homebound members as he is with the man teaching Adult Sunday School. He's no more delighted in the sister leading the Bible study than the woman holding babies in the nursery.

Consider for a moment the alternatives to the picture Paul paints in 1 Corinthians 12. When members don't use their gifts to serve one another, you end up with a body that's missing fingers, toes, an ear, an arm. When members don't embrace their God-given gifts and grasp for the gifts of others, you end up with fingers pretending to be eyes and toes trying to be mouths. Neither of those pictures looks good on canvas. But when every member humbly and faithfully uses their God-given gifts to serve the body, each in their proper place, it's a thing of beauty.

1 Timothy 2:8–14

⁸ I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling; ⁹ 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, ¹⁰ but with what is proper for women who profess godliness—with good works. ¹¹ Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. ¹² I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, 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 became a transgressor.

Character matters when it comes to the employment of our God-given gifts (vv. 8–10; cf. 1 Cor 13:1; 1 Tim. 3:1–12; Titus 1:6–9; 2:2–3a, 6). Ungodly men and women, no matter how gifted, have the potential to do great damage to the body of Christ (e.g., 2 Cor 11:1–15; 2 Tim. 3:1–5).

Sadly, we don't have to look far to see evidence of this reality in churches today. There are far too many Josiahs out there—gifted leaders and teachers with significant character flaws—whose churches choose to ignore Paul's instructions to Timothy, believing the good will somehow cover over the bad. For a season, these churches may have an appearance of health and fruitfulness. But, eventually, the tree rots from the inside out, and the fruit, which once seemed so sweet, sours.

If you are a member of Mount Vernon, when you joined the church, you committed to “strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness, and strength.”⁴ Paul says striving for the advancement of the church starts with striving for holiness. Knowledge without holiness puffs up. Strength without godliness does more harm than good. Are you as concerned about cultivating your character as you are about cultivating your spiritual gifts? Are you striving to help others in the church advance in holiness? Our character matters to God. Without it, the employment of our gifts will likely do more harm than good to his church.

Character isn't the only thing that matters when it comes to using our gifts to serve the church. Our God-given gender roles matter too (vv. 11–15; cf. Titus 2:3b–5). In 1 Timothy 2:11–14, Paul pulls from the soil of Genesis to make the case that the office and function of eldership in the church are reserved for godly men. Women like Cassandra—godly, gifted leaders and amazing Bible teachers—are not to serve as pastors or preach sermons. Instead, God would have them use their gifts in the church in ways that accord with their God-given gender role—teaching other women, leading women's small groups, organizing women's ministry and other church events, teaching children, etc.

While it is easy to agree that character matters when it comes to using our gifts to serve the church, it may be harder for some to understand why gender roles are so important. If godly Cassandra is preaching the true gospel and faithfully expositing God's Word, what does it matter that she is a woman? If she is faithfully leading and shepherding the flock, what's the big deal? Why make such a fuss?

Because ignoring God's design for gender roles in the church is a lot like hanging an artist's masterpiece upside down. Believe it or not, that's actually happened more than once! For example, in 1965, Van Gogh's *Long Grass with Butterflies* was accidentally hung upside down by the National Gallery in London after being removed for photographing. For fifteen minutes after the painting was re-hung, no one noticed. Until a 15-year-old school girl holding a postcard of the

painting realized something was amiss. She showed the museum attendants her postcard, and in what I'm sure was a state of shock and embarrassment, they quickly worked to get the painting hung right side up. How do you think Van Gogh would have reacted if he had been alive to see that happen?

When we allow women to serve or function as elders in the church, we turn God's design for the church upside down. While some may not notice the difference, the Lord certainly does. The beauty of his masterpiece, the church, is not found in the fact that all the elements are there, whether the painting is right side up or upside down. Its beauty is found in the fact that all those elements are *in their proper place*. He intends for his masterpiece to be right side up—for godly men and women to use their gifts to serve in ways that accord with their God-given roles—so that all the world can see its beauty.

If you struggle with this teaching in ways big or small, I would encourage you to talk to an elder. We recognize that not everyone agrees with our interpretation of the passages I've mentioned above. We'd love to hear your concerns, understand your wrestling, and engage with you in more in-depth discussions of these texts.

Having examined Paul's major brushstrokes, let's pause for a moment before leaving the easel, take a step back, and appreciate the full picture.

Romans 16:3–16

³ Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, ⁴ who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks but all the churches of the Gentiles give thanks as well. ⁵ Greet also the church in their house. Greet my beloved Epænetus, who was the first convert to Christ in Asia. ⁶ Greet Mary, who has worked hard for you. . .

Paul's final greetings to the church in Rome provide us with a picture of life in the local church as God intends. What do we see in these verses? We see a healthy church full of members using their God-given gifts to build up the body. Those members are men and women. As Paul thought of the church and Rome, he couldn't help but think of godly brothers and sisters whose labors for the Lord and his church were worthy of commendation. Two-thirds of those he greets are female. And they're using their gifts to serve the church. He highlights Prisca's hospitality (v. 5), Mary's hard work for the church (v. 6), and the labors of Tryphaena and Tryphosa (v. 12). It's a sweet, beautiful picture of a God-glorifying local church.

Were churches in Rome perfect pictures of health? Of course not. No local church is. Doubtless, some men struggled to see women given such prominent roles in the body, especially in a culture that held women in low esteem. There were likely a few women who questioned God's good design, particularly when they and the church were negatively affected by the imperfect leadership of men in the body. But, overall, by God's grace, these churches were faithful replicas of the picture Paul paints in his letters.

Replicated by Mount Vernon

Nearly two thousand years later, churches like ours continue prayerfully laboring to faithfully replicate the picture painted by Paul and the other New Testament writers. What does that look like at Mount Vernon? Practically, it's seen in our doctrine, leadership, teaching ministry, Sunday gatherings, and serving opportunities.

Doctrine

Mount Vernon requires every member to affirm and uphold our statement of faith. Our article on the doctrine of man states, "The gift of gender is . . . part of the goodness of God's creation."⁵ The statement then goes on in its article on the church to explain that, "While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture."⁶ To join Mount Vernon, you must be convinced that these statements clearly reflect the Bible's teaching.

Recognizing that members' depth of understanding varies and that our culture constantly attacks these doctrines, we also teach on them regularly. For example, we regularly teach a Biblical Manhood and Womanhood Equipping Matters course. If you've got unanswered questions about gender roles or have never taken the class, I'd encourage you to attend when it's offered this October. Aaron also plans to preach two topical sermons on manhood and womanhood in September, so mark your calendar for those.

Leadership

Only qualified men can serve as elders at Mount Vernon. And, only those men on staff who are serving as paid elders are given the title "Pastor." This means you won't see a woman serving as a Children's Pastor or Pastor to Women at Mount Vernon. That's because the titles "elder," "overseer," and "pastor (shepherd)" are all used interchangeably in the New Testament to refer to the same office (e.g., 1 Peter 5:1-3). An elder is a pastor, and a pastor is an elder.

We also reserve the office of deacon for qualified men. Mount Vernon's elders have wrestled significantly with whether or not Scripture allows women to serve as deacons. Some complementarians understand the office to be one of service, *not* spiritual leadership. They believe Paul refers to female deacons in 1 Timothy 3:11 as he lists out the qualifications for the office and also describes Phoebe as a "deacon" of the church of Cenchreae in Romans 16:1. Others believe the office is one of service *and* spiritual leadership. They believe Paul gives qualifications for deacon's wives in 1 Timothy 3:11 and merely describes Phoebe as a "servant" of the church in Cenchreae.⁷ They also lean into Acts 6:1-6, where the first Christians called to serve in a "deaconing" role were all men.

Because there is simply not enough agreement among the elder body on this issue, and because Mount Vernon has maintained an all-male diaconate since its founding, the elders have chosen to continue this practice. Because we are eager for women and men to utilize their gifts to serve the church in recognized ways, we established the position of Ministry Coordinator. These Coordinators keep everything from our Women's Ministry to our Church Library running on all cylinders.

Teaching Ministry

Both men and women teach at Mount Vernon. But, in obedience to 1 Timothy 2:12, only men teach mixed groups of men and women. That means you won't ever see a woman teaching an Adult Sunday School class or giving a Sunday evening devotion. You won't see them leading mixed Covenant Groups either. But, you will see women teaching other women at Women's Ministry events and in our Women's Equipping Matters class each August (this fall they'll be studying the doctrine of Christ). Women lead women's Covenant Groups. They also teach in the Children's Ministry and serve as girls' small group leaders in the Youth Ministry. Though it's a bit of a grey area, we've decided to leave the teaching of our Youth Ministry classes to men because the young men in the ministry are making the transition to adulthood.

Do you have a desire to teach? If so, let me encourage you to do four things. First, pursue holiness and knowledge. James tells us that those who teach will be judged with greater strictness (Jas. 3:1). Second, pursue faithfulness as a church member. Those asked to teach at Mount Vernon are the men and women our elders see faithfully investing in the life of the church. Regularly attend an evening service. Labor to know and be known by others. Refine and grow your teaching gifts by discipling

in the life of the church. Regularly attend an evening service. Labor to know and be known by others. Refine and grow your teaching gifts by discipling someone, helping him or her understand the Bible better. Serve in Little Explorers or Sunday evening childcare. Find creative ways to pour into the body. Next, if you are doing those things, let an elder know you are interested in teaching. And, finally, be willing to start small. Teaching children the gospel is no less important than teaching adults. Honestly, it will make you a much better teacher of adults when given the opportunity.

Sunday Gatherings

Every Sunday, you'll see men and women on the stage during our gatherings. Women don't preach, but they do play instruments, sing in the ensemble, and read Scripture. Though Paul has a category for women praying in the church's gatherings (see 1 Cor. 11:4–5), we've chosen only to allow men to pray our regular Sunday morning prayers—the prayer of confession, pastoral prayer, and prayer of praise and thanksgiving. Women do pray on special occasions (e.g., missionary commissioning), but our elders perceive elements of leadership and teaching embedded in these regular prayers. Those elements are more clearly seen in the role of ensemble leader, which is also reserved for men. For similar reasons, an elder always officiates the Lord's Supper. But women are invited to help distribute the elements. That's because the elders understand it to be an act of service. No leadership is exercised as they hand the elements to women and men in the pews, who then follow suit by passing them on to one another.

Sunday evenings look different than Sunday mornings. Women don't distribute the Lord's supper because the congregation literally comes to the table to receive the bread and cup from the elders. Men still lead the service and ensemble and do the teaching. But women are encouraged to pray in these services. Why? The prayers are different than those we pray on Sunday mornings. They're shorter, less formal, and generally supplications. Women are also regularly invited up front on Sunday nights to share announcements, testimonies, and prayer requests. If you've never been to a Sunday evening service, I strongly encourage you to come. It's a great blessing to hear about the needs of the body and the ministry opportunities God has given to brothers and sisters in the church. And there's nothing sweeter than joining with the saints as both men and women lift holy hands in prayer, and we boldly approach the throne of grace together.

Serving Opportunities

Serving opportunities abound at Mount Vernon. Some, like serving on the security team, are reserved for men. Others, like organizing the Women's ministry, are reserved for women. But most are open to all. Many of these opportunities are organic, like meeting with another member every other week to read through a book together or offering to pray with a hurting brother or sister after a service. Others are organized by our Deacons and Ministry Coordinators, like visiting homebound members or greeting and handing out bulletins before the service.

How might you use your God-given gifts and abilities to serve Mount Vernon? Start by simply looking around on a Sunday morning. Who are the brothers and sisters around you? What are their needs? Pay attention to the "Announcements" section in the bulletin and *The Weekly* email. What opportunities are there for you to serve? How might you make time in your schedule to help meet a need? If you are interested in serving in a particular ministry or have a unique skillset that you'd love to employ for the good of the church, reach out to an elder and let them know. They can work to connect you with a Deacon, Ministry Coordinator, or staff member who might be able to help you get to work using your gifts to serve the body. Whatever you do, don't do nothing. If you are a Christian, God has gifted you for the good of his church. Seek out ways to use your gifts and employ them faithfully for the glory of the Lord.

Doctrine, leadership, teaching, gathering, and serving. In each of these areas, we are laboring to faithfully replicate the teaching of the New Testament in the context of our local church. Mount Vernon may not be a perfect replica of the picture Paul paints in his letters, but I hope you can see that we are trying, by God's grace, to be the most faithful replica we can be.

A Truly Healthy Church

Ruth Martin wasn't wrong to encourage her readers to look for healthy gospel-preaching churches. Where she went awry was in her definition of health. A healthy church *isn't* one that affirms women and men who serve the church in their callings, whatever they may be. It isn't a church where Josiahs are elders and Cassandras are pastors.

When it comes to men's and women's roles, a truly healthy church is one that enthusiastically encourages godly men and women to use their gifts to serve the church in ways that accord with their God-given roles. It's a church where a godly

man sees Josiah's immaturity, selfishness, and anger and asks him to start meeting up so that he can help him grow in Christlikeness. It's a church where Cassandra's elders aren't intimidated by her teaching gifts, but affirm and encourage her to employ them in teaching women the Bible. It's a church where members pursue holiness. Where men and women embrace God's good design. Where godly men lead, and godly women and men gladly follow. It's a church where members don't just sit on their hands, but willingly and joyfully roll up their sleeves and use their God-given gifts to serve one another, from the pulpit to the preschool to the parking lot and everywhere in between.

That's a beautiful picture. A biblical picture. One God delights to see hanging in the gallery of his glorious grace. And, it's exactly the kind of church we want Mount Vernon to be.

– Dustin Butts

¹Ruth Martin, "How to Find a Church that Empowers Women," CBE International, June, 5, 2023, <https://www.cbeinternational.org/resource/how-to-find-a-church-that-empowers-women/>.

²I'm using the terms "called" and "calling" provocatively in these scenarios. Though a full discussion is outside the bounds of this article, it is important to note that churches are not obligated to affirm any man or woman's subjective sense of calling. Christians would be well-served by replacing the phrase "I feel called" with "I aspire." See Bobby Jamieson, "Reframing 'Calling': Words to Churches and Aspiring Pastors," <https://www.9marks.org/article/reframing-calling-words-to-churches-and-aspiring-pastors/>.

³Kevin DeYoung, *Men and Women in the Church: A Short, Biblical, Practical Introduction* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021), 25. DeYoung unpacks many of the ideas presented here in greater detail. I would also recommend Greg Gilbert, *Can Women Be Pastors?*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2022), for a detailed discussion of how 1 Timothy 2:12 relates to Genesis 1–3.

⁴Mount Vernon Baptist Church Covenant (emphasis mine).

⁵Mount Vernon Baptist Church Statement of Faith, Article III.

⁶Mount Vernon Baptist Church Statement of Faith, Article VI.

⁷The Greek word for "women" and "wives" is the same. The same is true of the word for "deacon" and "servant." Both words can be translated either way, depending on the context.

Men and Women in the Church: A Short, Biblical, Practical Introduction

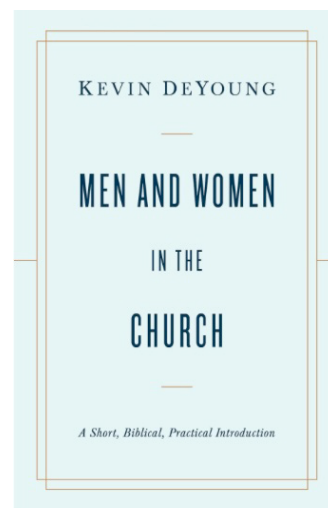
Written by Kevin DeYoung

In light of the cultural confusion and attempts to redefine gender, sexuality, and marriage, Kevin DeYoung's *Men and Women in the Church: A Short, Biblical, Practical Introduction* turns to Scripture to unpack what God's Word says on the subject. DeYoung's primary aim is to look at "the divinely designed complementarity of men and women as it applies to life in general and especially to ministry in the church" (p. 15). He begins his analysis of the scriptures with creation and the garden, then reviews Old Testament patterns, Jesus's teaching in the gospels, and Paul's letters to the early churches. DeYoung drives home the point that the complementarity of male and female is established in creation, upheld in the rest of the Bible, and is a (very) good thing meant to display God's goodness and bring Him glory. The latter part of the book addresses common objections and concludes with practical application for following Christ as a man or woman.

Having read a few of DeYoung's books, it was no surprise that this was an enjoyable and edifying read. I was particularly encouraged by his discussion of biblical manhood and womanhood in the context of creation and the fall. It was helpful to be reminded that God created men and women with distinct differences that complement one another to fulfill God's purposes, a truth grounded in the very fabric of God's creation of Adam and Eve. I also appreciated DeYoung's focus on leadership in the church and the practical ways he believes local churches can promote the flourishing (and involvement) of both men and women in ministry. I came away encouraged "that male and female are nothing when it comes to justification in Christ but have everything to do with living as justified Christians" (p. 133).

DeYoung's short book is a commendable resource for Christians seeking encouragement and instruction from the Bible's teaching on manhood and womanhood. It isn't overly technical, but helpfully exegetes passages from different parts of the Old and New Testaments and analyzes passages used against complementarianism. The book is also saturated with application and will challenge readers to consider how they are fulfilling their God-given roles as men or women. Whether single, married, or raising children, the book will serve any Christian who wants to be faithful to live out their God-given role as a man or woman in and outside the church.

— Recommended by Parker Bently



Excerpts from
the Book

1

The whole human race is, has always been, and will be for the rest of time, comprised of two differentiated and complementary sexes. This perpetual bifurcated ordering of humanity is not by accident or by caprice but by God's good design.

— "Introduction", p. 14

2

The phrase "biblical manhood and womanhood" has fallen on hard times, and perhaps some of the wounds have been self-inflicted. But at its best, biblical manhood and womanhood is about nothing less than the joyful appropriation of all that God meant for us to be in the garden, divinely fitted for working and helping, for protecting and flourishing, for leaving and cleaving, for filling the earth and subduing it. That's what God saw at the close of the sixth day, and behold, it was very good.

— "A Very Good Place to Start", p. 34

3

Manhood and womanhood cannot be reduced to authority and submission or leadership and nurture. But these things are meaningful expressions of what it means to be a man and a woman, rooted not just in the names we give to people but in nature itself. The expression of nature will not look identical in the church and outside the church, married and single, younger and older, but, importantly, it should look like something and should be visible.

— "Following Christ as Men and Women", p. 136

Available for checkout from the Church Library or purchase in the Bookstall.

Can Women Be Pastors?

Written by Greg Gilbert

Greg Gilbert's *Can Women Be Pastors?* gives biblical reasoning for why women cannot hold the office of elder in the local church. In this short book, he examines the structures of authority that God established from the beginning and then uses that good, God-ordained structure to interpret 1 Timothy 2:8–15. Gilbert helpfully explains that, in the garden, Satan's goal was not just to get Adam and Eve to sin. He was trying to dismantle God's original design for authority. This is why Satan came in the form of a snake (the lowest of all the animals) to the woman, who was under the authority of her husband. He wanted to create a chain reaction of usurping God-ordained authority. Gilbert shows that, in the church, God is redemptively re-establishing authority structures to reflect His good design.

Before reading this book, I had never looked at 1 Timothy 2:8–15 through the lens of Genesis 1–3. Paul's command in 1 Timothy 2:12 is rooted in the very structures of authority God established in the garden. With pastoral sensitivity and clarity, Gilbert lays out the evidence for only qualified men being fit for eldership, while also acknowledging the great and significant ways God uses women in the local church. This is not an argument based on ability, but God's authority to design and order his creation and church as he pleases. It is our responsibility to humbly and joyfully submit to that authority.

I believe that all Christian women should read this book. As those living in an era where feminism infiltrates and permeates so much of our culture, we need to see that male authority and leadership in the local church and male headship in marriage are actually beautiful things. Submission to that authority is God's good design for His glory and our good. Men who aspire to be elders will also be helped by *Can Women Be Pastors?* As we all know, authority can be abused and twisted, which is not God's design either. This book provides an understanding of the weight of eldership and God's design for it. Finally, I suggest giving this book to a friend or a family member who thinks women can be pastors. Though short, it clearly walks through 1 Timothy 2:12, which is the lynchpin verse for thinking about this issue.

— Recommended by Madeleine Dallas



Excerpts from
the Book

1

He (God) designed a beautiful framework of royal authority throughout his cosmos. Adam and Eve exercise godly dominion over the animals, while within their relationship Adam reflects God's divine character as he holds authority over his wife. Ruling over it all is the High King of the cosmos, God Himself.

– p. 23

2

Satan's aim wasn't just to get Adam and Eve to sin but to disrupt and destroy the entire structure of authority created. He wanted to cause a chain reaction of rebellion throughout the cosmos. Satan's plan was for an animal to convince the woman to convince the man to declare war against God.

– p. 27

3

The church, the new covenant community of the Messianic King, is where the structures of authority that had been destroyed in Eden are now re-established.

– p. 40

Available for checkout from the Church Library or purchase in the Bookstall.

MAY

These Scripture readings have been selected to help you prepare for the Sunday morning message. Take Up & Read!

May 1	Romans 13:1–7	May 18	Haggai 2:1–9
May 2	Luke 22:24–30	May 19	Haggai 2:10–23
May 3	Mark 10:42–45	May 20	Ezra 7
May 4	2 Samuel 23:3–4	May 21	Ezra 8
May 5	Ruth 1	May 22	Ezra 9
May 6	Ruth 2	May 23	Luke 1:26–33
May 7	Ruth 3	May 24	Ezra 10
May 8	Ephesians 2:1–10	May 25	Haggai 2:10–23
May 9	Ephesians 2:11–22	May 26	Nehemiah 1
May 10	Ruth 4	May 27	Nehemiah 2
May 11	Ruth 1	May 28	Nehemiah 3
May 12	Haggai 2:1–9	May 29	Luke 1:26–33
May 13	Ezra 4	May 30	Nehemiah 4
May 14	Ezra 5		
May 15	Hebrews 12:1–17		
May 16	Hebrews 12:18–29		

TAKE UP & READ

NEW MEMBERS



**Katherine
Bell**



**Haddon
Crosby**



**Sam & Rachel
Edwards**



**Eva
Thayer**



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