



Grace Life Church *of Dallas*

The doctrines of grace, the life of the Spirit, to the glory of God



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“Women speaking in the church”

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Biblical Manhood/Womanhood

God has given clearly defined roles to men and women in the family and in the church. In the family, husbands are called to loving and humble leadership, rather than the cultural norm of passive or domineering headship. Wives are called to intelligent and willing submission, rather than usurpation or servility. Redemption in Christ gives men and women an equal share in the blessings of salvation and both are equally valued in God's economy; however, some governing and teaching roles within the church are restricted to men. (Gal 3:28; 1 Cor 11:2-16; 1 Tim 2:11-15; Prov 31, 12:4; Titus 2:3-5; I Tim 5:14).

- Men and women have equal value and worth before God, equally loved
- God has given distinct roles/responsibilities to women and men
- These distinct roles are part of God's creative design (Gen 2-Before the fall)
 - Adam being created first then Eve was the order of creation, but also revealed God's perfect design for roles/responsibilities.
 - This creative order for men/women is based on God's perfect wisdom, and not based on man/woman's ability, and it's for our good.
- Our post-modern culture's push for equality in all things between men/women based on women's ability/education/evolving must never change God's perfect design in our roles.

1 Corinthians 14:33b-35

As in all the churches of the saints, 34 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. 35 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.

- This is and has been a portion of Scripture that has been debated **within** the church regarding the extent of Paul's intention
- Faithful pastors/churches striving to be careful with the text, have arrived at different understandings
- Scripture is our authority-It must always be the basis of our doctrine and practice

Three Main Points today:

- Share the elders understanding of the text & Paul's intention with the church
- Suggest Guidance-How do we uphold God's design regarding roles in our interactive studies and times of corporate prayer
- Discuss what you do if you have come to a different understanding

Within faithful churches, we all agree that women are not to teach men or have authority over men (1 Tim 2:11-15).

Regarding 1 Corinthians 14:33b-35, there are two basic understandings of Paul's intent regarding women not speaking in the church:

- 1) Women are not to speak at all when the church is assembled
- 2) Women are not to speak at all when the church is assembled, as it pertains to the weighing of prophecy

Chapter Context-1 Corinthians 14: Prophecy and Tongues

Immediate Surrounding Context: Weighing of prophecy

- The verses preceding 33b-35, and the verses following 33b-35 are dealing with prophecy (Before-the weighing of prophecy and After- some summary thoughts on prophecy). Meaning he hasn't changed subjects. He is still dealing with prophecy.

26 What then, brothers? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up. 27 If any speak in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn, and let someone interpret. 28 But if there is no one to interpret, let each of them keep silent in church and speak to himself and to God. 29 Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said. 30 If a revelation is made to another sitting there, let the first be silent. 31 For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged, 32 and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets. 33 For God is not a God of confusion but of peace.

As in all the churches of the saints, 34 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. 35 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.

36 Or was it from you that the word of God came? Or are you the only ones it has reached? 37 If anyone thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that the things I am writing to you are a command of the Lord. 38 If anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized. 39 So, my brothers, earnestly desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. 40 But all things should be done decently and in order.

- The weighing of prophecy is a place of authority, and involves teaching. Therefore women should not weigh prophecy, challenge the weighing of prophecy, or question the weighing of prophecy. Rather they are remain silent.
- The consistency in the use of the word “silent” in chapter 14
 - The other 2 uses of the word “silent” in chapter 14 (v28, v30) do not imply total/unrestricted silence, but the context provides the extent of the restriction
- Whole of Scripture context: Paul’s appeal for silence for women throughout Scripture is keeping with God’s creative order “*as the Law also says*”, and aims to deal with matters pertaining to authority and teaching over men
 - **1 Timothy 2:11-15** (1 Timothy 3, Titus 1) *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. 15 Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.*

Greater Context of 1 Corinthians (Book)

1 Corinthians 11-Paul encourages women to pray and prophesy

2 Now I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I delivered them to you. 3 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. 4 Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head, 5 but every wife who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, since it is the same as if her head were shaven.

- If chapter 14 was a call for absolute silence and not limited to the weighing of prophecy, many see a contradiction here with in chapter 11.
 - Some believe 11:2-5 is pertaining to a smaller gathering of believers (Not corporate worship)
 - Others believe 11:2-5 is pertaining to corporate worship, which would be a contradiction, if Paul's intent in chapter 14 is complete silence
- Either way, you have women praying and prophesying in mixed company. Paul does not forbid this, but again Paul's concern is in keeping with the Biblical order of authority and submission (Covering the head)

Summary and Guidelines:

- Because of the immediate context of 1 Cor 14:33b-35, the chapter context, consistency of the use of the word silence, the book context (harmony with 1 Cor 11), the overall Scriptural focus context (Paul's concern for silence as it pertains to matters of authority/teaching over men), we believe Paul's call for silence for women in 1 Corinthians 14 is regarding the weighing of prophecy, which is authoritative, and not absolute silence.
- We do believe it is wrong for women to teach or have authority over men, so women will not be teaching in any mixed settings in the church.
- We do not believe it is wrong for women to pray out loud or participate in Bible study during the 9:30am hour, because we do not see this as authoritative.
- We do want to make sure that questions or comments shared by women during our time of study do not become argumentative, or turn into teaching.

What do you personally do if you have come to a different understanding?

- As a women, come to the studies, but you don't have to participate in the discussion
- As a teacher, you may not be able to teach with a clear conscience
- Remember it is we as elders that will give an account to the Lord