

WOMEN CANNOT BECOME PASTORS

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Introduction

As a Christian, one encounters a controversial subject surrounding the participation of women in the ministry. The controversial subject boils down to whether women should become pastors or not. In this sense, some Christians support the assertion that women are qualified to occupy pastoral positions in the church, while other Christians are against women taking up such vocational positions in the church. In contrast, the set of people who are in support of women pastors are usually referred to as biblical feminists or Christian egalitarians, while those who oppose women pastors are referred to as traditionalists or complementarians. As a result, Louis R. Torres exclaimed in his book that “Once again the church is rocking and reeling – not from the beat of ‘Rock Around the Clock,’ but from well-meaning people anxious to champion a new cause: women’s ordination into the gospel ministry.”¹ Thus, while several Christians claim women can become pastors, the Scripture, the creation of humanity, and the role of the Levites from ancient Israelites prove that women cannot become pastors in the church.

Claims for Women Pastors

Over the past dozen years, there has been rapid increase of women service as ministers in Protestant churches. For example, Lyle E. Schaller recorded that in 1972, 3,358 women were enrolled in the seminary and the number got tripled eight years later.² Schaller further stressed that “one-fourth and two-fifths of the candidates for the Master of Divinity degrees or the Doctor

¹ Louis R. Torres, *Women Pastors, Why Not?: Bible Illuminations*, (N.P: Bible Illuminations, 2015), 6.

² Lyle E. Schaller, *Woman as Pastors*, (Nashville: Abingdon, 1982), 12.

of Ministry degrees are women.”³ In this sense, this section of research will deal with reviewing the Scriptural support, external claim in support, and historical support for women pastors.

Scriptural Support for Women Pastors

Supporters of Women Pastors claimed that men and women are co-equal under God, and both are valued by God in function and significance. And based on two passages such as 1 Corinthians 14:33-34 and 1 Timothy 2:12, the supporters for women pastors claimed address women as ecclesiastical elders or give right to women to become pastors. However, before moving into understanding the position for the support of women as pastors, Susan T. Foh, in a book, highlighted that “There is only one valid argument against women’s ordination to the ministry: scriptural prohibition. This prohibition is found in 1 Tim. 2:12.”⁴ As a result, the supporters place more emphasis on 1 Timothy 2:12. They do so by depicting that 1 Corinthians 14:34 is in comparison to 1 Timothy 2:12 in the sense that Paul focus was on *how* in relation to congregational setting. Thus, since Paul was not addressing the context of *who* should prophesy but rather on *how* a church should allow members to prophesy, one can denote a similar approach of how Paul addressed 1 Timothy 2:12. As a reference to 1 Corinthians 14:34, where Paul talked about the prohibition of women not to speak, the scholars in support of women pastors claimed that it initially appears to all churches in a generalized sense. According to James Greenbury, the prohibition cannot be a generalize ban on absolutely *all* speeches in a

³ Ibid.

⁴ Bonnidell Clouse, Robert G. Clouse, and Robert Duncan Culver, *Women in Ministry*” Contribution by Susan T. Foh, (Downers Grove III: InterVarsity Press, 1989), 91.

congregation since Paul already recognized women praying and prophesying with men in the church from 1 Corinthians 11.⁵

In addition, Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner in their commentary further stressed that “Paul actually thought of a particular instance where different kinds of participants in the worship meeting should refrain from speaking.⁶ From an interpretative view, Craig S. Keener concluded that since the gospel is open for women to learn alongside women, Paul declared that “if there is anything they desire to learn,” they should learn.⁷ In this interpretation, the author gave this conclusion about women as pastors to support that since the women could learn anything, asking questions in the congregation should not be considered going against the Scripture which in essence gives right to women to become pastors. Furthermore, most scholars expatiate on Titus 1:11, 1 Corinthians 14:35, Ephesians 5:12, and 1 Corinthians 11:6, to mean that the sentence which Paul stated that “let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church,”⁸ is not a shameful thing because women do pray and read

⁵ James Greenbury, “1 Corinthians 14:34-35: Evaluation of Prophecy Revisited,” *Journal of Evangelical Theological Society*, Vol. 51, no.4 (December 2008): 721-31, <https://www.galaxie.com/article/jets51-4-04>.

⁶ Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, *Pillar New Testament Commentary*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 720.

⁷ Craig S. Keener, “Women’s Education and Public Speech in Antiquity,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, Vol. 50, No.4 (2007): 747-60, <https://www.galaxie.com/article/jets50-4-05>.

⁸ 1 Cor 14:35. All Scriptural are from English Standard Version, unless otherwise explicitly referenced.

announcements in the midst of the congregations from the pulpit especially during worship services. Thus, none of these things are shameful, neither are they wrong.⁹

From a general point, most scholars who supported women pastors counter claimed that if one should adopt the statement that a woman cannot teach a man¹⁰ from a general view means that women cannot become teachers in schools, professors, doctors, lawyers, scientists and others. Hence, the verse does not restrict only in churches. Also, they claimed that if a woman cannot have authority over a man¹¹ means that women cannot become managers at stores and offices, elected to political offices, nor become principals in schools, and presidents/chancellors of universities. However, since this idea does not fit into the right interpretation of the idea Paul was passing across to his audience, “it is not clear that we should have the same policy today. We make allowances for changes in culture when it comes to prayer posture and women’s clothing.”¹²

Historical Claim in Support of Women Pastors

From a historical standpoint, advocates for women pastors always reference the women in the Bible as their basis for legitimizing women pastors. Thomas R. Schreiner appealed that “women should never teach and exercise authority over men in church because you just weren’t

⁹ Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*, (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2014), 483.

¹⁰ 1 Tim 2:12.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Michael Morrison, “Women in Ministry,” Grace Community International, last accessed July 16, 2024, <https://archive.gci.org/articles/women-pastors/>.

made for it” which “violate male headship.¹³ In response, the advocates for women pastors counter claimed that as one looks at Genesis 2, one will realize that it is not an appeal to creation order to establish male primacy or headship in a church, and there is no basis for the inferiority of woman.¹⁴ Instead, women have been in authority from the beginning. Another point for women pastors is that an illustrative point in the Scripture depicts that Deborah had political authority where the Israelites in her days respected her leadership.¹⁵ For example, Michael Morrison in an article suggested that “God used Deborah because all the men were incompetent or unwilling... God was working through Deborah as a civil judge.”¹⁶ Another biblical figure which leads to support for women pastors is Huldah. She was a prophetess whom the people of God in her days go into seek for advice.¹⁷ As one boils down to the New Testament, when Peter preached a sermon at Pentecost, most of the scholars in support of women pastors claimed that the promise of God “in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all

¹³ Thomas R. Schreiner, “Philip Payne on Familiar Ground: A Review of Philip B. Payne, Man and Woman, One in Christ, *Journal of Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, Vol. 15 no. 1 (Spring): 34.

¹⁴ Ben Witherington, *Women in the Ministry of Jesus: A Study of Jesus’ Attitudes to Women and their Roles as Reflected in His Early Life*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 6. It is true that the passage is not about the inferiority of women. However, just as God has instituted order in the world for a man to become the head of the house, for leaders in governmental positions to exist, and for children to obey their parents, so also pastoral positions. However, humans have the right to disobey the commands of God or obey it.

¹⁵ Judges 4:4-5.

¹⁶ Morrison, “Women in Ministry.” Although Morrison admitted that the author of Judges was not explicit why God used Deborah, Deborah who served as a civil judge does not indicate that she served in the position of pastoral duties or ecclesiastical eldership just as during the NT when the church was in existence. Since the church era had not started during her time, this interpretation is out of context.

¹⁷ 2 kings 22:14.

flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy....”¹⁸ is a support that women can become pastors just as men are pastors from antiquity. More so, the advocates for women pastors claimed that the Great Commission is a significant confirmation in support of their position.¹⁹ In this sense, Warren promotes the idea that the command of Jesus Christ in Matthew 28 gives both men and women the right to become pastors in churches.

Claims against Women Pastors

In this section of the debate, one will research on biblical proof against women pastors, creation of humanity, the role of Levites from Ancient Israelites. Through the research in this section, one will further explicate that arguing against women pastors is not about going against the value of women. Both scholars, for and against women pastors can agree that God created both men and women equal, and in his image. Both parties also respect the dignity and honor of both women and men. For example, the Baptist Faith in Message 2000 in Article 3, claimed that God created both male and female as the crowning work of his creation.²⁰ Thus the gift of gender

¹⁸ Acts 2:14-21.

¹⁹ Rick Warren, “Why I changed my mind on Women in Church Leadership,” Premier Christianity, last accessed July 17, 2024, <https://www.premierchristianity.com/opinion/rick-warren-why-i-changed-my-mind-on-women-in-church-leadership/15108.article>. Warren does not adhere to the state of order God has instituted just as Paul clearly stated in 1 Timothy 2 on how God created humanity: Adam first, and then Even. And there were no prescriptive precepts in Matthew 28 on pastorship roles in regard to church position, but it was only based upon preaching/teaching his Word to the ends of the earth.

²⁰ “Baptist Faith and Message: Article 3: Man,” *Baptist Press*, last accessed July 19, 2024, <https://www.baptistpress.com/resource-library/news/baptist-faith-and-message-article-3-man/#:~:text=Man%20is%20the%20special%20creation%20of%20God%2C%20made,thus%20>

is a gift from God one needs to cherish without superiority and inferiority status between a man and a woman.

From an interpretative standpoint to adhere to literary text of the Scripture, Andreea Nica, a feminist and an egalitarian changed her mind about advocating for women pastors and stressed in her article that the reason she now goes against women pastors is due to patriarchal order which God instituted from the beginning of time.²¹ In her article, she asked the question, “Why are women so determined to be leaders’ congregants for that matter...?”²² Further, she answered the question by emphasizing that all women should adhere to the explicit verse Paul stated in 1 Timothy 2:12 “I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet.” Also, during her soul winning ministry, Ellen G. White, in her writing clearly advised that in soul winning ministry, “It did not even involve holding a church office in the usual sense of the term. The women should be ‘appointed.’

In this light, in as much as God has used litany of women in several areas, from Miriam, the Prophetess,²³ Deborah (the Judge)²⁴, the wife of Prophet Isaiah²⁵, Serah (the wife of

part%20of%20the%20goodness%20of%20God%E2%80%99s%20creation.

²¹ Andreea Nice, “Why I Don’t Believe in Female Pastors, Feminism and Religion, last accessed July 17, 2024, <https://feminismandreligion.com/2014/02/11/why-i-dont-believe-in-female-pastors-by-andreea-nica/>.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ex 15:21.

²⁴ Judges 4:4.

²⁵ Is 8:3.

Abraham), Huldah (the Prophetess),²⁶ Anna (prophetess)²⁷, the four daughters of Phillip²⁸, Mary, Martha, Phoebe, Priscilla,²⁹ and host of others, God will continue to use women in special areas of his kingdom's business just as Paul stated in 1 Corinthians 12:11, that God will empower all humans by his Spirit who apportions to each one individually as he wills. As a result, Paul used 1 Corinthians 12:11 to support Christian women who are spiritually gifted just like men are gifted as well. However, all gifts are regulated according to Scripture. For example, Paul showed all Christians in 1 Corinthians 11 to reject any contrary practice of the gift God freely gave his church to profit all. In the forward of Torres' book, he revealed that "Through 40 years of ministry I have witnessed many attempts to introduce a variety of teachings called 'new light.' All of those movements have since faded into the pitch darkness of Egypt. After all, that is where many false teachings had their beginnings."³⁰ In his forward address, the author explained why people choose to defy the precepts of God including churches who choose to entertain women pastors in their midst.

Biblical Proof Against Women Pastors

"We will add that our surprise is all the greater when women of piety mount the pulpit, for they are acting in plain defiance of the command of the Holy Spirit, written by the pen of the Apostle Paul" (Charles Spurgeon).

²⁶ 2 Kings 22:14, 2 Chron 34:22.

²⁷ Lk 2:36.

²⁸ Acts 21:9.

²⁹ Priscilla Papers, "Understanding 'Head' and Head Covering," *CBE International*, Vol. 20 No. 3 (Summer 2006): 32.

³⁰ Torres, *Women Pastors, Why Not?*, 6.

Since the Bible is the only authority to question whether women should become pastors, the real concern is to address whether God has given prescriptive precept in accordance with his will concern this issue especially when it surrounds worship gatherings. This subsection will pay close attention in the realm of church order and ecclesiology in accordance with Paul's writing in 1 Timothy 2. For example, Tom Ascol in his article reiterated that "Chris has not been unclear about who may serve as a pastor in any church that bears His name. He cares deeply about how His churches are organized and operated. We see this in the language that the Apostle Paul uses to instruct Timothy about giving leadership in the church at Ephesus."³¹ Here, Ascol emphasized that there is an order Jesus Christ established in his church which all churches must follow if they claim they belong to him.

In using 1 Timothy 2:12 as the basis of this argument against women pastors, it is critical for one to have a better understanding of the letter itself. The first letter of Timothy was written by Apostle Paul in A.D 63-65/66³² to Timothy, his coworker who was the overseer at the church at Ephesus.³³ According to Lea and Griffin, the purpose of Paul to "direct Timothy to give vigorous personal opposition to the false doctrine developing in Ephesus (1:3), (and)... he instructed Timothy about the kind of behavior that should characterize Ephesian believers as members of 'God's household'" (3:15).³⁴ From the perspective of the writers, Paul had concerns

³¹ Tom Ascol, "Why Women Cannot Be Pastors of Christ's Churches," Founders Ministry, last accessed July 19, 2024, <https://founders.org/articles/why-women-cannot-be-pastors-of-christs-churches/>.

³² Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, Jr., *The New American Commentary: 1, 2 Timothy, and Titus*, Vol. 34, (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1992), 41.

³³ *Ibid.*, 26.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 42.

over orderliness in the church, and the kind of teachings the church at Ephesus should adopt; the true teachings in the Scripture. Although, it is crucial to stress that the two authors brought the attention of their readers to understand that Paul was not giving Timothy “a manual for church organization.”³⁵ From the perspective of the authors, due to false teaching which was manifesting in the church at Ephesus, Paul made the decision to ensure he guides Timothy to present a contrast with corrupt, and self-seeking behaviors ongoing in the church. As a result, Paul ordered the excommunication of certain so-called church members, Hymeneas and Alexander who were perpetrators of such act.³⁶ As a whole, Paul addressed some theological themes to enlighten the church at Ephesus so that they may be grounded in the teachings that pertain to the Kingdom of God: the trinity, the gospel, the Christian life, eschatology, church government, and salvation.³⁷

As a result, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus, which served as pastoral epistles provided significance to the church at Ephesus, as well as to churches today. Thus, Lea and Griffin provided that the epistles gave an insight issues that are contemporary in nature such as divisiveness, difficulties in leadership, heretical teachings, and guidelines to address such problems.³⁸ As an overarching theme, Paul wrote 1 Timothy with the mindset to warn his coworker against to anything that stood against sound teaching.³⁹ According to William

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid., 43.

³⁷ Ibid., 45-51.

³⁸ Ibid., 53.

³⁹ 1 Tim 1:10.

Hendricksen in his book explained that the reason why so Paul warned against sound teaching was because the teachings of the false teachers indicate that some who claimed to profess Christ have wandered away from the truth, and turned into unprofitable talks in light of the gospel.⁴⁰ Also, Ronald A. Ward in his commentary emphasized that the false teachers wanted to become the teachers of the law, however, they are ignorant of the truth.⁴¹ From the two statements above, it show that even the false teachers who were teaching heretics in the church at Ephesus were ignorant of the truth, no matter how much there was to teach the truth in the church. Meanwhile, as one takes a closer look at the term “charge” is “command” (as the known form of commandment) in 1 Timothy 1:5, it was to reveal that the goal of Paul in issuing out the command was to guide the false teachers to manifest love that is unconditional and genuine.⁴²

So, because God cares so much about how church should be organized and operate, Paul issued a command to Timothy to address the church at Ephesus that “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.”⁴³ From this prescriptive precept from Paul, Ascol emphasized that only men who are qualified can be pastors in ecclesiastical settings.⁴⁴ He further reemphasized that God has given an explicit command that only men who are qualified can serve as pastors in His church by quoting 1 Timothy 3:2, and 1 Timothy 2:9-14

⁴⁰ William Hendricksen, *I-II Timothy and Titus, NTC*, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1957), 61.

⁴¹ Ronald A. Ward, *Commentary on 1 & 2 Timothy & Titus*, (Waco: Word, 1974), 3.

⁴² Lea and Griffin, *The New American Commentary: 1, 2 Timothy, and Titus*, 68.

⁴³ 1 Tim 3:14-15.

⁴⁴ Ascol, “Why Women Cannot Be Pastors of Christ’s Churches.”

in his article.⁴⁵ Here, Ascol highlighted from a Greek text to depict that Paul meant that “the qualifications prescribed for pastors – ‘he must be...the husband of one wife’ (μῑς γυναικὸς ἄνδρα, (means) a ‘one woman man;’ emphasis added).”⁴⁶

According to James Duvall in his article, John MacArthur declared that “Women who pastor and women who preach in the church are a disgrace and openly reflect opposition to the clear command of the word of God.”⁴⁷ In his article, Duvall revealed biblical passages that directly depict the role women should play in the church: 1 Corinthians 11:3-12, 14:34-35, 1 Timothy 2:11-15 and Titus 1, 2. From his own view, these passages are the grounds which stands against women pastors. According to 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, and 1 Timothy 2, the writer cleared out the notion that the passages were not attached to the current culture which causes a misunderstanding from anyone who guide his audience towards that direction that Paul was referring to the culture in his days.⁴⁸ Further, Duvall interpreted those passages, especially 1 Timothy 2:11-15 to depict that Paul was making his arguments according to order of creation God has established from the beginning of time.⁴⁹ In this light, the writer explained, “This order placed Adam first, then Eve – man, then woman. Because God created Adam first, this gave Adam authority... I find it interesting that God told Eve in Genesis 3 that her desire would be

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ James Duvall, “Student Opinion – God Clearly Says Women Should Not Be Pastors, and That’s Okay,” The Official Student Newspaper of Liberty University, last accessed July 19, 2024.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

contrary to her husband's."⁵⁰ From the writing of Duvall, he concluded that since creation, God has already laid down the channels of authority: man as the head of a women. More so, it is important to reiterate that the channels of leadership as an order of creation does not depict a woman as inferior but a desire of how God instituted order from the beginning of time. As one moves further in this research, it will be imperative to look at the creation of humanity in a more holistic form to have a better understanding surrounding why Paul supported his statement with the scene during the time Satan deceived the existence of the first human beings on earth.

Creation of Humanity

In order to capture the order God has established from the creation of humanity, Paul declared in his letter to Timohty that “ I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet... 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.”⁵¹ From this passage above, Torres exclaimed that Paul showed the absence of Adam gave room for Eve who “toyed with the aspiration of superiority when Satan tempted her.”⁵² From the concern of Paul, the author depicts that lack of Adam’s presence led to why Eve fell to adhere to the commands of God. As a result, White lamented

Eve had been perfectly happy by her husband’s side in her Eden home; but, like restless modern Eves, she was flattered with the hope of entering a higher sphere than that which God had assigned her. In attempting to rise above her original position, she fell far below it. A similar result will be reached by all who are unwilling to take up cheerfully their life duties in accordance with God’s plan. In Their efforts to reach positions for which He has

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ 1 Timothy 2:12-15.

⁵² Torres, *Women Pastors, Why Not?*, ” 10.

not fitted them, many are leaving vacant the place where they might be a blessing. In their desire for a higher sphere, many have sacrificed true womanly dignity and nobility of character and have left undone the very work that Heaven appointed them.⁵³

From the above content from White, explained that women who are not contented in their divine ordain position where they are desire to rise above the level of the men God has placed them to be their guide, they will eventually fall like Eve. In this sense, she lamented that many women have thrown away their true women “dignity and nobility of character” which God has apportioned them because they strive the position of manhood.

In creation order, most ancient women in the Bible have strived to embrace their womanhood during their lifetime. After Eve and Adam sinned against God, he drove them out of the garden of Eden in line with a futuristic divine plan to save human race from eternal condemnation. In this light, Eve retained the promise of God that the hope of humanity was rested upon a male child, she audibly aired her hope that “for she said, ‘God has appointed for me another offspring instead of Abel, for Cain killed him.’ To Seth also a son was born, and he called his name Enosh. At that time people began to call upon the name of the LORD.”⁵⁴ As a piggyback, Torres claimed that Eve used the term *offspring*, which she referred to the initial promise God gave her during the time he pronounced punishment over her for sinning against him by eating the fruit of good and evil she ought not to.⁵⁵ The promise stated “I will put an enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall

⁵³ Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, (N.P: Review and Herald Publishing Assn.: 1958), 59.

⁵⁴ Gen 4:25-26.

⁵⁵ Torres, “*Women Pastors, Why Not?*,” 11.

bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”⁵⁶ From this passage, the author explained, the child that has to come save mankind had to be man, although he was born of a woman.

Another woman who lived up to her womanhood was Sarah. Because of her submission to Abraham her husband, “And God said to Abraham, “As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. I will bless her, and moreover, I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall become nations; kings of peoples shall come from her.”⁵⁷ In this passage, God declared to change the name of Sarai to Sarah because of his blessings upon her, to give birth to a son and through her, nations will manifest. From the declaration of the blessings of God upon Sarah, God never placed her over her husband, or over the leadership on the entire Israel but in the position that God knows fits her perfectly. And in the book of Hebrew, the author mentioned her name amongst the “Hall of Faith.”⁵⁸

However, Miriam who was a prophetess, and the elder sister to Moses exhibited jealousy and criticism against Moses and his marriage to a Cushite woman, instead of being contented with the position God has placed her.⁵⁹ As a result, her disregard for the authority of God over Moses taught her a lesson on the importance of humility and acceptance of the order of God in life as a whole. At a point, Moses had to plead with God for forgiveness towards Miriam. Because of the mercies of God, Miriam was inflicted with leprosy, and she spent seven days outside the camp of Israelites until she was healed.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Gen 3:15-16.

⁵⁷ Gen 17:15-16.

⁵⁸ Heb 11:11.

⁵⁹ Num 12:10-14.

⁶⁰ Num. 12:15.

More so, the story of Hagar teaches a great lesson on orderliness in the Kingdom of God. Even though Sarah elevated Hagar and placed her in a position that does not belong to her, Hagar strived for more and decided to take over the position of Sarah, and disregarded Sarah, her mistress. In this sense, White declared that she became “proud and boastful, and treated her mistress (Sarah) with contempt.”⁶¹ As a result, Abraham gave Sarah the permission to deal with her how she so desired. This led to Hagar leaving the house of Abraham and became a wonderer in the desert with no food and water until God had mercy upon her and provided food for the sake of her son, Ishmail.⁶² Thus, all these stories and more as many authors recorded in the Bible about women role indicated that God desires order and wants both men and women to be in content in the position God has placed them. In this sense, woman ought not to be pastors and God used Paul to reiterate in 1 Timothy 2:12.

The Role of Levites from Ancient Israelites

In her article, Michelle Lesley confessed that “I’ve struggled with God’s instruction in these verses (1 Timothy 2:11-12), trying to stretch it, Silly Putty Style, into what I wanted it to mean, so that I could do what I wanted to do and still be ‘covered’ biblically. And ladies, let me tell you something – that is a sinful, wicked, self-seeking, and self-centered way of approaching this or any other Scripture. An approach from which I have to had to repent many, many times.”⁶³ Here, Lesley stressed that it is unbiblical to support women pastor when Paul and other

⁶¹ White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 145.

⁶² Gen. 21:14-16.

⁶³ Michelle Lesley, “Rock Your Role: Jill in the Pulpit (1 Timothy 2:11-12),” Michelle Lesley, Discipleship for Christian Women, last accessed July 20, 2024, <https://michellelesley.com/2015/09/11/rock-your-role-jill-in-the-pulpit-1-timothy-211-12/>.

authors in several passages, down to the Old Testament explicitly emphasized that ecclesiastic position is strictly reserved for men only. The writer went further to support her premise by quoting 1 Samuel 15:22-23a “Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams.” In view of this passage, Lesley warned her readers that it is critical to examine scriptural passages as in its context, especially by developing an understanding of over its exegetical meanings.⁶⁴ Furthermore, she added, “look at the overall general pattern of male headship and leadership in Scripture. First, human that was created was a man, and all the Patriarchs, Priests, Levites, Scribes were all men.⁶⁵ As a crucial point, the head and founder of the entire church is a man, Jesus Christ.⁶⁶

To be specific, the Levites were a tribe of Israelites who descended from Levi, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. Meanwhile, according to history, the Levites men who were selected by God to serve God, Himself in the holy temple and Tabernacle. Some of their responsibilities included services as musicians,⁶⁷ Gatekeepers,⁶⁸ Guards,⁶⁹ judges (to interpret and apply Jewish

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ 1 Chron 15:16-24, 23:5.

⁶⁸ 1 Chron 9:18.

⁶⁹ 1 Chron 9:22.

law),⁷⁰ temple officials,⁷¹ and craftsmen.⁷² Although they did not receive land inheritance like the other tribes, God strictly preserved them to serve in diverse manners in spiritual leadership, worship, and administrative positions.⁷³ During their time, no women were ever included in such service to the Lord.

Thus, as one reverts to 1 Timothy 2:12, Richard. C. H. Lenski emphasized that the command Paul gave in the text was in reference to church settings, and his primary emphasis was in reference to speak of females in a primary generic sense.⁷⁴ Here, Lea and Griffin gave three observations. The first one indicated that Paul gave a prescriptive command that women should not teach in the congregation, second women should not have authority over men in the congregation, and third Paul instructed women to be silent in the church.⁷⁵ As the authors explained, the use of *ἐπιτρέπω* in Greek, meaning (*I do not permit* in English) indicated that Paul was issuing out a command regarding the situation in Ephesus. From the second observation, the writers use of the work *authenteo*, suggested that Paul was referring to the authority which comes from a teacher who was responsible to ecclesiastical settings.⁷⁶ And from the third observation depict “Paul intended that the women show their teachable attitude by remaining

⁷⁰ Deut 17:8-13.

⁷¹ 1 Chron 23:28-32.

⁷² Exod 31:1-11, 35:30-35.

⁷³ Is 66:21.

⁷⁴ Richard. C. H. Lenski, *The interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians, to the Thessalonians, to Timothy, to Titus, and to Philemon*, (Columbus, OH: Wartburg, 1946), 562.

⁷⁵ Lea and Griffin, *The New American Commentary: 1, 2 Timothy, and Titus*, 98-100.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

physically quiet (cf. ‘she must keep quiet,’ Williams).”⁷⁷ On a final note, Lee and Griffin stressed that the role of teaching was linked to pastoral role, which is still applicable today in modern churches. In this sense, it is imperative that Paul intended to emphasize that women must not take the position of pastorship.

Conclusive Assessment

From the findings above, this research fulfilled its purpose to find out whether the women can become pastors. Thus, while several Christians claim women can become pastors today, the Scripture, the creation of humanity, and the role of the Levites from ancient Israelites prove that women cannot become pastors in the church. To all Christians living in modernity, it will be crucial to seek better understanding from a holistic Scriptural reference, accept the truth especially about prescriptive command as outlined in the Bible, and earnestly desire to follow the commands for the edification of the ecclesiastical settings, rather than eisegesis to favor a presuppositional narratives.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

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