

# **THE WOMAN LEADERSHIP IN THE CHURCH**

**1 Tim 2:11-15:** <sup>11</sup>A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. <sup>12</sup> I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. <sup>13</sup> for Adam were formed first, then Eve. <sup>14</sup> And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. <sup>15</sup> but women will be saved through childbearing — if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.

**1Tim 3:2-12:** <sup>2</sup>Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self- controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach. <sup>3</sup> not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. <sup>4</sup> He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. <sup>5</sup> (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) <sup>6</sup> He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. <sup>7</sup> He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap. <sup>8</sup> Deacons, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. <sup>9</sup> They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. <sup>10</sup> They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons. <sup>11</sup> in the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything. <sup>12</sup> A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well.

**Titus 1:6-11:** <sup>6</sup>An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. <sup>7</sup> since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless — not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. <sup>8</sup> Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self- controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. <sup>9</sup> He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it. <sup>10</sup> for there are many rebellious people, mere talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision group. <sup>11</sup> They must be silenced, because they are ruining whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach— and that for the sake of dishonest gain.

**Mainly from the above scripture some people have these views.**

1. Woman must be silent.
2. Woman have no authority to teach man, because this is God's order of authority in the church. Adam has the authority over Eve.

3. The Elder must be (man) husband of one wife, not a woman, a wife of one husband.
4. He must manage his children well.
5. He must be reverent, and have other qualifications as well.
6. They say, that the Bible has never given an example of a woman leader with spiritual authority over the man. In the case of Deborah, she was a judge; they claim this is not a spiritual authority. It was a special circumstance in that time of Deborah.
7. Phoebe and other women in the New Testament who helped Paul, they were just faithful woman. But they did not have any spiritual authority.

I have tried to put across as much as I could, the views of these who hold a view against women spiritual authority of leadership in the church.

### **Our Answers.**

Paul in his writing of the scripture taught us to compare scripture with scripture in order to understand the word of God. We are looking to the whole Bible to understand this important matter of woman spiritual authority of leadership.

We understand from the scripture that God respects culture, but sometime God himself teach us things which are against our culture. There is no doubt that culture is important, but Gods word is more important than culture. I will put my view in points to make it easy to read.

### **Woman Spiritual Authority and God's order.**

God sometimes teaches us something against our own culture but he will never break His own order.

The case of Deborah is a great example for us to really learn the heart of God regarding this matter. For those who claim that Deborah was a judge with no spiritual authority. Let us read together,

- a. Judges 4:4 "Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, was judging Israel at that time". She was a prophetess, the highest spiritual authority at that time. Even through the Jewish culture was total against woman leadership in any kind.
- b. 1 Chronicles 17:6 Wherever I have moved about with all Israel, have I ever spoken a word to any of the judges of Israel whom I commanded to shepherd my people, saying why have you not built me a house of

cedar? God is clearly saying that He commanded the judges of Israel including Deborah to shepherd the people. What a spiritual authority God has given to a woman!!!

Therefore from this case if it was God's order for the woman not to be in spiritual authority over man, God would never put Deborah in this position, but rather the opposite. God went against the Jewish culture in order to teach them the order of God. Man and women are both accepted into God's heart to serve him in all the spiritual positions.

### **1. Understanding what is a Spiritual Authority of Leadership.**

For some people spiritual authority of leadership is only for the Pastors and Elders. (Other leaders have limited or no spiritual authority). I think they need to review the word of God again. The spiritual gifts are given to man and woman by the Holy spirit. Every leader who has a role of leadership has the authority of the Holy Spirit, for the gift he or she holds is from God the Holy Spirit. In our church and in other churches women are already serving in roles of spiritual leadership. They are serving in areas of spiritual service, such as worship, biblical studies, public speaking and pastoral care. Some woman at East Ham Baptist church play a huge role in the area of pastoral care, this is definitely a spiritual authority given by God the Holy Spirit.

### **2. The Priesthood of all Believers.**

Baptists believe that every believer that attends a Baptist church has a role to play and can use their God-given gifts/ skills and talents for the good of the church and the community.

These gifts include teaching, evangelism, social action, pastoral care, prayer, and healing, taking part in worship, administration and hospitality.

In the Old Testament the priest from the Levi tribe only has the authority to enter to the Holy place, and the high priest to the Holy of Holies to offer on behalf of the people. But Jesus on the cross made it possible for all believers, including woman to enter into the Holy of Holies.

### **3. Understanding Paul's writing.**

Scripture often encourages us to reject trends within society, but at other times encourages us to follow cultural customs. For example:

- a. Rom 16:16, 1Peter 5:14 "Greet one another with a holy kiss", many Christians have no problem with this command, but people in America

generally have a problem with it. We encourage Christians to implement the principle of the command without obeying it literally; we consider this command to be based on culture and not a timeless truth. The principle of the command is to be friendly, not to kiss one another even when some cultures have a problem with it. Paul was writing this command from his understanding of his own culture,. We still learn from it, the principle to be friendly.

- b. Eph 6:1 Paul told slaves to obey their masters. He was accommodating himself to culture, he was not advocating slavery itself. There is no question that some commands apply to Paul's culture, and we need to learn the principle behind them. Others are clearly timeless, we need to take them literally. That is why I said earlier, as Paul said compare scripture with scripture in order to understand the word of God.

#### **4. A Close Look at Paul's writing to the Issues of the Woman Spiritual Authority of Leadership in the Church.**

##### **A. Women Supported Paul in many area of his ministry.'**

**Acts 2:17-18:** *"<sup>17</sup>In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. <sup>18</sup> Even on my servants, **both men and women**, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy".*

##### **Men and Women are called to be servants.**

**Acts 18:24 -26:** *<sup>24</sup> Meanwhile a Jew named Apollo's, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. <sup>25</sup> He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervour and taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the baptism of John. <sup>26</sup> He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately. A woman helped in teaching Apollo's the way of God more adequately.*

##### **B. Paul's use of the Greek language.**

1. The word Elder in Greek is presbyter, literally meaning the aged or the elderly. However we do not take this literally, but the principle behind it, which means the older or the mature in the faith.
2. The word Deacon in Greek is diakonon, literally meaning servant. In Matthew 20:25-28 the Lord Jesus Christ called all of us to be servants. Even though the official calling of the church to serve is in the Deacons.

3. The words presbyter and Diakonon are masculine in nature used by Paul and by the early church to address church members. Also the words ekklesia (the church or the called out) is a feminine noun, but we know from the scripture it includes men as well as women.
4. The work Adelphos is masculine translated brethren, is used to address and include both women and men. Gal 12:1.
5. Rom 16:1 Paul commended to the church Phoebe as a servant of the church, he used the word Diakonon in the masculine form even when she is clearly a woman.
6. **Presbytera, the feminine of presbyter, appears in 1 Tim. 5:2, while the masculine form occurs in the preceding verse (5:1). If 1 Tim. 5:1 refers to an elder who is to be entreated as a father (as indicated in older versions), then verse 2 refers to a woman elder who is to be entreated as a mother.**

It's clear from the above usage of the Greek language that Paul would prefer to use the masculine form in order to address even woman. But sometime he has to use the feminine form.

**C. The view of an Elder to be “a husband of one wife, not a wife of one husband”.**

1. If you take this statement literally we shall conclude, that no woman nor single man nor remarried, nor widowers nor man without children could be an Elder. If this is true then Paul himself could not be an Elder for he was a single person.
2. Paul was dealing with a problem that men have in his own culture, men have more than one wife. Women at that time did not have this problem, there is no need to say woman of one husband.

**D. Paul instructs older women to teach younger women only!!**

Paul also instructs older men to teach younger men. Does this mean that men cannot teach the entire congregation when they are together? In the time of Paul and his culture, women and men were very much in segregation in nearly all aspects of life even at home. Women have their own meeting rooms and men have their own meeting rooms. That's why it was natural to encourage both men and women to teach young men and young women.

**E. Paul's outline of qualifications to Eldership included women.**

*In **1Timothy 3:1-11** Pauls outlines the qualifications to the man who wants to be an Elder in verse 1-7, then in verse 8 includes the deacons, “Likewise deacons must*

*be reverent". In verse 11 he includes the women, "Likewise their wives must be reverent". The whole list of qualifications applied to men Elders and Deacons and to women Elders and Deacons.*

#### **F. Paul's address to the Elders, Deacons, men and women to be Reverent.**

Very clear joint qualification; they must be respectful in their spiritual leadership showing deep love as reverent in their position.

#### **5. *The issue of Paul not permitting a woman to teach or have authority over a man.***

1Timothy 1:12. The issue here was not man or woman authority, but rather as Paul clearly put it in the same chapter in verse 3-4 is the wrong teaching of doctrine. In which some women brought to the church and they like to teach their husband. It is a cultural issue that needed to be addressed. That's why Paul gives them the example of Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve were husband and wife, not a leader and a member of Church. This is not a church structure of leadership.

#### **6. *The role of an Elder and of a Deacon.***

In Acts 6:8-10 we learn that Stephan who is considered to be the first deacon of the early church supported the Elders in their work. He also preached the gospel publicly and performed signs and wonders with authority. The role of Elders and Deacons interact together, but surely both have a spiritual authority.

### **CONCLUSION**

We have to remember that both sides of the argument, those who support the leadership authority of the women or those who do not, both are saved by the same blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are one family of the body of Christ. There are many essential doctrines in our Christian faith; like there is only one God (this is very essential to our faith). But there are some other doctrines that are not essential, they are guidelines or policies, these may differ from culture to culture like the woman leadership authority in the church. For some people who grow up with woman leaders, this would be easy for them to accept, than those who do not have woman in leadership.

When a congregation is ready to receive a woman in leadership authority then they accept women. When they are not ready, prayer and time will be the answer to their hearts.

No matter who is to be an Elder, a man or a woman, they are both not perfect, no one is perfect, but we have to respect them and respect their calling. We have been in prayer, putting this matter in God's hands, trusting in Him to lead us and guide us for his glory.

Thank You Lord for your guidance and your blessing and for the faithful women you have chosen for us.

God Bless You All

*Pastor JEREMIAH*