

Role of Women in Ministries at FCC

INTRODUCTION

The Bible teaches men and women are equal in terms of worth and value in the eyes of God. Genesis 1:27 declares that male and female were created in His image. Galatians 3:28 explains that no distinctions exist pertaining to the covenant blessings of redemption and salvation. Men and women have equal access to God and an equal standing before God. The New Testament confirms that men and women have spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:7-11); and are held responsible to use those gifts to minister to the body of Christ (1 Peter 4:10); their ministries are indispensable to the life and health of the church. Therefore, Fellowship Community Church honors the varied ministries of women and encourages them to pursue them.

BIBLICAL TEACHING

The New Testament contains numerous verses concerning women participating in ministry of the early church.

Luke 8:1-3 describes women who were with Jesus and the disciples during their ministry because women were not part of any discipleship groups in the first century due to Jewish customs, this mention demonstrates the prominent role women played in Jesus' ministry.

Acts 18:26 and Romans 16:3-4 shows Priscilla and Aquila, a married couple who together played a vital part of Paul's ministry. Together they corrected Apollos' theology of Jesus Christ and they also had a house church in Rome.

Romans 16:1-2 Phoebe was a prominent member in the church and assisted Paul's ministry. He asked the Roman church to help her in any way they could and Paul asks for help on her behalf because of her important role in the early church.

Romans 16:6-7 and 12-13 list women who Paul commended as an integral part of the church.

1 Corinthians 11:5 Paul emphasizes women's public ministry of praying and prophesying.

Philippians 4:2: Paul pleads with two women to get along because of their prominent role in the Church in Philippi.

There are numerous verses in the Old Testament and New Testament concerning the roles of men and women in a complementary relationship.

A dance is a beautiful analogy for the purpose of roles within the church. When two dancers move in unison, they complement each other in a dance of roles. God created man and woman to be interdependent (1 Corinthians 11:8-12, Genesis 1:27, Genesis 2:18) and this interdependence causes men and women to live more joyful and complete lives. God created gender roles to work in concert with one another and not in opposition.

1 Corinthians 11:3 Paul talks about the headship of man. This does NOT mean that man is more important than woman but that there are certain roles that each play. Paul relates this headship to the Trinity: God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit are equal but their roles are distinct. Jesus came to earth due to the will of the Father (John 8:28), and the Holy Spirit is sent out under the authority of the Son and the Father. (John 15:26) Again, headship does not imply superiority nor does submission imply inferiority but both reflect a Godlike cooperation to fulfill the greater good. This analogy also provides an example for marriage regarding how Christ relates to the church. (Ephesians 5:21-33).

The function of God-given roles at Fellowship Community Church

The Holy Spirit administered gifts to the body as He sees fit for the common good of the body. (1 Corinthians 12:7) There are instances in the new church that Paul addressed with Timothy and Titus. Those instances related to the offices of deacon and elder and the spiritual gift of teaching.

Elder: 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. Paul talks about the qualifications for elders and their wives in the church. He quantifies the attributes that an elder must exhibit and Paul also restricts the office to men only. This does not mean women cannot be leaders in the church; it is only for the role of elder that Paul has restricted the office to men only. It is the men who are solely responsible for the spiritual direction and the governance of the church.

Deacon: 1 Timothy 3:8-12. Paul gives the qualifications for deacons and their wives. Again, Paul restricts the office of deacon to men only. In Acts 6:3-8 when the office of deacon was created it was given to men only.

The gift of teaching: Paul in 1 Timothy 2 talks about instructions for worship in the church for which Timothy was an elder. The verses in question are 2:9-15.

TNIV: "I also want the women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, adorning themselves, not with elaborate hairstyles or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God. A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man; she must be quiet. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. But women will be saved through childbearing-if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety."

In 1 Timothy 2, Paul's instruction is specifically for a gathering of the congregation. In 1 Timothy 2:9-12, Paul instructs about a problem occurring within the church of Ephesus. The women of Ephesus were deceived by the false teachers of their day and were undermining the authority of Timothy and other elders (1 Timothy 4:1-3, 2 Timothy 3:6-7). Paul explains he does not permit women to teach or exercise authority over men, within the context of the general assembly, and on topics of authoritative governance and spiritual direction of the church. The word "authority" in these verses means to be domineering in an arrogant way. This is something that both men and women should not do. Verses 13-14 recount the same process that took place in Genesis when Eve usurped the male spiritual leadership role. Verse 15 explains how all are saved through the birth of our Savior, and through faith, love, holiness and self-control. The admonition that these qualities should be present and increasing in all our lives is repeated in 2 Peter 1:5-11.

The role of women in the church is an important and sensitive topic. It is important to recognize the context of the instructions given concerning these roles in the New Testament. Dogmatic application of selected verses can be inappropriate and cause unintended restrictions on the role of men and women. FCC encourages women to exercise their spiritual gifts and believes these verses intend to only restrict women from deacon and elder leadership roles.

Authority of Scripture

2 Timothy 3:16 "All scripture is breathed from God and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness".

Romans 15:4 "For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope."

The elders are the governing board of FCC and are committed to put their trust in the Lord for the direction of the church. (Acts 14:23) All ministries are done under the authority of the Board of Elders. Properly approached this does not need to be contentious or divisive topic. The Board of Elders believes that women and men can teach in an ABF or LIFE group if it is approved with the leader of that ABF or LIFE group.

At Fellowship Community Church, under the authority of the Board of Elders, women may participate in any ministry role with the exception of Deacon or Elder/Senior Pastor.