

The Story of Men and Women: Gender Roles in the Church

Introduction

Q: What are the major questions that need to be asked and answered as we approach this question?

- Dramatic shifts
- The problem of “neutrality”
- Major questions: authority and goodness

1. Equality and Distinction in God’s World

I. God’s “very good” design - Genesis 1-2

i) Created together in God’s Image - Genesis 1:26-28

Implication: Radical equality with clear distinction in united Image bearing

ii) Created in partnership to work together under God - Genesis 2:7-25

- The Man created first and commissioned to work - Genesis 2:7-9, 15-17

Work - cf Deut 11:13, 28:14, Zeph 3:9

Keep - cf Gen 3:24, 4:9, 17:9; Nu 18:4-5

- The Woman created as the necessary Helper for Man in God’s World - Genesis 2:18-25

Helper - Deut 33:29; Hos 13:9; Ps 70:5

Not a helper for loneliness, but a helper in mission and service

Not subservient or hierarchically lesser

Implication: Radical equality with clear distinction in united service

II. Mankind's Rebellion and Corruption - Genesis 3

i) *Rebellion against and distortion of God - Genesis 3:1-6*

ii) *God's judgement: curse and confusion - Genesis 3:7-15*

- The Serpent
- The Woman (*cf Gen 4:7*)
- The Man

Implication: Comprehensive corruption

2. Equality and Distinction in God's Church

The Gospels

John 4:27 - Luke 10:38-42 - Matthew 26:10-13 - Matthew 28:5-7 - Matthew 19:4-6 -
Matthew 10:2-4 - Matthew 19:4-6

The wider New Testament

Acts 1:21-22 - Galatians 3:26-29 - 1 Corinthians 12:4-7 - Colossians 3:16 - Philippians
4:2-3 - Acts 18:24-26 - 1 Timothy 2:8-15 - 1 Corinthians 11:3-16 - 1 Corinthians 14:33-35
- Titus 2:1-10 - Ephesians 5:21 - Ephesians 5:29-32 - Philippians 2:1-5

Equality	Distinction

Implication: Filial love

I. Some Key Passages

- *1 Timothy 2:8-15*

- Context

- “Teaching” and “authority”

- Creation, not culture

- *1 Corinthians 11:3-16 (cf 1 Cor 14:3-4, 33-35)*

- Equality: men and women together can prophesy

- Distinction: they are to do so in a way that expresses creational and divine distinction

- Humility in the face of creaturely limitations

- *Titus 2:1-10*

- *Colossians 3:16 (cf Ephesians 4:15)*

II. A Critical balance

Teaching that is only for certain men - 1 Tim 2:12

Teaching that is particularly for women - Titus 2:4-5

Teaching that all must engage in - Col 3:16

Public word speaking that some gifted men and women may engage in - 1 Cor 11:4-5

III. Leading to contextual decisions

The Egalitarian Left - Men and women homogenised - Differences masked	The Complementarian Middle - Men and women equal in status, dignity and humanity but different in roles in the church			The Domineering Right - Men more prominent - Equality masked
Galatians 3:28 - In Christ there is no male or female	1 Corinthians 11:3-16 - Women can pray and prophesy under authority	Titus 2:3-5 - Older women teach and train younger women	1 Timothy 2:11-15 - Women should not teach or have authority over men	1 Corinthians 14:34-40 - Women should remain silent in church and have no public role
Male and female presbyters (Ministers, elders, bishops etc)	Women can preach in certain contexts	Women are needed to disciple other women	Women cannot preach to mixed groups	Women often frustrated and under-used in church

Table from "Different by Design," Carrie Sandom, p.173

- i) What a church does
- ii) How a church speaks
- iii) Who a church champions
- iv) Who a church listens to

Implications: Clarity and charity

Clarity: hearing and obeying what God has said

Charity: disagreeing well, together and with others

Further reading

Carrie Sandom
 Claire Smith
 A&M Köstenberger
 Kathy Keller

Different by Design
God's Good Design
God's Design for Man and Woman
Jesus, Justice and Gender Roles

D&D Tidball
 L. Goddard and C. Hendry
 R. Pierce & R. Groothuis (eds.)
 John Dickson

The Message of Women
The Gender Agenda
Discovering Biblical Equality
Hearing Her Voice