

Healthy Church – A Structure that Honors Christ

1 Timothy 2:8-15

Before we get into the roles of men and women in the church, I want to start with **the roles of men and women (husbands & wives) in the home.**

When couples want to get married here at BRC, & have me officiate, we require them to go through a “marriage prep” class... A tool I often use in this process is to have the couple go through a Pre-Marriage Inventory...

119) Put an "F" by those items that will be the primary responsibility of the female, an "M" for the male, & an "S" for those which will be equally shared.

a. house cleaning	_____	i. driving	_____
b. yard work	_____	j. pet care	_____
c. spiritual leadership	_____	k. cooking	_____
d. parenting	_____	l. laundry	_____
e. major decisions	_____	m. car maintenance	_____
f. financial management	_____	n. social plans	_____
g. household repairs	_____	o. replying to correspondence	_____
h. grocery shopping	_____		

Are there certain **roles** in the home that are strictly the responsibility of the man or the woman? Or is it contextual? Is there room for different approaches?

I tell couples that when it comes to marriage & raising a family, you have to be on the same page or your relationship/family will never be healthy! **You don't have to agree on everything, but you have to agree on a way forward!**

The same is true for a healthy church! We, as a church family, must make decisions on how we will structure our family so that there is mutual understanding, and agreement, on how we will choose to function!

That doesn't mean we all have to believe the same things, agreeing on everything, but we must agree on the essentials & be willing to flex on the non-essential/contextualized things, **for the sake of unity & health!**

In the church, just like in marriage, there are things worth divorcing over... but that list is very small! **Is the belief & practice of the roles of men & women in the church worth dividing over?** *"It depends on the belief & the practice..."*

- If our belief/practice leads to women, or men, being devalued beneath the intrinsic worth God places upon **all His children**, then yes leave the church!

If “role” determines “worth” then we’ve wrongly interpreted & applied Scripture!

- If either women, or men, are suppressed from living into their **God-given calling**, either by our teaching or by action, then yes leave the church!

If God calls a woman to fill a certain role and we say “no” because it doesn’t fit the way we interpret Scripture, then what does that say about us?

And what if advocating for women in leadership is at the expense of God’s calling on qualified, & willing, men... what does that say about us as well?

- If a church rejects the clear and **unsubjective** teachings of Scripture, then yes leave that church and find a different one!

We’ve had people leave our church accusing us of one or more of these very things... but were their departures substantiated? **The work of rightly handling the Word of truth is not easy & we must approach it with humility!**

Pastors, in seminary, take entire courses on hermeneutics – Methods of Biblical interpretation! Let me share with you a few of those principles:

Paul’s instructions here to Timothy pertaining to men & women seem clear, but we have plenty of examples in Scripture where such clarity gets blurred...

At the same time, we can’t just ignore or reject what “God’s” word says here!

Churches divide, people leave, over how 1 Timothy 2:8-15 gets interpreted & applied in the church! So how do we strive to be a healthy church? How do we decide what we will unite around & what we will graciously leave space for?

What do we know for sure? A structure that honors Christ includes:

- 1) Vs. 8 – **Men who will lead with prayer... and pursue holiness!** If husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the church, then men need to be praying for their bride, & Christ’s bride, & modeling Christ’s-likeness in love!
- 2) Vs. 9-10 – **Women who are focused on attracting people to God rather than attracting people to themselves!** Ladies are you focused on looking good, or making Jesus look good? Modesty & humble service ought to be your aim!
- 3) Vs. 11 – **Women who are present & learning alongside the men!** And who take the posture of Christ-likeness as well, through submissiveness!
- 4) Vs. 12 – However we interpret this verse, we must not devalue, wrongfully suppress, or reject the clear and unsubjected teachings of Scripture!
So what structure do we operate under as BRC in terms of women’s roles?
- 5) Vs. 13-14 – **A structure that follows God’s created order... the whole story!**
- 6) Vs. 15 – Seeing curses become blessings... Negative experiences bringing about great joy! **We must prioritize** – faith, love, holiness, self-control.

When I stand before God one day & give an account of my life & teachings, I know I will discover that I got some things wrong... but my hope & prayer is that God will say, “... you sought to rightly handle the Word of truth...”

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