

# Leadership and Gender In The Church

(The Organization of The Church Series - #4)

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## Review

The Bible speaks of the church (universal) and the church (local).

We recognize differences as to membership, structure, & salvation.

Jesus is the head of the church and His Word is our written standard.

Authority in the visible church is congregational.

Elders are to shepherd (protect, feed, and lead) the flock and be an example.

Deacons are to serve the church in specific ministries.

## Introduction

Cultural changes always raise questions for the church to address. Until very recently (50 years or less) religious groups were virtually unanimous in teaching and practicing “males only” in leadership roles. The feminist movement has caused our society to become much more egalitarian in the home, business, politics, and education – as well as in many churches.

While culture naturally causes us to evaluate our practices, culture must never dictate our answers.

## Gender Roles

### In the beginning...

*Gen 1:27* male and female equal – in the image of God

*Gen 2:18-23* man 1st / woman suitable helper /complete each other

*Gen 3:16* Eve sinned / Adam followed / male “rule” pronounced

[The fall was an early challenge to divine order in human relationships. Eve’s role of leading Adam into sin was an indication of an ongoing struggle between the sexes. Part of the punishment (3:16) was that woman’s “desire” would be to master her male counterpart. (“Desire” is not romantic-sexual. It is not a positive concept. It is the same word used in Gen 4:7 to describe sin’s “desire” to master and consume Cain.)

## Under Old Testament Law...

Family patriarchs

Rights of the first-born son

Public worship

## Under Christ...

Salvation: *Gal 3:28* – male & female equal in/with Christ

Family: *1 Cor. 11:3* – (Christ-like) male headship

## In the Church...

Service *Rom 16:1, 2, 6, 12* women active and serving

Leadership of public worship *1 Cor 14:34,35* male

Public teaching *1 Tim 2:12a* male

Authority (general) *1 Tim 2:12b* male

Elders *Titus 1:6* male

Deacons *1 Tim 3:12* male

## Summary...

- God’s will throughout history has been male spiritual leadership.
- Human nature (especially after the fall) challenges that will.
- Cultural pressure for complete equality challenges that will.
- God’s will for family and church requires willing submission and loving authority.
- Women are not permitted to lead public worship, teach Christian men publicly, exercise authority over men in the church, or serve as elders or deacons.
- For roles that are not clearly prohibited, elders must decide based on: the principles that are clear, their wisdom, and the unity of the congregation.

## Why ?