

Should Women Function as Pastors, Elders, Overseers in Today's Churches?

In 1 Timothy 2:11-12 Paul wrote that women are not to teach or have authority over a man, but be silent. This is the most-discussed passage in the Pastoral Epistles, and likely the most highly debated as to relevance to our day. Even pastors sometimes struggle with its interpretation and application to church leadership.

At one time my husband and I attended a church plant in our area, and experienced firsthand the confusion surrounding this issue. (Prior to 2008 we were pastors of a local church ourselves, but after that we co-founded the nontraditional ministry we have now and attend various churches in our area.) We'd been attending this particular church plant for a while when someone in leadership left and the pastor approached my husband and asked if he'd be willing to serve as an elder. My husband wanted to discuss this with me before answering, as we are very much a team in ministry. We decided that if my husband were to serve, then we would serve together as an "elder couple." So that's what my husband conveyed to this pastor.

The pastor was visibly conflicted and struggled as to how to respond. He acknowledged that his own denomination of churches had women pastors, but because 1 Timothy 2 says that women are not to be in authority over a man, and 1 Timothy 3 says an elder is to be the husband of one wife, ultimately he chose to interpret this passage literally, and decided that we could not serve.

When interpreting this passage, it's critical to explore issues like transforming culture biblically, taking Scripture

literally and considering the context of the Ephesian church to which it was written. Learn the historical-cultural background, word study and solutions for major interpretive problems that will enable you to answer this important question with a resounding yes.

– Listen to the podcast: *Should Women Function as Pastors, Elders, Overseers in Today's Churches?*

– Read the full in-depth article: "Should Women Function as Pastors/Elders/Overseers in Today's Churches?" {[eo](#)}

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