

HEALTHY CHURCH 5: SERVING THE CHURCH AS MEN AND AS WOMEN

INTRODUCTION

Why it's tricky:

- it's personal... stereotypes and sins... a time of change.

Basic convictions to guide us:

- **the Bible**
- **discipleship and godliness** has much in common for men and for women
- **being a man or a woman is a gift from God**
- Biblical manhood/womanhood **is relevant for ALL of us in EVERY stage of life**

1. A BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF GENDER

(a) Men and women are equal

- **equal in God's creation**

Genesis 1:26-27

- **equal in God's salvation:**

Women in the Bible:

OT = e.g. Miriam (Ex 15:19-21, cf. Micah 6:4), Deborah and Jael (Judges 4-5), Huldah (2 Kings 22), Naomi and Ruth, Esther, the wife of noble character from Proverbs 31.

NT = e.g. Paul's co-workers in Romans 16, women in Jesus' life and ministry.

Galatians 3:26-28, "You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, ²⁷ for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

Men and women:

Receive the Spirit (Acts 2:17-18), given gifts, (1 Cor 12:7), praying (1 Cor. 11:5, Acts 1:12-14) and engaging in prophecy (Acts 21:9, 1 Cor. 11:5), serving sacrificially (1 Tim 5:9-10) and teaching (Acts 18:24-28, 2 Tim 1:5, 3:14-15, Titus 2:3-4).

(b) Men and women are different

- **“Egalitarianism”**

= “men and women are essentially the same (apart from biological differences). Any other differences are purely cultural and imposed by a patriarchal society.”

- **“Complementarianism”**

= God has built men and women equal but different, such that we relate in an “ordered” relationship. Our maleness or femaleness is deep and fundamental to us. Men and women are distinct in disposition and distinct in certain roles.

- **Gender difference in the Bible**

Genesis 2:18-25

- The man “names”
- Woman is created “for”, “from” and “after” man (see 1 Cor. 11:8,9, 1 Tim. 2:13)
- The man works and keeps (Gen. 2:15), the woman is a “helper fit” for him

- **An ordered relationship: head and helper**

Genesis 2:18

- woman is “suitable” for a man = “like-opposite.”
- Created to be co-equal and complementary “help” (like God - Psalm 30:10, 54:4, 1 Samuel 7:12): not weaker, but a completer.

1 Corinthians 11:3, “Now I want you to realise that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.”

- Ordered relationships reflect the Trinity
- Part of man’s identity is to be a Christlike “head”

2. WHAT IS THE MASCULINITY TO WHICH CHRISTIAN MEN SHOULD PRAYERFULLY ASPIRE?

(a) **Be careful and clear!**

(b) **A distinct disposition**

- **Be a man who wants to help godly order**

“ADAM” and the ground (“ADAMAH”) linked – see Genesis 2:5,7,9,15,19 (*and* the curse in 3:17-19).

➔ Particular responsibility for a man to be a bringer of godly order.

- **Be a man who tends and nourishes**

Genesis 2:15, “The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.”

= “serve/cultivate/tend/labour.”

In work... with people and in relationships (cf. Eph. 5 and 6)

➔ “How can I tend or nurture those people God has given me?”

- **Be a man who seeks to keep and protect**

Genesis 2:15, “The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.”

= “guard/protect/take care of/watch over.”

➔ Physical and spiritual protection is part of being a man.

(c) **Distinct roles**

NOT that all men exercise authority over all women.

But TWO key covenantal relationships: marriage and church leadership

- **Marriage** (Ephesians 5:21-33)
- **Church leadership** (1 Corinthians 11:2-16, 14:26-40, 1 Timothy 2:11-15)

- **General observations** (cf. CHBC “Core Seminars: Biblical Manhood and Womanhood”)

1. Biblical masculinity expresses itself NOT in the demand to be served (and to get one’s own way), but in the strength to serve and sacrifice for the good of others.
2. Biblical masculinity doesn’t have to initiate every action. But it does feel the responsibility to provide a general pattern of initiative.
3. Biblical masculinity accepts the burden of the final say in disagreements between leader and led, but doesn’t presume to use it in every instance.
4. The Biblical call to leadership is a call to repentance and humility.

To think about: Biblical authority is not about personal advantage but SERVICE

A helpful reflection from Mark Dever’s “Discipleship”:

“Too often, people today don’t understand what a gift godly authority can be. Raising up leaders requires us to teach about godly authority, and encourage it. Jesus certainly taught his disciples about a right use of authority (Matt. 20:25–27).

“The fallen world both misuses authority and lies about authority well used. Satan’s basic lie to Adam and Eve was that God couldn’t really love them and tell them no.

“When people are skittish over complementarianism, apologizing for it, I know they are probably thinking about authority in a wrong way. It’s as if they think authority is only an advantage for the person who possesses it. Apparently they haven’t had children! Authority looks like an advantage only to someone who doesn’t have it. When you have the authority, pretty much all the “advantages” seem to vanish, and you begin to realize how much of it is service—a glorious service, but a service.

“This became clear to me years ago when I was preaching through 2 Samuel. David’s “last words” are striking: “When one rules justly over men, ruling in the fear of God, he dawns on them like the morning light, like the sun shining forth on a cloudless morning, like rain that makes grass to sprout from the earth” (23:3–4). Good authority blesses those under it. It nourishes them. People will gravitate toward good healthy authority that spends itself for the good of those under its care, rather than using them for its own good. Look at how a family prospers under good parents, or a team under a good coach.

“That’s why the abuse of authority by pastors is such a terribly destructive and blasphemous sin. Furthermore, the stories of prosperity preachers buying private jets for tens of millions of dollars point to something incredibly twisted and Satanic. Such “pastors” play right into the lie that Satan hissed into Adam and Eve’s ear in the garden of Eden: that authority is just a way to abuse you for the leader’s benefit.

“Gratefully, the King on the cross shows us that the opposite is true for godly authority.

“Just as Jesus tutored his disciples in the godly use of authority, so must we with any men whom we are raising up in leadership. And pastors must model such authority.”

Biblical womanhood: key points to understand, think, and talk about

Application points from Hilary Khoo, on Biblical womanhood:

1. Understand our identity is who we are in Jesus.
2. We live in a society where in order to be of equal worth we are told that we need to be the same. Anything a man can do a woman can do better!! Our worth and identity as women seems to be tied up with what we do and that needs to be the same as a man - we need to compete to prove who we are.
3. We need to grasp what it means to have been created a woman and celebrate that distinctiveness. Man and woman have always been part of God's plan and reflect His very image: "us". Understand *distinctiveness without division*.
4. Ask the Lord to help us understand what it means to be women who understand what it means to be a helper, a refuge, while not feeling inferior.
5. Understand what real submission looks like – looking to Jesus. He submitted perfectly to the will of his father in the Garden of Gethsemane. The Son was 'sent' - It clearly did not make Him inferior or 'weak' – e.g. roles in a football team as an equal the defenders pass the ball happily to the strikers to score does not mean they are inferior for not doing something in their role.
6. Titus 2: Teach what is good.
7. Older women, draw alongside younger women – real relationships. We live in a Social media world where we want people only to see our best side, best makeup, best houses, best holidays. It's about making ourselves vulnerable to each other as together we grow in Jesus. Takes time, planning and intention to care.
8. It's about service – Philippians 2 – Jesus did not consider His equality something to be grasped but made Himself nothing