

Serving the church as men and as women – part 1

Our aim: that we each...

serve the Lord and his church not serving ourselves...
together because we're all part of a family...
as either a man or woman because this a deep part of who we are...
grateful for how we're made though remembering that we all battle sin and weakness

What's it like to live in THIS culture?

“The church has been called to shape culture, not ape it. But very often our churches reflect rather than constructively influence worldly culture. Even worse, some church leaders tell us that if we want to reach the culture, we must become like the culture. Don't you love the way Dorothy Sayers confronted this mixed-up notion? She said: “It is not the business of the church to conform Christ to men, but men to Christ.” That's precisely the challenge we face in the area of biblical manhood and womanhood. Will the church conform her ways to the prevailing cultural mores and norms or will we impact and shape our culture?”

From *Women's Ministry in the Local Church*, J. Ligon Duncan and Susan Hunt.

Learning from the pattern of our creation

God's images are either male images or female images (Genesis 1:27)

Not identical... not totally different... but perfectly fitting = “complementary” (Genesis 2:18)

Great variety... many weaknesses... and sins... yet given a distinct and valuable calling as...

Man: like God, as a...	Woman: like God, as a...
<p><u>Guardian</u> “to work/minister it & keep/guard it” (Genesis 2:15) <small>Same verbs for Levites in Numbers 3:7-8, 18:7</small></p>	<p><u>Helper</u> “helper” (Genesis 2:18,20) <small>Used of God, e.g. Exodus 18:4, “God is my help”</small></p>
<p><u>Provider</u> “... the ground <i>Adamah</i> ... by the sweat of your face you shall eat bread...” (Genesis 3:17-19)</p>	<p><u>Life-giver</u> “... Eve... the mother of all the living.” (Genesis 3:20)</p>
<p><u>A father</u> Man's body: designed for fatherhood</p>	<p><u>A mother</u> Woman' body: designed for motherhood</p>

The whole Bible assumes male/father and female/mother distinction:

e.g. 1 Thessalonians 2:7-8 mothers and 2:9-12 fathers

Living out what God has made us to be

In marriage (Ephesians 5:31-32)

ALL of us... in ALL our relationships (e.g. 1 Timothy 5:1-2)

** we relate to people differently if WE are a man or woman... and if THEY are a man or a woman... specifically as different FAMILY members **

In the family of the church

partnership in action – e.g. Romans 16

men, as spiritual fathers (or future fathers)

women, as spiritual mothers (or future mothers)

Reflections on Church as Family

moving towards each other... older women to younger women... older men to younger men... sharing lives... encouraging... asking 'How can I pray for you?'

living out the roles God has given us

“Scripture calls us to things that are utterly counterintuitive, utterly countercultural, and demanding in the extreme, but scripture shows us the Saviour and his bride. This glorious sight motivates us to live under God’s authority and serve him through the local church, for his glory and our good. Falling in love with Christ means falling in love with his church.”

Discuss!

Q. Attitudes for men/boys to cultivate? Sins to watch out for?

Q. Attitudes for women/girls to cultivate? Sins to watch out for?

“The fall introduced distortions into the relationships between men and women.

- In the home, the husbands loving humble headship tends to be replaced by domination or passivity and the wife’s intelligent willing submission tends to be replaced by usurpation or servility.
- In the church, sin inclines men toward a worldly love of power or an abdication of spiritual responsibility and inclines women to resist limitations on their roles or to neglect the use of their gifts in appropriate ministries.”

“Redemption in Christ aims at removing the distortions introduced by the curse.

- In the family, husbands should forsake harsh or selfish leadership and grow in love and care for their wives; wives should forsake resistance to their husband’s authority and grow in willing joyful submission to their husband’s leadership.
- In the church redemption in Christ gives men and women an equal share in the blessings of salvation; nevertheless, some governing and teaching roles within the church are restricted to men. “

Next week: partnership in practice at Immanuel