

Women's Hundred Meter Hurdle

Introduction

We are in the midst of a series on Leadership taken from Philippians 1:1. Healthy and growing churches are always developing leaders. They are committed to the growth and development of their members.

(Philippians 1:1) "Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons:"

Someone asked me this week about a leadership class that we are doing. Yes, we have a leadership class going on. We are not trying to be secretive about it. David Zimpelman asked me to help him in the area of teaching and preaching. I gladly accepted the opportunity. I knew that there were some others who also wanted some help in that area, so I asked a few others. Some people turned down the opportunity, and others accepted. There are ten people in a class that is focused on how to become effective teachers and preachers. One of the things that I have consistently done for the past twenty-five years is to disciple men, particularly in the area of word ministry. The ten people in the class are:

1. David and DeeDee Zimpelman
2. Lee and Betty Griego
3. Ray and Rosie Arambula
4. Bill and Rachel Lotgering
5. Bill and Karen Murchison

In addition to learning about preaching and teaching, we are also covering some other leadership principles. God has blessed us with some leaders, and I am honored to sow into their lives and ministries. Healthy churches are committed to developing leaders and also the members of the congregation. My prayer and desire is that leadership series is helpful to everyone in the congregation, not just to those who are called to the office of overseer or deacon.

Last week we looked at the qualifications for deacons and deaconesses. We saw in Acts 6 that the original office of deacon was limited to men. That took place somewhere between 30 AD and 37 AD. We know this because Paul was converted on the road to Damascus in 37 AD. The selection of deacons in Acts 6 was prior to his conversion. Paul held the cloaks for those who stoned Stephen to death. Stephen was one of the seven deacons who were chosen to serve the widows their food.

(Acts 7:58-8:1) "And when they had driven him out of the city, they began stoning him, and the witnesses laid aside their robes at the feet of a young man named Saul. {59} And they went on stoning Stephen as he called upon the Lord and said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" {60} And falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them!" And having said this, he fell asleep. And Saul was in hearty agreement with putting him to death. And on that day a great persecution arose against the church in Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles."

We saw that Phoebe was mentioned as a servant of the church in Romans 16:1-2, which was probably written around 58 AD. Something happened in the 23-28 year time period that moved the church to allow women to serve as deaconesses. Then, in 64 AD, when Paul gives the qualifications

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for elders and deacons, he includes women. By that time women were widely accepted.

Today, I want to talk about women in ministry. A few weeks ago I woke up in the middle of the night and the Lord was speaking to me about a message called the Women's Hundred Meter Hurdle. I spent most of the night studying hurdles and putting some thoughts together about this message. There are four specific hurdles that women in ministry have to clear before they reach the finish line. God wants us to run our races in a way that we might win (1 Cor 9:24). Therefore, women have to learn to clear these hurdles while they are running their race. The three hurdles that I want to talk about this morning are:

1. Hurdle of Translation (1 Tim 3:8-13)
2. Hurdle of Silence (1 Cor 14:34-35)
3. Hurdle of Teaching (1 Tim 2:9-15)
4. Hurdle of Pastor (1 Tim 3:1-7)

Before I get into the message I want to ask a few questions and then say a few introductory remarks about women in ministry. As I start with some questions, help me out and raise your hands to indicate an affirmative answer.

- How many of you feel like you have all the answers about women being in ministry? That means that you have a clear conviction, and there are no gray areas.
- How many of you believe that women should be Senior Pastors or it is okay to have a woman as a Senior Pastor?
- How many of you believe that women should be Elders?
- How many of you believe that women should be allowed to preach in a church?

There are lots of different viewpoints. This is a pretty divisive topic in many circles today. I told one person this week what I was preaching on, and he commented that I was touching on a pretty controversial topic. He was correct. There are churches on both extremes. Some do not allow a woman to teach or preach. They do not allow a woman to be involved in any public ministry. Women are to be silent and just be good mothers and homemakers. On the other extreme, there are churches that recognize and highly esteem women in ministry, almost to the neglect of honoring motherhood.

I spoke with a man last year that went to a class at a church in town, and the pastor's wife started to teach the class. Because he was a man, he got up and left the class. In his mind, women were not to teach or exercise authority over a man. He was not going to be deceived by a woman and have false teaching. He was not going to be disobedient to the Scriptures or encourage people to be disobedient to the Scriptures. This is just one example of how there are people on all sides of the issue.

My message this morning is not intended to stir up controversy. We have been dealing with leadership, and women in leadership is something that should be covered. When discussing the qualifications of deacons, we find that women could serve in the office of deacon. We saw Phoebe mentioned as a deaconess. We need to discuss women in leadership, as it is very relevant to our series on leadership. This morning, I cannot address every aspect of women in leadership. I just want to clear out three specific hurdles that women in ministry have to face.

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Another point I would like to preface this message with relates to firm convictions. In my mind, there is room for discussion. Everything is not black and white. The Bible says that we see dimly. There will come a time when we know all things, but right now we do not have that luxury. I do not have all the answers. I don't like to preach on things that I don't know the answers. I am a pilgrim on a journey, much like most of you, and I am asking God to reveal more of Himself and His ways to me every day. Women's ministry is just one area that I am constantly asking God for more revelation about. I have read lots of books about women in ministry. I have also studied the Scriptures about women in ministry. I still don't have all the answers. But, I do have some things that I want to share, and I hope that it brings freedom and unity to our body in the area of women in ministry. Let's pray.

Father, I ask You to speak clearly through me this morning. I ask You for wisdom in sharing. I ask You for revelation and insights about women in ministry. I ask You to help us clear these hurdles so that women can run effective and successful races. I ask You to tear down dividing walls in the church. Rather than create division and controversy, I ask You to bring unity. Father, open our eyes and ears this morning so that we can understand and apply Your word and Your principles in our lives. I ask these things in Jesus' Name. Amen.

1. Hurdle of Translation (1 Tim 3:8-13)

The first hurdle that I want to address is the hurdle of translation. This was not a hurdle in the early church. They did not have the Scriptures yet. The Scriptures were being written, so they had bits and pieces of the New Testament. They also had all of the Old Testament. They also had the apostles and elders in Jerusalem who were the final authority on church practices and doctrines. Paul and Silas traveled to all the churches and delivered the decisions of the apostles in Jerusalem.

(Acts 16:4) "Now while they were passing through the cities, they were delivering the decrees, which had been decided upon by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem, for them to observe."

The early church also had the example. They saw deaconesses in the church. The church today cannot go to the apostles in Jerusalem. The church today cannot go observe how it is being done in the church in Jerusalem, or other churches, like Rome. The church today can look around and see a thousand different practices, not a central doctrine about women serving in ministry.

The church today does not read New Testament Greek. We rely on the translations of the Bible that the translators have given us. There is a large segment of the church that only accepts the King James Version. The King James Version is a good version, but the translators translated out of their own framework of understanding. The original writings are God-breathed or inspired by God. The translations that we have can have some error in them, whereas the original manuscripts are error-free. The final text that we looked at last week is where we will pick up this morning. Let's read the qualifications in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 for deacons. I will read from the King James Version.

(1 Timothy 3:8-13 KJV) "Likewise must the deacons be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; {9} Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. {10} And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. {11} Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. {12} Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their

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own houses well. {13} For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus."

There are many churches that do not allow women to serve as deacons in the church. Furthermore, those that serve as deacons have additional qualifications on them that are not given for elders. All of this is because of translators. The early translators did not believe that women could be in leadership, so they translated the word *gune* (Strong's G1135) as wife instead of woman.

There are a couple ways to clear this hurdle. First, we must look at the placement of this verse on the qualifications for a woman servant. It is sandwiched between the qualification given for men. The whole passage is about servants in the church. Therefore, the qualifications given for a woman are clearly for the office of servant or deacon in the church.

Second, there are no qualifications given for the wife of an elder, so it would not make any sense for there to be qualifications for the wife of a deacon. Therefore, as good workmen, we must be consistent. These are not qualifications for the wife of a deacon, but for the deaconess. The text literally reads like this.

(1 Timothy 3:8-13) "Likewise must the servants (*diakonos*) be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; {9} Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. {10} And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a servant (*diakonos*), being found blameless. {11} Even so women (*gune*) must be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. {12} Let the servants (*diakonos*) be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. {13} For they that have used the **office of a servant** (*diakons*) well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus."

Notice this is the office of a servant. Let's go back to Romans 16:1 and look at Phoebe. The scripture says that she was a servant of the church. Again, the translators did not want to allow her to be a deaconess. They did not transliterate this time, they translated *diakonos*, which tells people that she just a servant in the church, not in any kind of office. The problem with this is the verse that follows. Paul tells the church that she is a helper or succourer of many. We saw that the word helper is *prostatis*, which comes from the root word *proistemi*, to preside or rule over. *Proistemi* is one of the qualifications for both elders and deacons.

(Romans 16:1-2) "I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea; {2} that you receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and that you help her in whatever matter she may have need of you; for she herself has also been a helper of many, and of myself as well."

In addition to what Paul says about her, he tells the church to help her. She has official business to take care of, and they need to assist her in whatever matter she may need help with. The work that she was doing also indicates the office of deaconess.

When we look at translations, it is a good thing to always go back to the original Greek. I study with three versions at one time. I always have the New American Standard, the King James Version, and the Hebrew Greek manuscripts that were used to translate the King James Version open. I also have

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the Strong's Hebrew Greek Dictionary open on my Screen. I can click on any Hebrew or Greek word and instantly have the definition. I can also click on a Hebrew or Greek word and go to every verse in the Bible where the word is used. That gives me a better understanding of what the word really means. As workmen who are going to handle the Word of God accurately, we need to use tools like this so that we can interpret passages correctly.

The application of this is very clear for me. As a church, we will help women over this hurdle in our church by giving men and women proper understanding of the passage. I believe that we have women in the office of deacon or servant of the church. If we go back to the terminology of the early church and say servants of the church, we do not offend anyone. Everybody is okay with both men and women being servants in the church. It is when say deacons or deaconesses that we stir up controversy. At the East Mountain Vineyard, we will have both women and men servants of the church. We will have both men and women in the office of a servant in the church. As we saw in Acts 6, people in these offices will be put in because of need, not for the sake of holding an office.

Examples of where a woman might be a better servant than a male servant include:

- Children's ministry – Some women are far more gifted with babies in the nursery and with small children. If there is a need, and a woman has a clear gift and call, then we should not hesitate to put a woman in the office of servant. In our church, Danielle has a heart for children's ministry. We have asked her to head up the children's ministry. This is the work of a servant in the church, but we have not put her in the office. She is simply serving in that capacity right now.
- Woman's ministry – A woman should oversee the woman's ministry. This should not be a man; it should be a woman.
- Counseling women – I do not think that men should counsel women privately. If a woman wants counsel from me, there will always be someone else in the room. I try to have Karen with me in all counseling appointments with women. I have been doing this for twenty-five years and I plan on continuing this practice. I recommend that all men adopt this policy.
- Ministering to women – At the end of a service when women come up for prayer, I try to find women who can come up and pray for the woman. I don't mind praying for a woman. But sometimes a woman will want prayer for something that she feels uncomfortable sharing with a man. Also, if there is a prayer for healing, we don't want men touching women. If we do touch a woman, it should be on their head or shoulder. We need to be very careful about this. I also believe we should ask someone before laying hands on them before praying. You can extend your hands towards someone and pray just as easily as touching the person. If I have a sense that the woman needs to have hands laid on, I will ask some women ministers to touch the woman as we pray. We may have a woman in church who is put into the office of ministering to women at the end of service. We could have some men and women who served in this capacity.

These are just a few different areas where we might have a woman servant of the church. We will elevate women to the office of servant of the church and help them clear this hurdle.

2. Hurdle of Silence (1 Cor 14:34-35)

The second hurdle that I want to talk about is the hurdle of silence. In 1 Corinthians 14:34-40, Paul writes, "Let the women keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but let them subject themselves, just as the Law also says. And if they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is improper for a woman to speak in church."

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(1 Corinthians 14:34-40) "Let the women keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but let them subject themselves, just as the Law also says. {35} And if they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is improper for a woman to speak in church. {36} Was it from you that the word of God first went forth? Or has it come to you only? {37} If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment. {38} But if anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized. {39} Therefore, my brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak in tongues. {40} But let all things be done properly and in an orderly manner."

The context of the passage is significant. Paul is telling everyone to come prepared to share with one another. One has a psalm, one has a teaching, one has a revelation... He also tells us to earnestly desire spiritual gifts, especially prophesy. He finishes the chapter by speaking about things being done properly and in an orderly manner. In this passage, Paul is encouraging everyone to come prepared to share when we assemble. He is not trying to discourage the use of gifts, but to encourage them to be exercised, and to be done in an orderly manner.

(1 Corinthians 14:26) "What is the outcome then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification."

When we look at women being silent in the churches, we cannot take that literally. Women worship the Lord. The Scriptures say "let everything that has breath praise the Lord." Women must not be silent in worship. They must praise the Lord in and out of church.

When it comes to praying and prophesying, women are encouraged to pray and to prophesy, but with their heads covered. God wants women to be under proper authority when they pray or prophesy.

(1 Corinthians 11:5) "But every woman who has her head uncovered while praying or prophesying, disgraces her head; for she is one and the same with her whose head is shaved."

It is really hard to pray or prophesy while being silent. When Paul tells the women to keep silent in the churches and that he did not permit them to speak, he certainly was not talking about praying, prophesying, singing, or worshiping. No, Paul was addressing a particular problem in the church. People were trying to prophesy and exercise the gifts, and there were women in Corinth who were talking while all this was going on. They were asking questions and trying to gain understanding. There is nothing wrong with asking questions. It is hard to gain understanding without asking questions. The problem was that they were speaking and asking questions while others were trying to hear what was being prophesied, taught, or shared. It was causing disorder in the services. God is a God of order and He wants things done in a proper and orderly way that allows everyone to be edified.

The key to getting over this hurdle is through proper understanding of the Scriptures. We must put the instructions in the context of the passage, and also in the context of the rest of the Scriptures. To interpret this passage as a moratorium on women making a sound in church would be wrong.

3. Hurdle of Teaching (1 Tim 2:9-15)

The third hurdle is that of teaching. In my introduction I told you a case of a man who got up from a class at church because the pastor's wife was teaching that morning. In many churches today women are not allowed to teach or preach because of this passage. I want to look at this passage from several different vantage points.

(1 Timothy 2:9-15) "Likewise, I want women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments; {10} but rather by means of good works, as befits women making a claim to godliness. {11} Let a woman quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. {12} But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet. {13} For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve. {14} And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being quite deceived, fell into transgression. {15} But women shall be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint."

The first vantage point is the context of the passage. Paul is speaking about prayer. He tells men to pray with hands lifted up, without wrath or dissension. He is talking about the attitude and posture of people in prayer. He goes on to address the attitude of women in prayer. He begins with likewise, meaning that women must have the proper attitude and posture when praying corporately. They are to be properly adorned, with modesty and discreetly. I will let the older women teach the younger women what it means to dress discreetly. Their adornment was not to be external, but internal. They are to have quiet, submissive, and receptive hearts.

(1 Timothy 2:8-9) "Therefore I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension. {9} Likewise, I want women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments;"

Then, Paul puts out this hurdle and says that women are not allowed to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet. There are a couple words that the Lord showed me a long time ago that cleared this up for me. When Paul talks about exercising authority over men, the Greek word is *authenteo*. The word means to act of oneself, dominate, or to usurp authority. The King James says that women are not to usurp authority over the man.

G831. *authenteo*, ow-then-teh'-o; from a comp. of G846 and an obsol. *hentes* (a worker); to act of oneself, i.e. (fig.) dominate:--usurp authority over.

As the Senior Pastor in this church, I am not going to allow men to come and preach or teach at our church that usurp authority. A man who is not properly submitted to authority is a dangerous person. When John Dean was here a few months ago, he mentioned that whenever he is in our church, he is submitted to my authority. John is a man who understands submission. When John is at his church in San Antonio, he is submitted to his pastor. I have no problem bringing John in to share with our church, because he does not usurp authority. He is a man under authority.

A few years ago, I put together the men's breakfast Mountain Christian Church. They did not have a Men's Ministry and when I asked them what area of church life would they like me to help them with, they said a men's ministry. So I launched a very successful men's ministry there.

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One month, I asked a pastor from another church in town to come speak to our men. I told the man that we would have breakfast from 7:30 to 8:00. I would give announcements, and have a man lead two songs of worship. I would introduce him at 8:15, and he would have 45 minutes to share his message. I told him to aim for 30-35 minutes so that if there were questions or prayer afterwards, we would have time for it. The man accepted my invitation and came to speak. At 9:00 he was nowhere near through. He came unprepared and was not able to do the message in the proper amount of time. He made a comment about how people in American churches are too caught up with time, and that he was going to take all the time he needed. He shared for 1 hour and 40 minutes. He finished at 10:00. I had a couple of options. His message had some good points. I could interrupt him and shut the message down, or I could let him finish. I elected not to dishonor him, and to allow him to finish.

Afterwards, I shared with the man that the message had some good content, but that I could not allow him to speak again to our men. He did not submit to the conditions that I put before him. I had made a commitment to let the men out by 9:00 and his failure to submit caused us to not be men of our word that day. He usurped authority to speak past 9:00. He authenteo or took it upon himself that it was okay to keep on trucking. He was wrong. I won't allow it. I won't allow it for a man, and I won't allow it for a woman either.

Many of you do not know Susan Brown. She is an awesome teacher and minister. She has been speaking in churches that I have pastored for the past 15 years. We have been tremendously blessed by her ministry. How many of you in this room were blessed by her ministry last year? Her teachings are soaked with prayer and meditation. They are rich and wonderful meals for the congregation. But what I appreciate most about Susan Brown is her submissive heart. When she comes she is always submitted to my authority. If she has something that she feels might be objectionable or questionable, she will pull me aside before hand and run it by me. If she has a prophetic word that she feels must be given, but has direction implications, not just encouragement, she usually asks me to stand in and listen to the word, and then to judge the word. I have no problem with Susan Brown ministering to our congregation because she is a woman who does not usurp or take authority upon herself.

I think that this is the key that unlocks the mystery. I believe this is how women get over this hurdle. Again, it is proper understanding of the Scriptures.

But, I want to look at the passage from a different angle for a minute. Our interpretation of Scripture must line up with other Scripture. If a woman is not allowed to teach another man, then the rest of Scripture should support that position. And, it doesn't.

Turn to Acts 18:24-26. In this passage we have a man named Apollos. He was an eloquent man, and he was mighty in the Scriptures. He was the same Apollos that came to Corinth and began to encourage the church that Paul had planted there. Paul planted the church and then Apollos came and pastored the church after Paul went on to his next church plant.

(Acts 18:24-26) "Now a certain Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by birth, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the Scriptures. {25} This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus, being acquainted only with the baptism of John; {26} and he began to speak out boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately."

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Luke writes that Apollos had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus. However, he was only familiar with the baptism of John. When Priscilla and Aquilla heard him, they took him aside and explained the way of God more accurately. Notice that Priscilla and Aquilla are mentioned. Priscilla is the wife of Aquilla and she is mentioned first. In Greek, the leader is mentioned first. It would be normal and proper to mention Aquilla first. There are six references to Priscilla and Aquilla. In five of those six passages, Priscilla is mentioned first. Priscilla and Aquilla planted a church in Rome and their church met in their home. In this passage Priscilla is mentioned first.

(Acts 18:2) "And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, having recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. He came to them,"

(1 Corinthians 16:19) "The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Prisca greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house."

(Romans 16:3-5) "Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, {4} who for my life risked their own necks, to whom not only do I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles; {5} also greet the church that is in their house...'

I believe that Priscilla is mentioned first because she was a teacher. She was a very gifted teacher. I believe that she was probably the primary teacher and preacher in the church that met in their house. She was submitted to her husband and under proper authority and taught. When the incident came up with Apollos, she is mentioned first because she was the one who taught Apollos more accurately. The passage says that they took him aside and taught him more accurately, but "they" was Priscilla, with Aquilla giving his support. Some might say that this is not black and white. I will agree with you that it is not clear, but the principle of mentioning the leader first in Greek is not such a gray area; it is widely accepted.

One final thought on this passage about teaching and exercising authority over men is the word *prostatas* that we briefly looked at last week. One of the qualifications for both deacons and elders is that they are able to manage, rule, or *proistemi* over the affairs of the church. In Romans 16:1-2, we saw that Phoebe was a helper or succourer to many. The word used is *prostatas*, and it is a derivative of *proistemi*. Phoebe was a deaconess or servant of the church, and she was able to preside, rule over, and manage the area of ministry that she had been assigned. In that position of standing over, presiding, and ruling, it would be very likely that she had to make some decisions that affected men. The Scripture does not specifically say that she ruled over men, but only that she helped many, including Paul.

My position on this is that a woman who has been assigned a task in the church has been given authority to do that job. Those under that person should submit to her authority. In our church, Betty has been put in charge of the worship team. She is presiding, standing over, managing, and leading the worship team. Those serving on the worship team should follow her directions. The word *submit* is *hupotasso*, which means to be under proper order and arrangement. For our worship team to be in order, they have to submit to the leader, Betty. Without coming under the proper order and arrangement, there would be disharmony on the worship team.

4. Hurdle of Pastor

This hurdle is probably the hardest for me to speak about. I do not see any specific times in Scripture where women are called Elders. It is probably the most gray area. I have many friends in the Vineyard who believe in male elders, and there are people in the Vineyard that have women elders. I do want to take a minute to speak about some thoughts about it.

First, in the passage in 1 Timothy, there are no specific instructions given for women, as there are for deacons. This could indicate that the office of elder is limited to men. There is another way to look at this.

In the book of Genesis, Eve was taken from Adam's rib. She was to be at his side. She was made to rule with him over all of the creation. Notice that he was not to rule, but that they were to rule over everything. The mandate to rule was given to both of them.

(Genesis 1:26-28) "Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." {27} And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. {28} And God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.""

In the fall, God said to the woman that He would greatly multiply her pain in childbirth, and her desire will be for her husband, and that he shall rule over her. These were the consequences of sin. There was spiritual death, sin, pain, sickness, and male rule over women. This was not God's original intent, but the wages of sin.

(Genesis 3:16) "To the woman He said, "I will greatly multiply Your pain in childbirth, In pain you shall bring forth children; Yet your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you.""

In the New Testament, Jesus paid the penalty for our sin. He restored fellowship with the Lord. We find that in Christ there is neither male nor female. Paul writes I Galatians that there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free man, neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

(Galatians 3:28) "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

There were dividing walls in the temple. The Greeks and Gentiles could not go into the inner courts. They were only allowed in the Court of the Gentiles, or outer courts. Paul told the Ephesians that he abolished the wall and made the two into one new man. The same walls between men and women were also abolished. Men, women, Jews, Gentiles, slaves, free men all have access to the inner courts and the holy of holies. In the Old Testament, only the Priests were allowed into the holy of holies. In the New Testament, we are all one and we all have access to go boldly into the holy of holies. There were no places in the temple where women were off limits. They were priests and joint heirs and they have been made one with men. God had restored His original intent in Genesis.

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(Ephesians 2:11-16) "Therefore remember, that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called "Uncircumcision" by the so-called "Circumcision," which is performed in the flesh by human hands-- {12} remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. {13} But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. {14} For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one, and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, {15} by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, {16} and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity."

I believe the passage in 1 Timothy can be seen in terms of a man's wife ruling with him in the office of elder. I say this because of God's intention in Genesis and His restoration through the blood of Christ. However, there are some other reasons that I believe this.

I also want to go back to Genesis and marriage. The Lord says that for this reason a man shall leave his mother and father and shall cleave to his wife and the two shall become one. They were both naked and not ashamed. There was complete openness and transparency between them. I think that this original design and purpose of marriage is still valid. Jesus repeated the design for marriage on more than one occasion.

(Genesis 2:24-25) "For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh. {25} And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed."

When people say that they want to say something to me that I can't share with anyone, I stop them. I tell them that I always have the right to tell two different people. I always have the right to share with my wife, and I always have the right to share with those in authority over me. We do not want to remove the covering over our lives, and we do not want to put up any barriers or walls of separation between our spouses and ourselves. We want there to be complete oneness and unity.

In the role of elder, there are lots of confidential and other things that come up when you are pastoring people. The ministry cannot come between a pastor and his wife. He must be able to share any and everything with his wife. If a wife cannot handle this, then I believe that it would be wrong to put a man in the office of elder. When you call a man, you are automatically calling his wife.

When John Dean laid hands on me a few months ago, he also laid hands on Karen. We are one. God did not call me to minister by myself. He called me to minister with Karen at my side.

This view allows for a consistency of headship in the home. There are those today that believe that headship is about source, not authority. I believe that God is a God of order and I believe that headship indicates authority. To be consistent with the use of headship, let's take a look at Colossians 2:9-10. It says that in Christ the fulness of Deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority." Christ is the head. He is over all authority. He is the highest authority. There is no higher authority than Christ, who is the Head. In the same vein, when a man is the head of his wife, he is the authority over her and she is to submit to him as to Christ. To be under proper order and arrangement, she is to submit to him.

Women's Hundred Meter Hurdle

(Colossians 2:9-10) "For in Him all the fulness of Deity dwells in bodily form, {10} and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority;"

This view also allows for people like Priscilla and Aquila and the church that met in their house. I believe that she pastored the flock with him. Because her name is mentioned first in the majority of the six verses, she may well have been the primary teacher or preacher. That is my viewpoint. I won't argue with people about it; it is simply my view of this matter. This is also how we are setting up our eldership at East Mountain Vineyard Church. If a man is called to the office of elder, his wife will be at his side, not behind him, but at his side.

What about women who feel called to the office of elder? That is a difficult question, but I will go out on the limb and give an answer. I believe that the norm is for men to be elders. I believe this is why we do not see any women referred to as elders. I believe that there are circumstances where a woman may be called to the office of elder.

The church today is comprised of 60+% women. In the black church, there are close to 85% women. Some black churches have gone so far as to pay black men to attend. In many of these churches, women serve as elders and senior pastors. They are the Deborahs of today. When the men are not willing to step up to the plate and lead the nation of Israel, Deborah was willing to do it. These women serve because there are no men, or they are not willing.

Additionally, there are lots of divorced women in the church today. These women need to be ministered to, counseled, shepherded, and discipled. We need women pastors today more than ever before. The breakdown of the family unit has left women more needy than ever. God may call a woman to help shepherd the flock.

Outside of circumstances, the Holy Spirit is God. The Holy Spirit can choose who He wants to make an elder. If the Holy Spirit calls a woman to be an elder, who am I to tell the Holy Spirit that He is wrong and has made a mistake. God does not make a mistake and if He calls a woman, I am okay with that.

A few weeks ago we looked at the five fingers that point to the calling of an overseer. I believe the same five fingers should point to a woman if she is being called to the office of overseer. I don't see this as the norm, but I do see it as a possibility. This is a definite move from my view in the past. I have always supported women in ministry, but not women serving in the presbytery.

These are the four hurdles that I wanted to share with you this morning. Again, my intent has not been to stir up controversial issues, but to address some issues that need to be discussed. Paul said that he did not shrink back from declaring anything profitable, or from declaring the whole purpose of God." As the pastor, I have the same commitment to you – not to shrink back from addressing any issue that is profitable, and to declare to you the whole counsel of God. Let's pray.

(Acts 20:20, 27) "how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house... {27} For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God."

Introduction (Phil 1:1, Acts 7:58-8:1, 1 Cor 9:24)

1. **Hurdle of Translation** (1 Tim 3:8-13, Acts 16:4, Rom 16:1-2)

- The key to clearing this hurdle is proper _____ of Scripture.

2. **Hurdle of Silence** (1 Cor 14:34-35, 1 Cor 11:5)

- The context of the passage _____ all to share, not to _____ anyone from sharing.
- God is concerned about things being done in an _____.
- The key to clearing this hurdle is proper _____ of Scripture.

3. **Hurdle of Teaching** (1 Tim 2:9-15, Acts 18:24-26, 18:2, 1 Cor 16:19, 16:3-5)

- The context of the passage is our _____ in prayer. (1 Tim 2:8-9)
- Authenteo means to _____ authority.
- Women servants of the church had to proistemi or _____ their area of ministry, which probably included both men and women.
- The key to clearing this hurdle is proper _____ of Scripture.

4. **Hurdle of Pastor** (1 Tim 3:1-7, Acts 20:20, 27)

- Both men and women were called to _____ over creation. (Gen 1:26-28, 3:16)
- In Christ, there is neither _____ nor _____. (Gal 3:28)
- In the temple, the _____ have been taken down. (Eph 2:11-16)
- Men and women are not to have any _____ between them. (Gen 2:24-25)
- A man is the _____ of his wife, just as Christ is _____ of the church. (Col 2:9-10)

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