

"be sensitive to its own culture and current leadership. \* (page 50) In my opinion the Oak Hills church was not ready or willing to take a strong Biblical stand that would go against the previous teachings and prejudice of the church body so they voted women were equal in the eyes of God but not in the eyes of men when it comes to serving in leadership as elders in the local church.

This brief study only highlights the confusion and conflict in the church over this issue. The matter may well not be settled until the end of time and Jesus brings us all home. I have served with fine men and women in church leadership who have held different and conflicting views on the matter. I personally have served in churches that saw all the same and others that saw men as the leaders and women as the workers. I learned about this first hand and have found when both men and women are using their gifts as leaders and workers the church is better served.

Additional Notes:

\*Oak Hills Church "A STUDY OF THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCH BY THE DOCTRINAL ADVISORY GROUP (2011) <http://oakhillschurch.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/A-Study-of-the-Role-of-Women-in-the-Church.pdf> Accessed May 11, 2016



The question of women serving in leadership in local churches has haunted the church for two millennium. An excellent document on the subject was published by Oak Hills Church in 2011.\* Though I disagree with the final conclusion of excluding women from serving as elders the document is telling especially in the individual interpretations and understanding of the issue as presented by the members of the Doctrinal Advisory Group. This group was responding to a previous 2009 report that had concluded, *"We agree and conclude that the bible teaches full equality of men and women in status, giftedness and opportunity for ministry and that the church is best served when men and women share responsibilities and serve together as complementary partners."*<sup>(pg 119)</sup> The original report included among its members, Pastors of Oak Hills church Randy Frazee, Mark Tidwell and Max Lucado. With the original 2009 conclusion I wholeheartedly agree. After reading the 2011 document I was convinced they were wrong in their assessment and disregard for the conclusion of the 2009 report. In my opinion the 2011 report and notes in detail disproves the final conclusion they arrived at. Leaving me to wonder how much of this was cultural and personal prejudice and how much was actually Biblically based when they voted on and wrote their final report.

The report is available online at <http://oakhillschurch.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/A-Study-of-the-Role-of-Women-in-the-Church.pdf>

I especially recommend reading the personal convictions and comments made by members concerning their conclusions about including women in the eldership of the church. One word of caution: The report should be read with the understanding that the final conclusion of excluding women from eldership in the church was a direct reversal of the previous report. It is quite possible that a different committee from the same church today studying the same issue would arrive at a different conclusion. After almost 2,000 years we must be careful not to think we have suddenly arrived at the truth of the matter. The report is worth reading for study and providing a basis for discussion on the subject. <sup>REHIII</sup>

**There is no way to cover the complete subject here but I wish to put forward the following study guide on several scriptural text for thought and discussion.**

I find the statement of Paul to the church at Galatia the clearest and best place to start and is in my opinion the clearest.

*You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.* Galatians 3.26-29

- ❑ What three distinct barriers are removed when an individual believes in Jesus as his or her personal savior? How can these be seen in our modern world?

church leadership and ministry.

2. Nothing out of Context: the context is often lost when looking at men and women in church leadership. Quoting one verse here and another there can prove either point easily. The truth of the matter is much more difficult to understand and must be seen in light of the Bible as a whole.
3. The Easy interprets the difficult: This does not mean that the simplest and what appears to be the clearest statement alone can be used to settle a matter. The whole Bible was given to help us see and understand.
4. Jesus is Boss: Jesus elevated women to a new height in His ministry. He broke Jewish custom and law in dealing with and allowing them to minister to Him and for Him.

One author put forward 8 verses he said settled the matter. They were: Genesis 2.18, 1 Corinthians 11.3-12, Ephesians 5.22-23, 1 Timothy 2.9-15, 1 Timothy 3.11, 1 Timothy 5.9-14, Titus 2.3-5, 1 Peter 3.1-6. Each of these is part of a bigger picture but these eight alone are not the picture and are misleading or the proof text to support a particular point of view.

After two different studies the Oak Hills church arrived at two different conclusions. In the end they VOTED in the affirmative "Based on my study and understanding of scripture, women may serve in any and all areas of Oak Hills Church public worship." \* (Page 4) Yet they VOTED in the negative "Based on my study and understanding of scripture, women may serve as elders of the Oak Hills Church." \* (Page 4) One reason for this was the need to

*For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.* Romans 6.14

- ❑ How is the believer's relationship to the law changed through their relationship with Jesus?

The church at Corinth was filled with problems. One of the ten Paul addresses in 1st Corinthians is the question of women causing disruption in worship services.

*For God is not a God of disorder but of peace. As in all the congregations of the saints, women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, **as the Law says.*** 1 Corinthians 14.33-34

- ❑ Why would Paul use the LAW to try and restore order in the church at Corinth?

- ❑ Does Paul's directions to that church apply to all churches? Explain your answer.

The believer must be careful to make sure to look for the complete picture and not to break the rules of Biblical interpretation.

1. Scripture interprets scripture: The expanse of scripture allows for it to be used as a self styled reference book on itself. As noted earlier when looking at all scripture on the subject of men and women in leadership there is ample and clear support for including women at all levels of

1.

2.

3.

- ❑ What three phrases are used to describe all believers? How does each one remove a barrier that could divide them?

1.

2.

3.

- ❑ What is the best description here for the way believers are united together? How does this help us understand how Jesus removes barriers?

*An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient.* <sup>Titus 1.6</sup>

❑ What four requirements are set here for a person to serve as an elder in the church?

1.

2.

3.

4.

❑ Taken literally how should each of these be applied to Elders (leadership) in the local church?

1.

2.

3.

4.

❑ If taken as guidelines how should these be applied to Elders (leaders) in the local church?

1.

2.

3.

4.

Paul is always careful to delineate between his opinion and that which is the word of Christ. Speaking on marriage he

wrote:

*"To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord): A wife must not separate from her husband."* <sup>1 Corinthians 7.10</sup>

❑ What makes this statement of Paul so important and authoritative?

*"To the rest I say this (I, not the Lord): If any brother has a wife who is not a believer and she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her."* <sup>1 Corinthians 7.12</sup>

❑ Why is Paul so careful here to make sure you know this is his opinion and not the command of Jesus?

When writing to the young pastor Timothy Paul said, *I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent.* <sup>1 Timothy 2.12</sup>

❑ What is Paul's background and authority for making this statement?

❑ Does this mean that all churches have to or should follow Paul's example? Explain your answer.

Paul's understanding and use of the Law of Moses:

*. . . no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.* <sup>Romans 3.20</sup>

❑ What is the purpose of the law? How does this make the law relevant to all people in all times?