

THE ROLE OF WOMEN

LAKE POINTE BIBLE CHURCH

August, 2000

This paper provides an update to the subject of Women in Ministry, as published to members and friends of Lake Pointe Bible Chapel in January, 1995. This paper will discuss the Biblical hierarchy of roles; man's responsibility for leadership and public teaching; public participation by women in church services; service by women as deacons, and head coverings for women.

The Biblical Hierarchy of Roles

God has established a divine hierarchy, or order, of roles both in the Godhead and in man-woman relationships (1 Cor. 11:3). The man is to be 'head of the woman just as the Father is the 'head of Christ. The man is responsible before God for the spiritual welfare of both the family and the church. Husbands are to remember that scripture teaches mutual respect and submission in the relationship with the spouse: "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ" (Eph. 5:21-23). The woman is specifically exhorted to "submit to" the man and support him in his role as leader at home and in the church (Eph. 5:24). The different roles of men and women in the home and in the local church do not indicate superiority or inferiority. Men and women are "heirs together of the gracious gift of life" (1 Pet. 3:7); and in their relationship there is no difference, men and women are "one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:18).

Man's Responsibility for Leadership and Public Teaching

We believe that, consistent with God's principle of divine order (1 Cor. 11:3), God intends for men to generally take the primary leadership role in the home and in the local church. This does not mean, however, that there may not be some occasions when women need to exercise a leadership role e.g. in women's ministries; or where a woman is responsible for a single parent home.

In the church, the ministry of elders is to be fulfilled by men (1 Tim. 3:1-7). A key qualification for elders is that they be "apt to teach" (ref ...) and we believe that, consistent with God's hierarchy of roles, that men are to take responsibility for the teaching of the Word of God at public services of the church. We believe that women are precluded from functions that constitute teaching authority, including functioning as an elder, preaching, and teaching mixed adult Sunday School classes (1 Tim. 2).

Public Participation by Women in Church Services

Although women are specifically precluded by scripture from teaching publicly (1 Tim. 2), and are commanded to remain silent in the use of prophecy that constitutes authoritative teaching (1 Cor. 14), women are permitted to pray and prophesy in the church as long as they respect the male authority in the church (1 Cor. 11:5). Consistent with 1 Cor. 11:5, women have typically participated publicly in our church in open prayer, in scripture reading, and in singing solos.

We do not believe there is any scriptural basis to preclude women from participating publicly in the breaking of bread service, providing that is done decently and in order (ref...). Accordingly, we believe

we should afford women the freedom, as they are lead of the Lord, to participate vocally in the breaking of bread service as this service is one of remembrance, worship and prayer- but not a teaching ministry. Women are not precluded from these functions in the New Testament. Such participation may include reading a scripture, offering a prayer, or sharing a thought related to the worship. It is understood that sharing during the breaking of bread is done with a view to worship and remembrance, not instruction.

Service by Women as Deacons

The ministry of deacons at Lake Pointe does not constitute an authoritative teaching position, and the duties of deacons at Lake Pointe are similar to activities performed by women in the New Testament (Rom. 16:1-2; Acts 1:14, 2:17-18, 9:36-43, 12:12, 16:40, 21:8-9; 1 Cor. 11; Col.4:15, Rom 16:2,12; Titus 2:3-5). Accordingly, we believe women may serve as deacons and this will enable representation of women's ministries and other ministries unique to women. We propose to ask selected women to serve as deacons in the near future.

Head Coverines for Women

Within the New Testament culture, the commonly accepted practice of a head covering depicted submission to authority. Not to wear such a covering was a blatant symbol of independence, and it diverted attention away from worship to the woman (1 Cor. 11). Although such a symbol does not have the same meaning today, we believe that the injunction for submission within the guidelines of male authority is still valid. We believe it is appropriate for women to have freedom regarding the use of a head covering as they are comfortable before God.

Closing Thoughts

As your elders, we have a deep desire that everything at Lake Pointe be done to the honor and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our goal is to seek harmony among all believers that our Savior may continue to be lifted up. We covet your prayers for our church as we join together to serve and worship our glorious Savior in the weeks and months ahead.

The Elders
Lake Pointe Bible Church
August 29, 2000