

The Role of Women in the Church

Suggested Resources for Further Bible Study

*(prepared for the congregation of the Cornerstone Church of Christ – Duluth, GA
by the Elders & Evangelist - as of 12.30.23)*

I. Areas of Focus & Suggested Approach

During this last year, we appreciate the engagement and support of the congregation as we focused on several areas of Bible study and practical applications, including our main theme of “With” and our desires to draw closer to God and each other; a review of our core beliefs and distinctions from matters of opinion; as well as introductions to deeper Bible study through a review of hermeneutics and exegesis approaches to understanding the scriptures. Additional opportunities for expanded bible study and practical applications focusing on key ministry needs included our Marriage Retreat; Men’s and Women’s midweek lessons and discussions; Teen and Middle School parenting workshops, midweeks, and retreats; Children’s Ministry training and lessons; our Wounded Heart weekend; Life Group activities; Worship Nights, and shared prayer devotionals.

We also discussed our desire for further congregation-wide study and discussion of the roles of Women in the Church, which we will begin over the next few months. Through further Bible Study, reflection, prayer, discussion, and review of our worship practices, will seek to answer several questions, including the following:

1. What worship and leadership roles for women in the church are supported by the Bible?
2. What changes, if any, should Cornerstone make regarding the role of women in the church at this time?
3. What additional topics of study and discussion are recommended in related areas at Cornerstone?

Please accept the following materials as suggestions for your review and consideration as we collectively seek to answer the questions listed above. (Note: our review will not be primarily focused on the roles of men and women in marriage; however, there will be some overlapping themes that are implicated). While the Elders and Evangelist, as well as many other members of the congregation, have been studying, praying, and evaluating these topics and varying resources for some time, our goal is to continue to seek our collective discernment from the scriptures, as well as mutual learning and understanding of the potential appropriate applications and practices at Cornerstone.

II. Relevant Bible Verses for Consideration

The following is not an exhaustive list of key Bible verses for consideration. However, we have included a wide range of relevant texts regarding God’s good news and desired loving relationship with all people, including scriptures regarding the creation of men and women, the disobedience and fall from God’s original plan for mankind, ongoing calls to pursue God and His ways, multiple examples of varying worship and leadership roles of women throughout the Old and New Testament (including the use of spiritual gifts), redemption through the gospel of Jesus – and some radical roles, relationships and encounters Jesus had with women, as well as a

review of controversial scriptures that have been interpreted by many to include at least partial limitations on the role of women in the church.

As noted above, there have been and remain a wide range of interpretations of the scriptures, including two of the most challenging chapters to understand and apply (1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2) from Paul. However, we would encourage study and consideration of the full story and thoughtful approach to our exegesis and hermeneutics of all the scriptures, including the following:

- **Genesis 1** (including 1:26-28 – where God created humankind in His image, both male and female; outlining their shared identity as image bearers of God and their shared vocation to multiply and have authority over the earth)
- **Genesis 2** (including verse 2:18, stating that woman was created to be an EZER [helper, partner, co-ruler] with man).
- **Genesis 3** (including the account of how both Adam and Eve disobeyed God, ate the forbidden fruit, were expelled from Eden, and suffered negative consequences in their relationship with God and each other, along with the serpent who deceived them).
- **Exodus 15: 20-21, Numbers 12: 1-5, Micah 6: 1-8** (role of Miriam)
- **Judges 4:5** (role of Deborah)
- **2 Samuel 14: 1-20; 20: 14-22** (noting the role of women as sages in Israel)
- **2 Kings 22: 14-20; 2 Chronicles 34: 19-28** (role of Huldah)
- **Nehemiah 7: 67; 2 Samuel 19:35; Ezra 2:65' 2 Chronicles 35:25** (noting the role of women as Levitical singers during worship)
- **Esther 9:29-31** (the role of Queen Esther)
- **Psalm 68** (noting the role of women as heralds)
- **Joel 2:28** (including Joel's prophesy about the future restoration of Israel when God said "I will pour out my spirit on all people. Your sons and your daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams.")
- **Luke 1: 48; 52-54** (the blessing and role of Mary as the mother of Jesus)
- **Luke 2: 25-32** (noting the prophet Anna - heralding the good news of the Messiah's arrival in Jerusalem)
- **Luke 7: 36-48** (Jesus & woman who anoints him)

- **Luke 8: 1-3, 10: 38-42** (noting multiple women who were called as disciples and supporters of Jesus and his ministry, including Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna, the sisters Mary and Martha, and many others)
- **Luke 13:13** (Jesus & a crippled woman)
- **Matthew 21-28** (Jesus & Canaanite woman)
- **Mathew 27: 55** (noting multiple women as disciples of Jesus)
- **John 4** (Jesus & Samaritan woman)
- **John 11: 21-27** (Jesus and Martha & Mary)
- **John 12: 1-7** (Jesus accepting varying displays of women worshiping him)
- **Luke 23: 55; Luke 24:1-9; Mathew 28: 7, 10; John 20: 17-18** (noting the role of women as witnesses at the crucifixion and first witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus)
- **Acts 2** (including 1-21; the Holy Spirit is poured out on both men and women at Pentecost and the apostles cite Joel's prophesy of sons and daughters as prophets, etc.)
- **Acts 9:36; Romans 16: 1-2** (role of Phoebe as deacon and church leader)
- **Acts 18:26; Romans 16:13** (roles of Priscilla & Aquilla to teach Apollos and others)
- **Acts 21:9** (Phillip's daughters prophesied)
- **Romans 8: 16-17, 23** (We all share in our inheritance as new creatures in Christ. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are first fruits of this inheritance).
- **Romans 12: 4-8, 10, 16; Romans 13:8, Romans 14: 13, 19; Romans 15: 5, 7, 14; Romans 16:16** (multiple instances where the apostle Paul provides exhortation for the whole church to love, serve, and encourage one another - without gender distinction)
- **Romans 16: 7** (notes Junia as one who was counted as outstanding among the apostles)
- **1 Corinthians 11** (including 2-16; where men and women had prophesied in Corinth; however, Paul calls for orderly worship and commands silence of troublesome women in Corinth – and some interpret beyond)
- **1 Corinthians 12** (including 7-11; reviewing the spiritual gifts given by the spirit to all followers of Jesus)

- **1 Corinthians 14** (including 33-35; where Paul again challenges disorder and disrespect by troublesome women, calling them to be quiet in worship – and some interpret for all women)
- **Galatians 3: 26-29** (God has brought redemption to all humankind, male and female alike. As new creations in Christ there are not more class or gender distinctions, and all are to live in mutual love with God and each other)
- **Ephesians 5** (including 5:21-23; with calls for husbands and wives to have mutual submission to each other – but has been interpreted by some to promote male dominance in the relationship in all settings).
- **Philippians 4:2-3** (where Paul asks other believers to help Euodia and Syntyche, women who have labored side-by-side with him in the gospel)
- **1 Timothy** (including 2: 8-15; including many difficult-to-interpret comments, but includes an apparent further proposed restriction for women to be silent in the worship assembly and to not allow a woman to teach or have authority over a man – which some interpret for all women and all situations)
- **1 Peter** (including 2:9-10; 4: 10-11 – with calls for mutual submission, and calls for believing wives to submit to unbelieving husbands - at least in some situations)

III. Additional Suggested Resources

- Book: “Women Serving God” by John Mark’s Hicks (including Appendices on pages 251-270 with multiple citations of quoted sources and identification of other books, white papers, and presentations with varying conclusions for limited, partial, or full participation)
- Research Paper: *A Study of the Role of Women in Church* by Oak Hills Church (including a review of key scriptures and citations to other resources with varying conclusions regarding the roles of women in the church in Appendix 3, pages 88-90, and Additional Resources on pages 118-119)
- Book: “Four Views on Women and Church Leadership” by Ron Highfield
- Book: “The View from Paul’s Window” by Jeanie Shaw
- Podcast: Women in the Church, After Class Podcast, (16 Episode series: 2.33 – 2.48)
- Podcast: Women in the Church, ICOC (15 Episode series)
- Video: *Biblical Basis for Women’s Service in the Church* by NT Wright
- Video: *Why Women Should Be Church Leaders and Preachers* by NT Wright