

'Men & Women in God's House

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Date: 26 April 2026

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[0 : 00] But it is God's word to us and as Delaney prayed it's worth listening and working out what it does say and what it doesn't say.

And more than that our passage tonight has more than just those controversial verses in it. And it speaks to both men and women about how we ought to conduct ourselves in God's household if you remember.

That is the house rules for God's house and as it says just after yellow which is the church of the living God. And so let's get straight into it. It starts with the house rules for men in church.

Point one verse eight. Therefore I want the men everywhere to lift to pray lifting up holy hands without anger or disputing. Now last week he urged us to pray for all people to be saved including those in authority as Delaney led us in prayer tonight.

And so it continues. Therefore when it comes to praying like for all people, Paul wants men to pray lifting up holy hands without anger or disputing.

[1 : 13] Now it's worth recognizing here and in fact this is helpful whenever we read the Bible to realize there's a situation that is being addressed which gives rise to an instruction.

But then it can also be expressed in a particular way and I'm going to kind of work through those categories tonight. And so the situation is it seems as though some men in the church were lifting unholy hands because he tells them to lift holy hands instead and doing it in anger and disputing. Which is not surprising because in my experience us guys lose our temper a bit quicker than the ladies amongst us. But more importantly I think for this letter the false teachers were all men.

And so even in chapter one we talked about Hymenaeus and Alexander a couple of weeks ago briefly. These are guys who are false teachers. In fact all the false teachers in 1 Timothy are men. And so it seems like these false teachers, these men were teaching their false doctrine which led to fighting and quarreling. And we see that later in the letter where the false teaching does just that.

[2 : 29] It leads to disputes and so on. And so perhaps some men were using their prayers as a platform to promote their quarrels against each other.

For example, perhaps something like, I thank you God that I'm not like Jeff down here who doesn't follow the food laws or whatever the false teaching was.

And insists on wearing Neo Vision t-shirts all the time or something like, do you actually have a Neo Vision t-shirt? What is that? Yep, that's right. I was trying to think, what does my son wear?

Anyway, you know, perhaps they were doing something like that. Using their prayers to kind of get their arguments across or have a go at other members of the church.

And so the instruction here in verse 8 is Paul wants men everywhere. That is every place that the church meets. It's literally every place to pray, lifting up holy hands without anger and disputing.

[3 : 27] And so he moves from some men who were doing this to an instruction for all men. And that instruction is to pray with holy hands firstly.

The word holy just means set apart. It could be set apart for purity, which is often how we think about it. Or it could be set apart for a particular purpose, which is really what's on view here.

That is, they're to pray. They're set apart for a particular purpose, which is to pray in church. And that's meant to be done humbly, because we're praying to God, but also helpfully, because we're leading others in prayer.

They need to be able to say amen to it. And so that's the instruction. Don't pray with anger and disputing, but for the purpose which you're being set apart for.

The expression of this instruction is then shaped by culture. So in those days, churches met predominantly in homes.

[4 : 29] They were home churches. And you literally lifted your hands to pray. This was the normal Jewish posture for prayer, kind of hands up like this.

For us, though, culturally, we meet in buildings, don't we, like we are tonight, and we don't tend to lift our hands to pray. And so, again, in terms of reading the Bible, it's worth considering the situation, the instruction, and the expression.

Because both the situation and the expression might change, mightn't it? I mean, we don't have false teachers here who are using their prayers to, you know, further their arguments.

And we meet in buildings, and we don't lift our hands to pray. The situation and the expression are different. But I take it the instruction, praying with holiness and without anger and disputing, I take it that still holds true for all men today.

And so the house rule is, when men pray in church, we're to pray with holiness, but without anger and disputing. That is, we're to remember we're set apart to lead others in prayer, which means praying humbly to God and helpfully for others so that they can say amen.

[5 : 45] Not to use our prayers to promote our personal or political views or causes, which actually I've heard some do, not in this congregation, but in some of the mourning congregations.

And I've had to say, hey, we can't do that. Or to express anger at fellow members as they were doing in Timothy's church back then. Now, no, men in church are to pray with holiness and without anger or disputing.

Now, does that mean then that women cannot pray in church? Well, no, the Bible says elsewhere they can, like 1 Corinthians, where Paul assumes every woman can pray and prophesy.

It's just that the situation back then was that some men were the problem. But the instruction is given then, that sort of gives rise to the instruction for all men.

And so when men pray in church, we're to pray with holiness, but without anger and disputing.

Okay, so the situation, some men, leads to the instruction for all men, but it might be expressed culturally.

[6 : 54] Let's move on then to the women in church, point to verse 9 and 10. Paul writes, The word also, the second word there, also means we're still in church.

And of course, men are to do good deeds as well. But again, the situation back then seems to be that some women this time were flaunting their wealth and turning church into a bit of a beauty contest.

Caring more about how they looked, you know, had to look better than the other woman that was coming to church, had to outdo each other or perhaps turn the eyes of some men, whatever it was. It was a bit of a beauty contest, it seems. And so like with verse 8, this situation with some leads to an instruction for all.

And the instruction is that all women are to dress with modesty and decency rather than trying to be showy, trying to impress others. And that it is so with propriety.

[8 : 16] The word propriety just means good judgment and self-control. Thinking about what's appropriate, not just for the occasion, but verse 10, for a person, a woman in this case, who professes to worship God.

What's appropriate for a Christian, if you like? So it's not saying you can't dress up for church if you want. It's not as though you have to go around looking like this, wearing a Hessian bag, so that people out in Doncaster can go, Oh, there's a Holy Trinity woman, look at her, I recognise her by her clothing.

Saying, no, no, you've got to use your good judgment and your self-control, propriety, along with modesty and decency to wear what's appropriate, both for the occasion and as a Christian.

In other words, women in church are to dress to impress God, not others. That's the instruction. But again, the instruction can be expressed in a way that's been shaped by both culture, and I think this time our conscience.

And so, for example, in a previous culture, not too long ago, actually, even here in Australia, women used to come to church wearing hats and gloves.

[9 : 31] That's what they used to wear. But our culture has changed, and so they don't wear that anymore. See, culture has shaped what is modest and decent, what's appropriate, if you like.

But your conscience will also tell you, no, I'm not comfortable wearing that for this occasion. I mean, thinking positively, if you're going to a wedding, I know Ugg boots you can wear almost anywhere, but your conscience might tell you not to wear your Uggs to a wedding, because, you know, you

need to get dressed up or something like that.

And so here, both culture and conscience might shape how you express what's modest and decent and what's appropriate for the occasion and as a Christian.

And can I say, I think women both here at HCD and down at St. John's are doing a great job of living this out. For I've seen many women who come to church to worship God and who clothe themselves with good deeds, as we're told here, which is brilliant, because all women here are to dress to impress God rather than others.

It doesn't mean, by the way, that you, you know, can't look your best for that special someone or, you know, who you might be going out to dinner with afterwards. But again, what are you coming to church for?

[10:55] Or rather, who are you coming to church for? If you're a Christian, you're coming to worship God and to serve others, not to pick up someone else, which might be a byproduct later.

So women in church dress to impress God and not others, and reflect God's good design, which brings us to verse 11. A woman should learn in quietness and in full submission.

I do not permit a woman to teach or assume authority over a man. She must be quiet. Now, this is where we typically shift uncomfortably in our seats, and I start to sweat a bit more.

And so let's again work out what's going on here. What is the situation? Well, again, it seems that some women who were trying, and it's probably the same group of women who are trying to outdo each other in beauty, were the ones who are then being disruptive during the public teaching, whether it was shouting out or throwing jaffas or whatever it is, I don't know.

Because the word propriety comes up at the beginning of the instructions for women and at the end. You see how it's in verse 9 and it comes up at the end of verse 15. And so it kind of bookends these set of instructions and suggests it's the same group of women.

[12:13] But like the men, this situation then gives rise to an instruction for all women, which is verse 11. And note there, verse 11 says women should actually learn, which is different to Islam.

Islam says women shouldn't be learning at all. But here women should learn, but they're there to learn with quietness and submission rather than to teach and exercise authority over a man.

Now, before you kind of write off this part of the Bible, it's worth noting a few things. First, the word quietness does not mean silence, as though women can't talk at all.

It's actually the same word back in verse 2. Remember from last week, we are to live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.

And in verse 2, we didn't say last week that we have to all be absolutely silent. It's not like we have to take a vow of silence, become monks and never speak again. No, no, it's not saying that.

[13:18] Perhaps a better translation is having a peaceable attitude, if you like, without seeking to create conflict. So that, like we said last week, we can be good advertisements for the gospel.

Well, so too here in verse 11 and the end of verse 12, actually. It kind of bookends this little two verses. This quiet or peaceful attitude is what's on view here, which again suggests that some women back then were not showing a peaceful attitude, but causing disruption during the public teaching in some way.

But the point is, quietness does not mean absolute silence. It means having a peaceable attitude, which I take it even men are to have.

But second, despite what our world says, the other word that gets misunderstood is submission.

Submission is often seen in our world as an evil word, but it's not actually evil.

Yes, some people and even some Christians have used it in an evil way. And so let me be absolutely crystal clear at this point.

[14:35] Domestic violence is never, ever, ever acceptable. Ever. But this word submission in the Bible never, ever means that, actually.

It's just that some people have misused the word and done that evil. Think about it for a moment. Jesus submitted to his father. Is that evil?

Of course not. And at different times, we submit to one another. Rather, the word submission in the Bible is neutral. Depends how we use it. And here, it's talking about a voluntary submission.

Submitting willingly, not coercively. Just as Jesus willingly said in the Garden of Gethsemane, not my will, but yours be done. And when the service leader says, please stand, we willingly submit, don't we, and stand.

So submission is not inherently bad. It's willing and voluntary. Third thing to notice about this is that willing submission is to an authority that seeks to serve.

[15:51] In the Bible, authority is always a servant leadership, like Jesus. I mean, Jesus has absolute authority. He is Lord, right?

And what did he do? He came to serve us by giving his life as a ransom for us. And so those who exercise authority at church, in leadership in some way, are always to use their authority to serve, love, and encourage.

In other words, for the good of others, never to domineer. That's why Hebrews, that uses that word submit, says to submit to your leaders and to their authority because they keep watch over you, which is for your good.

And I'm sure you've seen that with Mark and Steph and Jeff and other leaders here who work hard for your good. The point is submission here is a submission to an authority that serves for your good.

And fourth, this voluntary submission here is in the context of church. Remember, verse 8 said, Therefore I want men in every place, every place that the church meets.

[17:03] These are house rules written to God's household, the church. The verse I showed you right at the beginning. And so it's not saying women cannot be CEOs or principals or any other number of things.

The context is church. In fact, this submitting is even more limited. It's not talking about submitting to every guy in the church, but only those who exercise teaching and authority in the public gathering of the church.

That is, those who meet the requirements of next week, whose character will be one that seeks your good. And so this means then that women can teach in lots of other contexts.

We see it elsewhere in the Bible, for example, where older women are to teach younger women and also children. So, for example, Lois and Eunice teach Timothy the faith.

And we know he was taught by his mother and grandmother because his father was not a Christian. And so he wouldn't have been the one to teach him about the Christian faith. Or Priscilla, along with her husband Aquila, explain the faith more adequately to Apollos in their home.

[18:16] So here's Priscilla teaching Apollos. In fact, we're all to teach one another and admonish one another through psalms, hymns and spiritual songs and so on.

And so there's lots of other contexts where women can teach men. Now, in our culture, these things are expressed in certain names and descriptions. For example, it's really talking about, we use the phrase teaching one-to-one or pastoral visits or kids' church or youth ministry.

They're the labels, the cultural labels that we've given these activities that we see women doing in the Bible. In fact, even in Bible study.

And I do ask a question more about that one later. Or those women who preach at women's conferences like Entrust next Saturday. In fact, I've trained women to preach.

Or it can be expressed in theological writing. Some of the best commentaries I have on my bookshelf have been written by women. And the women on our staff team teach me things all the time for which I am grateful.

[19:26] And so there's lots of other contexts where women can teach men. And even actually women in the service as well, speaking in other ways too.

For we saw in 1 Corinthians that every woman can pray and prophesy. Prophecy is just informally speaking the word of God, which in our culture is expressed or described in terms of leading the service or reading the Bible or leading the prayers or speaking to each other after the service over chicken and chips or whatever it is.

So these are all ways that women can teach and encourage men and women. And so what is this instruction saying in verse 11 and 12? Well, it's saying that in the public gathering of the church, women are not to teach or have authority over a man, which our culture describes as doing the sermon, the Bible talk, preaching.

But why? Especially when it grates against our Anglican culture, though not Presbyterians in other cultures actually. Well, the answer is because it's based on God's good creation.

And so Paul goes on to give some reasons for this. The first one in verse 13. For or because Adam was formed first, then Eve.

[20 : 51] And now we're going to need to spend a bit of time unpacking what this means because he's appealing to Genesis chapter 2, where we see the creation of man and woman. But there is an order.

Adam is formed first. Now, this does not mean that he's better or the best. You know how like kids at school, when they choose teams, the first person they pick is always the best person. It's not like that. Rather, it's more like being the firstborn who's given certain authority and responsibility, much like firstborns today.

I mean, I've said to my firstborn before, but you're the eldest. I expect more from you. Have any firstborns here who've had parents say that to you as well?

Well, that's kind of what's going on here in Genesis 2. Adam is the one who's given the authority and responsibility. To do what? Well, to work the garden and to care for it.

[21 : 50] To lovingly rule over the world. And perhaps that's why he's made from the ground because he's given responsibility to care for the ground. It's certainly why God gets him to name the animals, which we're told in Genesis three times, to show authority and responsibility over the animals.

And he's given the authority and responsibility to teach God's word to Eve. Because when God spoke that bottom paragraph about not eating from that particular tree in the garden, we know that Eve was not yet created.

And so Adam had to tell her. And we know it's his job to do it because when sin enters the world, God comes looking not for Eve, but for Adam.

To say, where are you? What's going on? Because it was his responsibility. Or why in Romans chapter five, Paul doesn't say that sin entered the world through one woman, Eve.

No, he says it's through one man, Adam. Because it was his responsibility. In other words, Adam being formed first means he had authority and responsibility to lovingly rule over creation and to teach God's word.

[23 : 03] But of course, he couldn't do it alone. And so God created Eve next to be his helper. And again, people think, oh, helper, that's inferior. But that's not the case because, for example, Psalm 118, God is called helper.

And does that make God inferior? Of course not. So the word helper is not inferior. In fact, to prove that she is equal with Adam, she is creative from Adam's rib to show that she is the same stuff, equal in worth, but different in role.

And part of this different role, for Eve at least, was to bear children, to help fill the earth, which only women can do. It doesn't mean all women have to have kids.

No, no. But it does mean only women can have kids. And I think that's still true today. Although back before the fall, it was pain-free.

And sadly, I was at the birth of all three of my kids and it's not pain-free today, I really felt, for my wife. But the point is, they have equal worth, but different roles.

[24 : 15] And the part of our problem with all this is that our teaching, sorry, the world teaches us to attach our worth to our role. It's so ingrained in us.

I mean, if you meet someone new, even at church, the two questions that are often asked first are, what's your name? And what do you do? What are you studying?

And they go, oh, I'm studying medicine. Oh, wow. Excellent. Yeah, that's really good. Or if they say, I'm studying garbology. You go, what? I want to be a garbage truck driver.

All right. Have you had a shower this morning? Because, you know, just checking. Or if they say, like it's happened to me, I've said before, I'm a minister. And they said, literally, oh, I think I need to go and talk to so-and-so there and walked off straight away.

Because people attach people's worth to their roles, don't they? But that's not how God acts or works. No, no. Our worth is not found in our role.

[25 : 17] It's found in being made in God's image. And then even more so, by being God's child in Christ. That's where our worth is found.

And so every person in the body of Christ, every person in this room tonight, has great and equal, whether you're a guy or a girl, equal worth in God's sight.

Even though we have different roles, even in this congregation, where we do different things. It's why our first reading said that God created mankind, singular, in his own image, equal worth, all humanity, but then created them, plural, male and female, with diversity, diversity of body for a

diversity of role.

It's why we rightly celebrate Mother's Day in a couple of weeks' time and Father's Day in September. There's no Parents' Day because we rightly celebrate the differences.

And yet those differences are meant to complement each other, just like in the body of Christ. And so Adam being formed first, but needing Eve, who is created equal in worth, different in role, it's part of God's design, you see, for men and women to work together in complementary ways to lovingly rule the world and glorify God.

[26 : 45] It's meant to be a good and beautiful picture. In fact, after God created humanity, equal in worth, male and female, different in role, remember what he said at the end of Genesis chapter 1?

God saw all that he'd made and it was very good. Very good. This is God's good design.

It's meant to be a beautiful picture of unity and diversity, of equality and difference, working together in complementary roles to glorify God. And it's this complementary picture from which we get the word complementarian, which you may have heard of before.

But it's just about men and women being equal in worth, different in role, to complement each other. In fact, even parts of God's creation are complementary when you think about it.

I mean, God created night and day, sun and moon, land and sea. They're kind of complementary things.

[27 : 50] And this complementary creation pattern in Genesis is reflected elsewhere in the Bible. Like in marriage households, in Ephesians, where the husband and wife are equal in worth but different in role.

The husband is particularly to lay down his life for his wife as Christ did for the church. And the wife is to let him. That's what servant leadership and voluntary submission are meant to look like in marriage.

The example I often use, and it's a real example, is me saying to my wife, Michelle, don't do the dishes, I'll do them. And then she submits by saying, okay, that's complementarianism in marriage. That's what it's meant to look like. And so for those girls out there looking for a guy, look for one who serves. For those guys out there, well, start serving.

The point is, this complementary pattern seen in creation, in Genesis, is then reflected in the marriage household in Ephesians and is to be reflected in God's household here in 1 Timothy.

[29 : 02] Men who meet the qualifications of next week are to teach and exercise authority in the public gathering, lovingly, gently, patiently, laying down our lives for the good of the church, if you like.

And women are to willingly submit and let them that we might reflect God's good, creative pattern. For, Adam was formed first, then Eve.

And more briefly, the second reason, Adam was not the one deceived, it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. Now, by the way, Paul is not really having a go at Eve, he's just saying what happened.

In fact, in Genesis chapter 3, Eve actually said, the snake deceived me and I ate. So, Paul is just quoting or referring to what Eve said about herself.

Nor is Paul saying that, that all women are, you know, more susceptible to deception. No, he's just, again, saying what happened back in Genesis 3.

[30 : 03] Eve was deceived and became the first sinner. That's just what happened. But it happened because Eve chose not to submit to Adam's loving leadership and teaching, which said, God told us not to eat that fruit and she decided not to submit to that but to take it, which is why Paul includes it here in 1 Timothy.

Adam still sinned as well and as I showed you before, he's primarily held responsible for that. God comes looking for him. We're told, sin entered through one man, Adam.

He's held primarily responsible. But that's why Paul mentions Eve here is because not choosing to submit led to this deception and sin.

But it's this good design that's the reason for this instruction, which means it's not actually based on culture, it's based on creation. Now, obviously, people disagree with all this.

In this room now, there may be people who both agree and disagree and at one level, that's okay. It is not a salvation issue. I rarely talk about it and I'm certainly not going to die for it.

[31 : 17] I would like to think I would die for Jesus because whether we believe in Jesus or not, that is a salvation issue. That's worth going to the stake for and people have in history.

But this issue tonight is not. I've got some other things to go through, but I think I want to leave time for questions instead. So let me finish here.

As much as, you know, I might like to ignore this instruction completely, which would make my life much more easy, it seems as much as possible, we're to reflect the pattern we see in creation.

And so to wrap up, men in church, we're to pray with holiness, but without anger and disputing.

Women in church are to dress to impress God more than others and we're all in church to reflect God's good design of beautiful complementarity, working together as men and women, equal in worth, different in role for God's glory.

Let me pray and then we'll sing. Now, gracious Father, we do pray that you would help us to keep wrestling with your word, with humility and open minds that we might understand what it is you're truly saying and please, by your spirit, help us to put it into practice.

[32 : 47] We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.