

**Titus 2:3-5 (Joel 2:28-32, Quoted in Acts2:17-21)**  
Rediscovering Church Polity As An Essential Element of the Gospel:  
Part 3: Women Leadership

*Unedited sermon notes not for distribution*

**Introduction:**

- Today we address the issue of women leadership in the church— now to be clear, this is NOT just a sermon for women... it is for the whole church in so far as we are all blessed in so far as we are organized upon the biblical foundation with Christ as the cornerstone.

To do this—we must first off reject out of hand the rationalistic arguments of modernity...

WE will reject “slippery slope” and “by association” kinds of arguments that create false litmus tests. We will attempt, with the church over the course of 2000 years, to interpret scripture such as to allow for its sometimes difficult nuances and antinomies.

**1<sup>st</sup>-- It will be my intention to clarify and extoll the great extents to which women are called to lead in the church as envisioned by God in scripture (egalitarian view)—I suspect that in the populist driving context of modernity and its resulting “political” (either-or) manner of discourse, that some who have wanted to preserve Christian orthodoxy have gone too far in so far as limiting women in leadership... if compared to scripture.. (modified egalitarian view)**

**2<sup>nd</sup>—it will be my intention to clarify the Biblical principle of male headship as a dramatic role play institutionalized at creation for redemptive purposes and to be maintained within the home and the church... as a mediatorial means of grace that directs us to Christ and the church. (modified complimentary view)**

Now to be sure—I might find myself in a kind of spiritual “border state” within the civil war of gender politics in the church. E.g. at the risk of offending both sides...

You will discover that

- 1) While wanting to preserve the principle of male headship as a redemptive role play in both the family and church—
- 2) I will also make the case that to make this issue of “woman’s ordination” a litmus test for orthodoxy generally, or a dedication to the sole authority of scripture as our only rule of faith and practice—would be misguided.. and uncharitable if not dishonest..

**Why does it matter?**

One the one hand—

- 1) That the scripture DOES recognize a formal and real leadership role for women in the church proves God’s continued love and concern for the whole body of Christ with no bias for gender in so far as a plan was constructed to insure God’s continued, if mediated, presence as the chief shepherd of the flock— what does it mean that in a culture that often treated women as truly second class citizen’s, that the scripture by God’s decree organizes a means of grace with special concern with shepherding the full flock of God including women...—thus the Titus 2 passage and others...

- 2) The Biblical way of defining male headship will again convince of the great extent of God's grace that we wouldn't have the grace of the gospel as contained in His plan of salvation on behalf of His bride, the church, by our husband—Jesus Christ.

### Exposition:

#### **Church Planting Instructions to Titus sent to Crete:**

##### **Titus 2—key observations:**

**1** But as for you (Teaching Elder), teach what accords with sound doctrine. **2** Older men (presbutas—masc—office of TE and RE's, or household instructions?) are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness. **3** Older women (presbutedas—fem, office of elder? Or household instructions?) likewise (same office? Or same household) are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, **4** and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, **5** to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands (headship in home, note "own" husbands, not all men), that the word of God may not be reviled.

### Observations:

#### 1) "Likewise"—how far is "likewise" to go—

- **Likewise—those who hold the same office?**
- **Or just likewise—older men/women**

Very interesting—same "likewise" shows up in 1 Tim 3:11—in context of a description of the OFFICE of elder-deacon (if per 1 Tim 5:17—distinguished from elder pastor/episcopoi as teaching elder)...

That would exegetically lean toward this being a recognized office (whether ordained with jurisdictional authority or not—more on this later).

#### 2) 2 Immediate Contexts that make it difficult to decide:

**a) Context of Office starting in Titus 1:5-** *I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you*

Vs. 6-9—Office of "Overseer (pastor- episkopon)

Vs. 10-16—description of "unsound" doctrine in Titus—as to explain "e may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it." Again, typically a role reserved for TE (per 1 Tim 3:1-10)

Vs 2:1—summary of Overseer/Pastor—Corresponds to elder-pastor ! Tim.3:1-10 (e.g. 1 Tim 5:17—esp. those who teach as a subclass of elder)

**Vs. 2:2—Presbutas- elder-masc—1 Tim 3:8ff "deacon-elder" (1 Tim 5:17) or "older men"**

**Vs. 2:3ff—"Likewise "presbutedas)—elder-fem. – corresp to "Likewise "woman" in 1 Tim 3:11 in elder-deacon class??? Or "elder women"**

Therefore, this passage could be read to be 2 offices, one (elder) as assuming the possibility of "women elders"??

**b. Note then again the second immediate context: household instructions**

again “likewise” but this time applied to younger men, women and servants..

So again—seems now to be focused on household instructions...

(but same thing happens where there is certainly a description of office in 1 Peter 5 and 1 Tim...)

One solution—church as household—even if then to discern when the office ends and the members of household begin...

c. Importance of “household” spirituality as related to church in scripture—

Eph—“Household of God” ....

Such that household “polity” informs the polity of the church such that it would at least make sense of why, moving from church polity, Paul would naturally continue on to family polity...

Examples:

Titus 3:

- Men Elders—husband to one wife (e.g. loyal)
- Female Elders—teach younger to respect/subordinate to their OWN husbands...

1 Tim. 5:1-2

- Presbutas—treat as “fathers”
- Presbutedas—treat as mothers”

e.g. what would a typical household look like?

- Would both father and mother exercise authority over children? yes
- Would they both make decisions together? yes
- But then are you saying that the man and woman have no role distinction, even if they both share some role of authority in the home? NO
  - **Note especially that one of the things the elder woman are to teach younger woman is to live in submission to their OWN husbands!!**

**But it remains unclear:**

- One the one hand, there is a role distinction in the household
- But on the other hand, the “their own” husband seems to suggest that they are not necessarily to submit to other husbands, presumably some of which are church elders?

**2) How does this passage get read in the context of other similar passages in the NT?**

**1 Tim 2:11** What does it mean “ do not permit a woman to teach “and not” (e.g. ) exercise authority over a man...

*1 Tim 2: 11 Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. 12 I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. 13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve; 14 and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.*

**15** Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.

Questions:

- a) Is this addressing women in the church, or women in the home (wives—same greek word for “woman” as “wife”)? Note here—“woman” is “wife”

Since it is universally agreed that 1 Peter 3 refers to marriage, if one allows "Scripture to interpret Scripture," that is, if one allows what is clear to assist in the interpretation of what is less clear, the presence of so many striking verbal and conceptual parallels between 1 Peter 3 and 1 Timothy 2 offers strong support for the present interpretation that 1 Timothy 2, likewise, concerns marriage

**1 Timothy 2:8-15** [L]

<sup>8</sup>Therefore I want husbands everywhere to pray lifting up holy hands without anger or disputing [with their wives].

<sup>9</sup>Likewise, I want wives to adorn themselves with proper dress, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, <sup>10</sup>but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God. <sup>11</sup>A wife should learn in quietness and full submission. <sup>12</sup>I do not permit a wife to teach, that is, to boss her husband; she must be quiet.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>13</sup>For Adam was formed first, then Eve. <sup>14</sup>And Adam was not deceived, but his wife<sup>15</sup>But she will be saved even through [the seemingly mundane work of] childrearing — that is, if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety. was deceived and became a sinner.

**1 Peter 3:7** [L], **1-6** [L] [note order]

<sup>7</sup>Husbands, in the same way live considerately with you showing them honor as the weaker partner and as heir of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

<sup>1</sup>In the same way, wives, be submissive to your husbands that, if any of them do not obey the word, they may be without a word by the behavior of their wives, <sup>2</sup>when the reverence and purity of your lives. <sup>3</sup>Your adornment not be merely outward — braiding your hair, wearing gold or putting on clothes. <sup>4</sup>Instead, it should be that of your in the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight.

<sup>5</sup>For this is the way the holy wives of the past who put their hope in God used to adorn themselves. They were submitted to their own husbands, <sup>6</sup>like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham called him her master. You are her daughters if you do right and do not give way to fear.

- b) **And especially, is it “to teach OR exercise authority over a man” (as in neither) or “teach as to exercise authority over a man” the greek can go either way).**

Now this is interesting—

- Does this mean “can’t teach” a man or “can’t teach in a manner as to exercise jurisdictional authority over him” –e.g. “ruling”
- Note the very interesting parallel with 1 Cor 11

**E.g Can one teach (Prophecie) and yet distinguished from jurisdictional authority?**

**1Cor. 11: 3** *But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God. 4 Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head, 5 but every wife who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, since it is the same as if her head were shaven.*

**Again: BOTH prophecy (how then is this regulated??) but one without head covering**—as more directly representing the headship of Christ—the other with head covering—as under the headship of the husband who is under Christ...

**AGAIN: what IS cultural is head covering—what ISN'T cultural is male headship**

Summary so far:

1) *There IS differentiating “role” in both the home and church that can be described as related to the principle of “male headship”!*

**e.g. One the one hand:** Note this male headship “Role play” is argued NOT as a cultural event, but as a redemptive event per creation/redemption story itself—which is why I can’t just discount it as a culturally determined relationship in the church and home...

**See 1 tim 2:12ff** *I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. 13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve; 14 and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. 15 Yet she will be saved through childbearing*

**Again, 1 Cor 11:6** For if a wife will not cover her head, then she should cut

*her hair short. But since it is disgraceful for a wife to cut off her hair or shave her head, let her cover her head. 7 For a man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God, but woman is the glory of man. 8 For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. 9 Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. 10 That is why a wife ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. 11 Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; 12 for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God.*

- **Therefore**, there IS a headship principle as applied to a Biblical household polity/order—even as this is carried over to apply to the household of God polity/order...
  - And yet, as per the redemptive role play—would the husband “demand” respect/submission” or use his authority to serve/protect/care for his wife as Christ does the church
  - And would the wife, likened unto the church, respect/honor her husband in so far as he is tasked with imaging Christ to the church in the home... e.g. her cooperation vs. resistance, in submitting to his imitation of Christ calling... even as to imitate the calling of the church—again for the sake of a redemptive “role play” to point the world to Christ and the church.

**2) However, and on the other hand:** Even if women were then envisioned as holding to a church “office” (say here “deacon-elder”-- we would expect writers of scripture, living in a man centered society—to use man-centered manners of communication but distinguished from excluding women—T

- Shouldn’t confuse “androcentric” (male centric) manners in communication that accord to the social norms as then prescribing an absolute principle/law..
- Example today: It is customary for people even today to say “Man” or “mankind” for “human” or “humankind” (though the practices is increasingly socially taboo).

And THERE ARE SOME CLEAR EXAMPLES OF MAN-CENTERED LANGUAGE APPLIED TO BOTH WOMEN AND MEN:

- Noteworthy that in the Old Testament every text that offers a "job description" for an office is presented in an androcentric manner, precisely as is found in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. This is so even where it is certain that the office in question did, in fact, permit women. This is the case, for example, with the office of prophet in [Deut. 18:14-22](#)<sup>L</sup> (cf. Deuteronomy 13) and the office of judge/elder in [Deut. 16:18-17:13](#)<sup>L</sup>.
- Especially illuminating is the foundational description of the office of "prophet" in [Num. 12:6-8](#)<sup>L</sup>: "When a prophet of the Lord is among you, I reveal myself to him in visions, I speak to him in dreams." In keeping with standard ancient practice, this "job description" is blatantly androcentric even though the Lord is addressing the concerns of the prophetess Miriam ([Exod. 15:20](#)<sup>L</sup>), who is mentioned in the immediate context.

**Raises the question: What does scripture reveal about the place (identity) and leadership roles of women in the church—both OT and NT...**

**Consider!**

**1) As to a woman's identity—there is no doubt that she is as a co-equal...**

In the words of the apostle Paul, *there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

- women fully share with men the image of God, they are joint heirs of the redemption wrought by Jesus Christ, and they are co-beneficiaries of the outpoured Spirit of God and of His gifts ([Acts 2:17-21](#))
- Paul exhorts all believers, male and female, to "let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs..." ([Col. 3:16](#))
- descriptions of particular women who taught spiritual truths to men in various private or less formal contexts (cf., e.g., Abigail, who rebuked David in 1 Samuel 25, or Priscilla who, with her husband Aquila, corrected the defective theology of Apollos in [Acts 18:26](#))
- There are no gender-related qualifications attached to the gifts listed by Paul in Romans 12:1-5!

One Application of this as then applied to roles even: a non-ordained woman is no less gifted and should have no less opportunities to serve and lead as any non-ordained man in the church when acting within her office of *Christian believer*. If a non-ordained man can read in the context of the assembly, so can women. If a non-ordained man can chair a committee, so can a woman. If a non-ordained man can teach, so can a woman.

**2) AS to Women Leadership in Redemptive History—again, it is unquestioned that women were allowed by God AND CALLED to play very significant leadership roles: A brief survey:**

Several Old Testament women are examples of this. More than once women are mentioned as leading the singing and dancing which were praises to God for some work He had wrought. Psalm 68 says, "The women that publish the tidings are a great host." Women also "ministered at the door of the tent of meeting." (Exodus 38:8.)

Rabbinical tradition shows seven prophetesses served the Hebrew people in special ways -- Sarah,

Miriam, Deborah, Hannah, Abigail, Huldah, and Esther. As prophetesses they proclaimed the will of God as official representatives.

In addition to their official duty as Prophetess of proclaiming God's word, these Old Testament women also performed other services. Miriam led singing and dancing in praise to God for Israel's deliverance; Deborah was a judge, religious counselor, and social arbitrator, and even led her people in a battle by which she won for them 40 years peace. Hannah -as the first to foretell Jesus' official name, i.e., Messiah, but she is best known as an ideal mother. Huldah interpreted the book of the Law to King Josiah and the high priest and influenced him to make a covenant with the Lord promising to keep God's commandments.

What was Junia doing that could possibly warrant imprisonment? At the very least, it opens up the possibility of some explicit leadership role to which the Roman authorities took offense.

<sup>1</sup> The OT context for women in ministry is also significant, if not here included. One thinks, for instance, of Anna, the OT prophetess Anne, an O.T. prophetess who recognized the Messianic child in the temple as Psalm 68 says, "The women that publish the tidings are a great host." Women also "ministering at the door of the tent of meeting" according to Exodus 38:8.

- women who were inspired by the Holy Spirit to author various portions of Holy Scripture, such as Deborah's song in Judges 5, Hannah's prayer in 1 Samuel 2, Mary's Magnificat in Luke 1, etc
- **Ex. 38:8**
- He made the basin of bronze and its stand of bronze, from the mirrors of the ministering women who ministered in the entrance of the tent of meeting.

**Throughout the New Testament scriptures, women are recognized and celebrated in their strategic roles within the apostolic church.**

- One thinks of the "elect lady" to whom John writes his second epistle, or the diakonon
- **Anna-- Luke 2:36** And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin, **37** and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day. **38** And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.
- There was Tabitha and Dorcas who made "coats and garments" for the impoverished widows in Acts 9.
- And who could deny the "leadership" role of Timothy's mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois in the religious instruction of children in the church, or the role that Priscilla had in "teaching" Apollos in Acts 18:26.
- eg God has so gifted certain women that they may prophesy and pray in church (**1 Cor. 11:5**<sup>L</sup>). As is implied by the example of Paul's own doctrinally rich prayers and what is said of prophecy in a text such as **1 Cor. 14:3**<sup>L</sup>, the prayers and prophecies of women would have been a rich conduit for the instruction of any member of their congregation, male or female.
- The diakonon, Pheobe, who was especially recommended to the Roman church so as to secure their help in whatever strategic ministry she was engaged in Romans 16  
I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church at Cenchreae, so that you may welcome her in the Lord as is fitting for the saints, and help her in whatever she may require from you, for she has been a benefactor of many and of myself as well.

Rom. 16:1-2

What strategic *leadership* role did Paul assign to Pheobe such as to warrant Paul's

admonishment to “help her” in Roman 16 and how might this be approximated in strategic leadership roles within our churches today?

- There were the Presbu/tidaß, or “elder-women” in 1Tim.5:2, and “widows” (if not the same class as “elder woman” of vs. 9ff and Titus 2:3ff) And their leadership role of the older women, either organized into boards or not, in 1Timoth 5:9ff such as to both disciple younger women but to also organize mercy ministry in and through the church.

Likewise, tell the older women to be reverent in behavior, not to be slanderers or slaves to drink; they are to teach what is good, so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be self-controlled, chaste, good managers of the household, kind, being submissive to their husbands, so that the word of God may not be discredited.

Titus 2:3-5

- depending on your interpretation of 1 Timothy 3:11, there was the strategic role of “deacons wives/deaconesses” who, regardless of how one understands this passage, were doing something so important as to warrant an examination of qualifications.
- One thinks of the women who “evangelized” the disciples concerning the resurrection of the Lord even after they found it difficult to believe (Luke 24:10).
- Likewise, Mary Magdalene, Johanna and Susanna and many other women “ministered” to Jesus with their possessions and through their services, both during His lifetime and after His death.
- And there were the women who joined with the apostles in the upper room for prayer and supplication in Acts 1:13.
- And there were the many strategic women significant enough to receive Paul’s explicit greetings and commendations in his pastoral letters to the churches, such as in the Roman’s epistle where we hear of Priscilla, Paul’s “fellow worker”(Rom.16:3), Mary “who labored much”(Rom.16:6), Junia who because of her labors in the Lord was a “fellow prisoner” with Paul (Rom.16:7), Tryphena and Tryphosa who also “labored in the Lord, together with Persis (Rom.16:12).

### **Scriptures in support of women in church leadership:**

- texts which have often been advanced in support of the right of women to hold church office.

**1Cor. 11:11** Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; **12** for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God.

### **Acts 2:17**

“And in the last days it shall be, God declares,  
that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh,  
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,  
and your young men shall see visions,  
and your old men shall dream dreams;

**18** even on my male servants and female servants  
in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.

**19** And I will show wonders in the heavens above  
and signs on the earth below,  
blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke;

**20** the sun shall be turned to darkness  
and the moon to blood,

21 before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day.  
And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

**Num. 11:24** So Moses went out and told the people the words of the LORD. And he gathered seventy men of the elders of the people and placed them around the tent. **25** Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the Spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders. And as soon as the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied. But they did not continue doing it.

**Num. 11:26** Now two men remained in the camp, one named Eldad, and the other named Medad, and the Spirit rested on them. They were among those registered, but they had not gone out to the tent, and so they prophesied in the camp. **27** And a young man ran and told Moses, "Eldad and Medad (Women) are prophesying in the camp." **28** And Joshua the son of Nun, the assistant of Moses from his youth, said, "My lord Moses, stop them." **29** But Moses said to him, "Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the LORD's people were prophets, that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!" **30** And Moses and the elders of Israel returned to the camp.

#### **Joel 2:28**

"And it shall come to pass afterward,  
that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh;  
your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,  
your old men shall dream dreams,  
and your young men shall see visions. **29** Even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit.

#### ○ **Pastor/Priest or Elders??**

- In the final analysis, however, perhaps the strongest positive argument for the inclusion of women in the eldership is the recognition that official leadership in the New Testament church appears to have been modeled most directly not on the Old Testament priesthood, which was restricted to physically perfect men from the tribe of Levi, but on the Old Testament eldership, which appears to have been remarkably unrestrictive. For this reason, the New Testament designates its leaders as "elders," rather than "priests."<sup>12</sup>

- In the Old Testament there was no tribal requirement for eldership/judgship (Othniel was a Kenizzite, and hence a convert of Edomite descent; Jephthah was the son of a prostitute), no health requirement (Ehud was handicapped), and, at least in the case of Deborah, no gender requirement.<sup>13</sup>

### **3) AS to Women in Leadership in post redemptive or "Church History" Again, the survey is quite significant:**

'There is no question that throughout church history, women played many and various prominent roles in church leadership and ministry as grounded in a study of scripture. For instance,

- there are many references to the work of "deaconesses as early as 100 A.D." The *Apostolic Constitutions* starts off the recommended prayer "concerning a Deaconess at the time of her appointment" as follows:

"O bishop, you shall lay your hands upon her in the presence of the Presbytery, and of the Deacons and Deaconesses, and shall say: 'O Eternal God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Creator of man and of woman, Who did replenish with the Spirit Miriam

and Deborah and Anna and Hulda (Ex, 15:20, Judg, 4:4, Luke 2:16, II Kgs, 22:14)...

- “Pliny mentions church *diaconissae* or *ministrae* in his 112 A.D. Epistle to Trajan;
- and also Ignatius, Hermas, Polycarp, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Theodore of Mopsuestia, and Chrysostom.”
- In the congregation of Chrysostom in Constantinople around 400 A.D. there were at least 40 “deaconesses” about whom Chrysostom once noted, “they all seemed to possess ... patience, immutable resolution, freedom of speech and lofty boldness” and “put to shame the enemies of God” and “delivered a deadly wound to the devil” while also bringing comfort to “those that fight for the truth.”
  - Deacon elders? Or Deacon Servant Leaders?
- As further noted by Philip Schaff in his renowned three volume history under the title, *History of the Christian Church*:

“The office of Deaconess which under the strict separation of the sexes in ancient times and especially in Greece was necessary to the completion of the Diaconate, and which originated in the apostolic age (cf. Rom, 12:1-13), continued in the Eastern Church down to the twelfth century...Its functions were the care of the female poor, sick & imprisoned; assisting in the baptism of adult women; and, in the country churches of the East, perhaps also of the West, the preparation of women for baptism by private instruction. Rom. 16:1f.

In the reformation era

- John Calvin, “wisely revived the New Testament auxiliary office of Deaconess. Indeed, in his *Institutes* (IV:13:19), while discussing I Tim. 5:9-15, Calvin stated that “Deaconesses were appointed...to perform the public ministry of the Church towards the poor....” That these women were “ordained” into a formal office of the church, albeit separate from male deacons, is also clear as by the instructions given by Calvin elsewhere in the *Institutes*. Calvin, for instance, states in his *Institutes* (IV:13:19) while discussing I Tim. 5:9-15, that “Deaconesses were appointed...to perform the public ministry of the Church towards the poor.... “

More recent history from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onward reveal a surprising host of “conservative” and “orthodox” Presbyterians who believed that there was warrant in Scripture to open the diaconate to women.

- IN his 1889 article published in the *Presbyterian Review*, B.B Warfield (hardly a man associated with the rise of Liberalism) himself advocated what he called the “revival of the office of deaconess” among Presbyterians, citing such Presbyterians as Thomas Witherow and W. Fleming Stevenson of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.
- Warfield’s Biblical warrant for the deaconess focused on Romans 16:1 and the ministry of Phoebe especially. Like even Calvin, Warfield viewed the Biblical office of “female diaconate” as “similar to and of like standing with the board of deacons.” Hence, there was in the New Testament one office, but two constituents albeit organized separately according to Warfield for reasons off expediency.

at the very least, this survey in church history should indicate something of the pro-active ways women were engaged in ministry throughout church history. And of course, whereas church history in itself doesn’t settle anything, it does raise some questions. What were they reading in Scripture to bring them to their conclusions and practices? What “ministry” roles did their practices assume that perhaps we have lost in our current context?

In sum, it is here acknowledged that there are plenty of significant leadership roles in the church which are open to both men and women who have leadership abilities. Just as in a godly home where a

husband delegates responsibilities to his wife and benefits from her leadership and abilities, so the elders may delegate significant responsibilities to both men and women based on their giftedness, less gender.

**Summary: And so from immediate context, and in context to redemptive history—this passage certainly doesn't disqualify the argument for ordaining women to the office of elder, even if it doesn't proscribe it either..**

**What IS clear is that God took the time to give instructions to women leaders in the church—and this is itself very instructive—as to assume as much according to God's plan....**

This all leads to the more pertinent question, *what does the scripture generally teach concerning ministry for women in the church and what might be some practical ways to work this out today in our local church*  
In short, putting aside for a moment this issue of ordination-- a non-ordained women is no less gifted and should have no less opportunities to serve and lead as any non-ordained man in the church when acting within her office of *Christian believer*.

- If a non-ordained man can read in the context of the assembly, so can women. If a non-ordained man can chair a committee, so can a woman.
- If a non-ordained man can teach, so can a woman.
- Again, in Christ there is "neither male nor female." It is only in the capacity of holding an office that exercises spiritual authority that our denomination recognizes a gender related distinction noted in the scripture as pertaining to a household economy.
- And so, in the church, if it doesn't require an ordained person, it doesn't require a man either!

**As for what the Elder women in Titus were to model and teach?**

**3** *Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, 4 and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, 5 to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled.*

#### **Behavior—**

- reverent and dignified... (note-self-control of tongue—not slanderer—what is slander—it is anything (whether you think it is true or not) that demeans the identity of another—something that "robs them" of their high standing with God or others...)
- Not "slaves" to much wine (note "much wine, not just "wine"—the key here is moderation!! "self-control" -- could be as much applied to access drink as access life—it's the issue of gluttony!! Thus... a life not absorbed)
- Giving their life away (vs. living for themselves) —"life on life"—to train younger women to control themselves
  - Note younger women only group not to be taught directly by Titus—
    - Moral purpose—sensible, chaste
    - Domestic vision—lovers of husband and children.. (calling
    - Workers of home\_- note "Mother's day sermon"—not necessarily "stay at home" but "puts interest of home ahead of herself-- \*Just as the husband puts the interest of his home/wife especially ahead of himself!!)

**Note)\_ working at home NOT "STAY AT HOME MOM" NECESSARILY!**

**BETTER TRANS:** “workers for the sake of the home” NRSV: good managers of the household

**1<sup>st</sup> century context—**there was no “privitization” “Public” dichotomy—households were the economic factories/office as it were—there was not such think as “leaving ones househol” in orde to go to work really!!

**OT Context:** Proverbs 31 “Idea” of the Godly Woman—clearly “workers for the sake of her home” is fitting...

**CROS REFERENCE:**

***1Tim. 5:13** Besides that, they learn to be idle, gadding about from house to house; and they are not merely idle, but also gossips and busybodies, saying what they should not say. **14** I desire therefore that the younger widows marry, bear children, rule the household, give no occasion to the adversary for reviling:*

AGAIN, REMEMBET THE CONTEXT:

Paul;S express concerns IS about laziness among the women of Ephesus. He says in verse 13 that they are idle and that many of them had become "gossips and busybodies." So naturally his remedy for their problem was to urge them to become women of virtue and integrity.

He instructed them to NOT become a leisure class, but to stay focused on working for the sake of her home... (rather than wasting time spreading rumors and silly talk) and to maintain order in their homes. In fact, the word used in this passage for "keep house" is the same word used for a ruler or master

*In the context of Creten decadence and especially given the demise of the “older men and women” in so far aging BADLY (in terms of righteousness and service in the church)—Paul instructs Titus to “put what remained into order” as then to include “teaching” “what is in accord with healthy Christian doctrine/teachings!!!*

*That is, Healthy doctrine ought to be measured by means of What accords to it or “Fits” it... i.e. healthy living!!*

*Such “healthy doctrine” that is evidence in healthy living” is then described here in Titus 2—again, we are especially interested in the instructions that are given to the older men and women!!!*

Application/Inferences:

The 19<sup>th</sup> century play *La Cocarde Tricolore* (1831) by Théodore and Hippolyte Cogniard portrays Nicolas Chauvin as excessively patriotic and naively blind in his devotion toward Napoleon. Chauvin’s devotion to France and especially

the *First Republic* will forever be castigated, not so much for his zeal, but for his misplaced zeal tragically assigned to an oppressive regime. *Chauvinism* is therefore associated with bad things—most especially, oppression—such as to demonstrate undue partiality for one's own group of identity resulting in policies and practices that express superiority toward those of another and perhaps “rival” group. A “chauvinist” then is more than an attitude, it is an attitude expressed systemically through organizational structures and social habits that result in the undue repression of someone else's freedoms and privileges. But of course, for those of us who woke up in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we are supposed to be getting beyond all of this, right? So what does it mean that today, the word “chauvinism” is STILL a part of common vernacular, and that it is almost exclusively associated with male attitudes and social habits that express superiority over women?

- 1) Women, aspire to be leaders in the church—all sorts of ways—
  - a. At CPC
    - i. WLB—
    - ii. SLB
    - iii. Team leaders
    - iv. Teachers
      1. Both adult and children
- 2) All—take note of how much effort was given in the apostolic foundation to take the interests of women seriously—all the more admirable given the cultural context in 1<sup>st</sup> century Palestine
- 3) Don't confuse the position of ordaining women to certain offices as a litmus test for orthodoxy or a high view of scripture—the “litmus” test as it concerns this issue is to maintain the principle of male-headship in both the home and church as per a dramatic role play of Christ and the church—
  - a. To be sure—a role play that wouldn't result in men demanding obedience or submission but rather men who are busy serving/giving/sacrificing for others as Christ does the church... And women then who respect/honor that in so far as living in submission to a man's sacrificial love and leadership—
  - b. And to be sure, if as a father and mother of a home there are woman and men ordained elders in a church—the fact that they work together, make decisions together, mutually support one another in the teaching and disciplining of the children is no count against the principle of male headship in the home no less than in the church...

***One could readily discern that this is merely a list of household instructions, or as also would be expected, household polity applied to the church in so far as there is one “periscope” (self-contained passage) that is addressing the “order” (polity) that Titus is to set forth in his church planting endeavors at Crete!***

If to BOTH maintain the redemptive role play of male headship AND allow for ordaining women to the office—here are some examples—all orthodox and highly conservative Christians...

Well/Stott—both ordination of women to the office of pastor and elder, as long as the Sr. pastor of the local church is male—as to model the role play of Christ and church even to the subordinate team of pastors... and where women pastors are especially dedicated to the teaching/pastoring of women..

Hugenberger—doesn't believe in ordination of woman pastors (word and sacrament)—but makes room for the ordination of lay ruling elders—again, wherein women elders are especially dedicated to the shepherding of women, as with partnering as members of the session in the macro-spherding of organization planning, etc.

Chrysostom- and other in the early church—ordained deacons—evn as it is difficult to know for sure if they were “elder deacons” or “servant leader deacons”

Others (like Calvin)- hold to the ordination of women deacons, if distinguished from the office of male deacons—again—to focus on discipleship of women and organization leas discipleship of men...