Following God’s Design for the Church

I Timothy 2:8-15

Introduction:
The historic interpretation of this passage has been the predominant view of the church for 2000 years. It wasn’t widely challenged until 1969.

“When opinions and convictions suddenly undergo dramatic alteration, although nothing new has been discovered and the only thing that has changed is the spirit of the age, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that that spirit has had an important role to play in the shift.”
- Harold O. J. Brown

“So what does the Scripture say?

1. Prayer is a primary ministry of the church and it is the responsibility of both men and women to pray.
- I Timothy 2:8-10

“If we do not invite the Biblical text to define church order, the intrusive culture will.”
- Kent Hughes
If you were to look at the lives of people whom God has used in the history of the church, you would find that prayer is a common link.

- Charles Spurgeon
- John Wesley
- Hudson Taylor

Prayer is to be a priority in the church and it is not just for women. It is for men.

Paul’s real concern is how we pray.

- Lifting up holy hands – with a clean heart.
- Without anger or disputing.

The emphasis is not on the posture of prayer, but the heart.

Verse 9 begins with “likewise” or “in the same way”, I want women to pray and here are some instructions for them.

- Women are to dress modestly.
- Women are to dress with decency – not pushing the limits of what you can wear.
- Women are to dress with propriety – good judgment.

Please note:

- The context of the passage is prayer and worship in the church. Think about where you are and dress appropriately.
- Remember that how a woman dresses says something about how she views herself. When you come to pray, remember God’s primary concern is your heart. Let your faith and love show in what you do.
The Bible isn’t saying that a woman should never braid her hair or wear jewelry. In Revelation 21:2, the picture of a bride beautifully dressed is used as a positive picture of the church. The context makes a difference.

II. The primary role of teaching and leading the church is restricted to men.  
I Timothy 2:11-15

In essence what Paul is saying in verses 11-15 is “I do not permit a woman to assume the office of an elder in the church.”

How do we get to that point and why does Paul say that?

First of all, the scripture says that a woman should learn in quietness and full submission. Quietness does not mean total silence. It’s an attitude of respect for the leadership of the men God has put in charge of the church.

Secondly, when Paul says, “I do not permit a woman to teach,” it is clear from the Scriptures that he does not mean all teaching.

- Titus 2:3-5 says older women are to teach younger women.
- II Timothy 3:14-15 is an example of women teaching their children.
- Acts 18:26 shows Priscilla and Aquila teaching Apollos in their home.
So what kind of teaching is he talking about? The answer is found in the next phrase – to exercise authority over a man.

The very next topic Paul will address in chapter 3 is the role of elders in the church. As we study 1 Timothy, we will see that elders have two primary responsibilities – to teach and to govern.

1 Timothy 5:17 says, “The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of a double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching.”

Why does Scripture give this command?
- It is not purely cultural.
- It is not because men are more talented, intelligent or gifted.
- The reason for this command is that it is God’s design.

Paul makes his appeal based on the order of creation. Adam was formed first and made to be the head of his wife. Eve was deceived when she acted alone, apart from the headship of her husband.

Verse 15 says that a woman will be saved through childbearing, which is either a reference to the birth of Christ in the promise given to Eve in Genesis 3:15 or a statement that a woman will be saved through faith in Christ by fulfilling her God given design typified by childbearing.
So what does this mean for the church?

1. It is a recognition that God has made men and women uniquely different, yet both are equal before God.
   Galatians 3:28

2. These differences are not meant to be limitations, but to bring order to the church and the home. In the church men and women are to serve, using their gifts, with as much freedom as the Scripture allows.

This is God’s design for the church.

There are many ways to pray. We can pray specifically for those that we know. We can pray for our neighborhood and school in a general way.