

POSITION OF GROUP 2

Biblical-Theological Evidence

- At creation man and woman were equal “in all things” (3T 484), with no female submission to male headship (Gen 1:26-28; PP 46). Only as a result of the fall was the *wife* under submission to her *husband* (Gen 3:16; PP 58).
- The Bible does not tell us why there were no females among the Levitical priests or the Twelve apostles, but it shows God using women in multiple ways as leaders of His people.
- The *highest* spiritual leadership authority in Israel was that of the prophet/prophetess. Deborah held the highest *spiritual* and *administrative* position in Israel (Judg 4:4-5), similar to that of Moses who was judge and prophet. Thus the Bible is open to gender inclusive leadership at all levels.
- Jesus made no reference to gender as a criterion for positions of leadership in the church. Rather the qualification insisted upon was humble servanthood (Mark 10:42-45).
- Paul described both male and female co-workers in exactly the same words when speaking of those who proclaimed the gospel and ministered to the churches (Phil 4:2-3; 1 Cor 16:16).
- The Spirit pours His gifts on all people, both men and women, for the fulfillment of the mission of the church in these last days (Joel 2:26-28; Acts 1:14; 2:3; Rev 14:6-12). One of these gifts is pastoral ministry (Eph 4:7, 11).
- Ordination is the church’s official commissioning in recognition of the Spirit’s call and gifting of pastors—male and female.

Misunderstood Passages

- 1 Timothy 2:11-15: This passage is not about the ordination of women to the ministry or a universal submission of women to male church leaders. It is about women learning quietly and respectfully from godly teachers.
- 1 Corinthians 11:2-17: Here men and women carry out the same leadership roles in the church (vv. 4-5). Paul's concern here is the shame brought when they dressed improperly. Neither this passage nor any other in Scripture speaks of any headship in the church besides that of Christ (Eph 5:23).
- 1 Timothy 3:1-12: The qualification of "husband of one wife" applies to both *elders* and *deacons* and *we know that there were female deacons* (Rom 16:1; Ellen White, RH, 7/9/1895). Thus this qualification concerns moral purity, and does not exclude women from being deacons or elders.
- Ellen White never used these passages to limit women in ministry and leadership. She wrote: "It is the accompaniment of the Holy Spirit of God that prepares workers, both men and women, to become pastors to the flock of God" (6T 322).

Conclusion

- Since there is no divine command opposing or supporting the ordination of women to the ministry in the Bible or in EGW, the decision should be based on evidence of the appropriate gifting from the Spirit (Acts 15).
- Since this topic is not part of our Statement of Beliefs, diversity of views and practice is acceptable. It would be theologically wrong to impose on the world church the interpretation of the biblical evidence supported by the majority of the delegates. Biblical truth cannot be decided by a majority vote.

- Ordaining women to the ministry does not violate any biblical teaching or mandate; therefore we should all move forward, in spite of our personal opinion on the topic, allowing divisions to decide the matter based upon the local circumstances in their territories.