“So Are All Women Pastors Deceived and Going to Hell?”

Dear Sue,

I really have to write you this. I met you at the Mind Games conference in Fall 2004 at my university and asked about the role of women in the pastorate. You gave a convincing view from the Scriptures that women are not allowed in the office of pastor. Even when I asked when a husband and wife team found a church and the Husband serves as Senior Pastor and the Wife as Co-Pastor, you said without apprehension “They are well meaning people, but they are deceived.” Honestly I could just cry in my soul. “Deceived” meaning that Satan the deceiver purposely deceived these people to start a church to carry on the mission of Jesus Christ and go out into the world and save those who are lost and edify the Church? I cannot fathom this is going on between Bible-believing Christians (or so they say) about saving souls and ministering to the Body of Christ. I do believe in the complementary natures of male and female, males serving as the primary heads of their families.

Maybe I come from another perspective, being raised where women did serve in ordained ministry. As I read on more of this, I read that various evangelical denominations (who do believe male and females are complementarily created, who oppose the ordination of homosexuals, same-sex marriages and abortions) for over a century have had women serve in ordained ministry.

What is the divine judgment of this: Will these “deceived” people inherit the kingdom of God or go to hell? Only “complementarians” will be saved? What? I don’t get it! Clear this up for me because souls depend on it!!

I am so sorry that my comments have caused you such grief. Had

I known your question came from your heart and not just your head I'm sure I wouldn't have responded so cavalierly.

I would gently suggest that you are making an unwarranted jump of logic here:

> *"Deceived" meaning that Satan the deceiver purposely deceived these people to start a church to carry on the mission of Jesus Christ and go out into the world and save those who are lost and edify the Church?*

No, starting a church and saving the lost is not the same thing as installing a woman as pastor and leader in a church. "Deceived" meaning, convincing oneself that the end justifies the means. That even though God says in His word, "I do not permit a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man" (1 Tim 2:12), somehow it's OK for a woman to be in pastoral authority over men in the congregation. I believe that God calls people to start churches all the time, to carry on the mission of Jesus Christ and bring the gospel message to the lost and edify the church—but only within the limitations He has set up according to His design for men and women. I can see that God would call a couple to start a church, but there's a big difference between working as a team to plant a church with the wife supporting her husband and contributing her gifts to the church, and the wife being a co-pastor. (Unless her pastoring [shepherding] is limited to women and children.)

As I have thought about your e-mail, I was reminded of Sarah, who believed that God was going to fulfill His promise of a son, but decided to help God out by doing things HER way. . . and the world's been dealing with the complication of Ishmael ever since. She was right to believe God for a miracle son, but she was wrong to go about it in the flesh. Women pastors are right to believe that God wants to do wonderful, marvelous things to build His kingdom, but wrong to go against and

beyond His restrictions in the Word.

I don't believe women being pastors is a salvation matter. It's an obedience issue. I know these women say, "But God called me to this position," and my response can only be, "God would not call you to something He has restricted to men in the Word." They are mistaken in how they walk out their calling. I know God calls women to shepherding ministry all the time; in fact, one of my spiritual gifts is pastor-teacher. But that means I am called to minister to women (and children would be OK too but that's not where God called me), not be in any kind of teaching position or authority position over men.

Does this help explain my position more?

Blessings,

Sue

P.S. Something God showed me last year about a big reason women are not to be pastors is Eph. 3:14-15

> *For this reason I bow my knees before the Father,*
> *from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name*

A much better translation of "family" is "the lineage descending from a common father" or "fatherhood." (The Greek word is *patria*, which is closely related to the word *pater* [father].) Male leadership and headship is an earthly manifestation of our heavenly Father's role of leader, protector, and provider toward all of us, and women pastors cannot reflect the fatherhood aspect of God. This is a minor, but nevertheless important, supporting reason for God's restriction on women from having positions of leadership over men. It's backwards.

Dear Sue,

I thank you for responding to the letter. It seems that "women CANNOT hold authority over men" sounds like a Universal Truth about women, therefore a bit contradictory. Why can women hold postions of civil authority and professional authority over men but not in the church. Doesn't the "order of creation" come to play in every facet of life on this side of glory? Women SHOULD not hold positions of authority over men in any shape form, or fashion if this is a UNIVERSAL TRUTH. For instance, a woman is president of a Fortune 500 company and "exercises authority" over five thousand men in her company. Why is that God, who in your position retricts pastoral authority to men, give Deborah, Huldah, Miriam, spiritual authority as prophetess. Yes, they were not in the priesthood which was restricted to men. But they were not called to be priests, but prophets. The old priesthood was done away with when Christ went to a cross. And how is that the gift of PASTOR is separated from the office of PASTOR? God's Word is spirit and life (Jn 6:63). What difference is the sermon if it comes out of the mouth of a man or a woman if it is thus saith the Lord, not Rev. Billy or Rev. Joan? God's Words have no gender distinction. Please explain.

> *Why can women hold positions of civil authority and professional authority over men but not in the church.*

Civil authority and professional authority are of the world; ecclesiastical authority is of the church. Two different realms.

> *Doesn't the "order of creation" come to play in every facet of life on this side of glory? Women SHOULD not hold positions of authority over men in any shape form, or fashion if this is a UNIVERSAL TRUTH. For instance, a women is president of a fortune five hundred company and "exercises authority" over five thousand men in her company.*

I would respectfully suggest that things work better if women

do not hold positions of authority over men, even in the world.

> *Why is that God, who in your position retricts pastoral authority to men, give Deborah, Huldah, Miriam, spiritual authority as prophetess.*

To be a prophetess is to offer the words of God to His people, but there is no authority inherent in the position. There are many places for women to serve in the body of Christ, and prophetess was/is one of them. As webservant for Probe Ministries, I send out e-mails informing people of new files on our website, offering the words of Probe to people in effect, but I have no authority over anyone either.

> *Yes, they were not in the priesthood which was restricted to men. But they were not called to be priests, but prophets. The old priesthood was done away with when Christ went to a cross. And how is that the gift of PASTOR is separated from the office of PASTOR?*

Because all of God's people need to be shepherded. Women are excellent at shepherding other women and children (a VERY powerful position of service!!) and we are called to do exactly that in Titus 2. There is a distinction between the gift of shepherding and the office of shepherding because God's way is to put men in positions of spiritual authority, so only men should have the office of shepherding.

> *God's Word is spirit and life (Jn 6:63). What difference is the sermon if it comes out of the mouth of a man or a woman if it is thus saith the Lord, not Rev. Billy or Rev. Joan? God's Words has no gender distinction. Please explain.*

God's Word DOES have a gender distinction when it comes to how things work in the church. We can't get around "I do not permit a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man." We

can’t get around the requirements for elder as being HUSBAND of one wife, which is a very definite gender distinction. We can’t get around the fact that Jesus chose 12 men as His apostles and leaders of His church, even though there were women who traveled with them and ministered to them in a service capacity.

There is also a difference between a person standing up reading scripture, which I would argue is open to both genders in a worship service, and a person standing up preaching a sermon, which is far more than simply reading scripture (“Thus saith the Lord.”) A preacher is making statements about God and about the meaning of His word from a position of authority. God says only men belong in that position.

I understand the sweetness and compassion of your heart that wants women to have as much spiritual power and access to people as possible, and bless you for it, but what do you do with the Biblical restrictions of women in positions of spiritual authority? How do you deal with 1 Tim. 2:12-3:7?

Dear Sue,

God bless you for your wisdom and conviction!! I totally admire that!! I guess there will be these FIERY (hopefully loving and prayerful) discussions within the Body of Christ til our Master comes back for His children. And in that day He will not come back for complementarians or egalitarians, Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, or Pentecostal-Charismatics. He’s coming back for us! And joyfully all of his children will be on one accord. Because in its totality, ministry of any form is not about our self-promotion, or egos. It’s about Him. And the fact that we can agree to disagree on the hermeneutics of the Scriptures without bashing each other because we want to serve our God in our total capacities (however we may view them!) is really evident that we do care for our brothers and sisters in Christ, and how we don’t want to marginalize them because some in Church History have abused

their authority and opressed, repressed, and suppressed the voices of God's daughters for their own gain. And let just say that, you may not hold an OFFICE Mrs. Bohlin, you surely have a PASTOR's heart (for women anyway)!!!

May God Richly Bless You and Yours,

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See Also:

- **Feminism**

Probe Answers Our E-Mail:

- "Should Women Be Pastors?"
- "I Have Some Questions About Women in the Church"
- "Your Position Against Women Pastors Is Outdated"