Women can speak… but can they pastor?

“Hello, my husband and I have been wrestling back and forth with the issue of 1) women speaking from the pulpit, and 2), women being pastors. We watched the message your wife spoke about women speaking in church, and it was very good and helped clear up a lot of things for us, but in the context of 1 Timothy, would the reasoning for it being okay for women to speak at church also mean it is acceptable for women to be Pastors? Personally, I feel it is okay for women to teach at church but not to have the position of pastors. However, since the "position of overseer" is mentioned so closely to 2:12 that says women should not teach or exercise authority over a man, it confuses me on those 2 things. Hoping to find some clarification from you. Thank you”

Thank you so much for continuing to wrestle. God invites us to wrestle, and like Jacob we leave that encounter transformed. (Genesis 32)

If it is ok for a woman to speak at church, does that make it ok for women to be pastors?

What is a pastor? Biblically, they are an overseer of people, a shepherd. Can a woman oversee people, protecting and guiding them? I think so. In fact I think every God believing mother should do just that toward their children.

Paul lists pastors in this short list of ministry within the body of Christ. “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers” Eph 4:11

So as you question if a woman can pastor, I think it is valuable to apply that same question to the rest of the list. Since Paul doesn’t make gender distinctions in the list, I figure we should not make gender distinctions either. Can they teach, evangelize, prophecy, and be sent (apostle)? Do we have any examples of women doing these things? Yes. There are women who prophecy. Junia (a female name) is listed among the apostles in Romans 16:7 but beyond that if an apostle is a sent one, Christ sent all believers with the great commission. I see no reason why a woman can’t be used by God to teach or lead someone to Christ (evangelist).

You asked about 1 Tim 2:12. The word for authority, authenteō, is not used anywhere else in scripture. It is a strange word - one who with his own hands kills another or himself. Some scholars suggest it was a sexual dominatrix thing. So yeah the women in the church should not be doing authenteo over men.

Question for you to ponder. Is there a way to minister to others without incorrectly usurping authority? If a man speaks the authority of scripture and walks in the power of the Spirit no one blinks an eye, but why can’t a woman do the same? Are men and women truly one in Christ? (Gal 3:28)

I am pro every believer walking in the power of God and ministering Jesus to others, regardless of gender. That said… If you don’t feel comfortable with a woman shepherd, that is ok. You get to choose who you allow to speak into your life.

I am very thankful for your question. Don’t hesitate to ask further questions. Sarah was very touched by your text. Blessings from the Fluitt family. – Pastor Chris Fluitt