

During the summer of 2014, I facilitated an Adult Forum at Oak Hills Baptist Church on the subject of Women in Church Leadership. For most churches, this seems to be an overly charged issue that is driven far more by emotion than Biblical knowledge or understanding. Most churches either pick a side (and segregate) or simply avoid the subject. Oak Hills is not one of those churches. I thank God for Oak Hills Baptist Church because it has repeatedly demonstrated an eagerness and ability to dialogue on the tough issues of the day with love and depth, in Spirit and Truth. Within our congregation is a variety of perspectives, but one Lord and Savior. We unify on the essentials and make room for differences on the non-essentials.

I have published and posted notes and audios from the Adult Forum on our website in response to requests. I pray that all who take the time to listen and do the study will be able to follow along and study the Scriptures with us. As a church, we did not set out to take a position. Rather, we sought to study the Word of God. The method used in this Adult Forum was one of compare and contrast. Essentially, we have studied the primarily debated texts and compared two specific ways of interpreting the texts – Complementarian vs Egalitarian.

It will be helpful for those who go through this study to do so in sequence. The first lesson establishes definitions, objectives and parameters for the whole forum. The five sessions follow the sequence of Scripture. On this issue of women in leadership, it is tempting to start with what the Apostle Paul wrote and then interpret the rest of Scripture through him. This is tempting because he clearly was writing to churches that had some issues regarding women. But, I don't think the Apostle Paul would want us to view the rest of Scripture through the filter of his letters. He would want us to see how his letters apply the truths of Scriptures he used – what we call the Old Testament. In order for us to understand what Paul wrote, we need to be able to see the whole of Scripture the way he did. So, we must look for continuity with the whole Bible and we must look for the good news. What makes the good news good is that it guides us to redemption, forgiveness and wholeness.

There are several presenters in this short series because I personally love collaborating with other gifted and knowledgeable teachers. They contributed in ways that were important and beyond what I could have done on my own. Thank you Debbie, John, and Christiana.

For those that open these documents, I hope that you are encouraged in your study of the Scriptures and that God moves your heart towards unity (which is different than conformity) and deepens your knowledge and use of Scripture. For those that take the time to listen, you will find much more information on the audios. We used a rather simple way of recording the sessions. As a result, there are some variations in quality and volume of the audios.

May God bless your study of Scripture and draw you closer to the work of the Holy Spirit.

Sincerely,
Paul Pankratz