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JOHN W. RAWLINGS SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

Women and Their Roles in the Church

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THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT

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Women and Their Roles in the Church, addresses the disagreement about the roles women are allowed to serve in at Faith Baptist Church. The problem is that congregants are disagreeing about what roles women are allowed to serve in at the church. This disagreement has led to people leaving the church and finding new churches.

The purpose of this study is to develop a small group curriculum to teach leading examples of women from the Bible. The purpose of the study would help expand the participants' understanding of what roles women are allowed to serve in at their local church. Through these lessons, the research participants should have a better understanding of what roles they can and cannot serve at their church.

The research method used in this study used various tools to gather data for the purpose of writing this thesis paper. These research tools included focus group discussions, questionnaires, and reflection journals. Future research can use this data or research design to conduct further research or teach their local church congregants about what roles women can serve at their church.

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Abbreviations

IRB *Institutional Review Board*

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Across the world, there is confusion about what roles women are allowed to serve in within the local church. There are two main sides to this discussion; both firmly argue for the restriction and freedom of roles that women are allowed to serve in their churches. This section of the paper will discuss a local church and its ministry context. Also, in this section, the problem and purpose statements are defined and understood. The research process and potential delimitations and limitations of the research project are explained, and the paper's thesis statement will be discussed.

Ministry Context

The ministry context of Faith Baptist Church will be discussed. The ministry context is essential because it gives further background information on the church and congregation discussed in this writing. The topics within this section that are addressed are the church's history, the church's location, and the church's demographic information. With this information, a better understanding of the problem presented at Faith Baptist Church can be further understood.

History

The Faith Baptist Church was founded in the late 1950s. The church has been a sect of the Baptist denomination of Christianity since its foundation. Since the church has been operating for over sixty years, numerous church pastors and members have come and gone. The current senior pastor of the church came into position when there was a merging of two local Baptist churches.

Unfortunately, the merger of Faith Baptist Church was due to the church being considered a dying church. At the merger, Faith Baptist Church's congregation was tiny and consisted mainly of older congregants. The previous pastor loved the church so much that he sought out the current senior pastor, and the two churches agreed to merge. After the merger, the previous pastor stepped down and became a current church member. The then-new senior pastor assumed the role of the pastor in the newly merged church and immediately recognized that the church needed some updating. He also changed the denomination from the Southern Baptist Convention to Independent Fundamental Baptist, also known as King James Version only church.

The first update made to the church was revamping the bathrooms. The next major update came after the church's congregation size started to grow under the leadership of the current pastor. In the second remodeling update to the church, the main meeting area of the church, lobby, and church pews were updated. Some of the reasoning for this growth is that another Baptist church closed down the road, and much of that congregation decided to become members of Faith Baptist Church. The church has also noticed growth in its numbers because of the more modern additions of the church, the pastor, and God allowing the church to grow. The recent congregational growth has allowed the church to buy the tiny house and land next to the church.

With that purchase, the church moved the excess items and the older teenager's youth class to the newly purchased house. Since the church acquired the property and the land next to them, it has grown to an average Sunday attendance of around two hundred attendees. This has made the church seek to build a bigger church on the available land that they had recently

purchased. The church plans to move the adults to the new church, while the small groups and children's ministry will stay in the current church.

Location and Demographics

The church's location is in the middle of two moderate-sized cities. However, both cities fail in comparison to cities like Cleveland or Toledo. One city is relatively small and has significant sections that are more rural than any actual city. The bigger city is made up of buildings, houses, and businesses. Only a tiny portion of this city has some rural outskirts.

Both cities can easily claim that their citizens would be considered of the blue-collar class. Both cities have a significant population considered lower than blue-collar. Many of their citizens could even be categorized as lower class as they are reliant on food stamps and social security for survival. Both cities struggle with crime, alcohol abuse, and drug abuse which increases the amount of crime within their borders.

Much of the reason these two cities have seen an increase in crime is because of the recession of 2008. The recession caused a few local factories to pause or completely shut down. Unfortunately, the recession hit both cities hard, and with the shutting down of local businesses that many people relied on, many of the citizens had to migrate to different cities to make a living. Some citizens could not afford these moves, which left them to regress further into poverty levels and become more reliant on governmental aid to sustain the cost of living. However, since the majority of the population of the two cities can be considered working families, the dominant political party and opinions of the populace align with the Republican Party.

The population of the two cities could be classified as predominantly Caucasian. This is not to exclude the fact that both cities have a strong presence of African Americans and Latinos. The citizens of both cities genuinely care about the core values of their beliefs, so for the most part, everyone minds their business and peacefully co-exists. Since these citizens care so strongly about their opinions, when someone threatens one of their core value beliefs, tempers do flare. Unlike most places, these two cities' citizens are not afraid to stand up for what they believe in, which is reflected in the local churches.

Faith Baptist Church has a good mixture of generations. The adults' ages range from their early twenties to late eighties. Most of the adults could be classified as elderly, though this is starting to change as a result of the younger adults inviting their friends and families to the church. With the church's shift in the adult generations, the church's youth ministry is becoming one of the strongest and largest that many congregants have ever seen. This has also caused a problem for the church since the church's size limits its full growth potential with the growing number of congregants and visitors.

Currently, the church's groups are dependent on the day and which services the church is meeting for. The church meets three times a week. The first service of the week is Wednesday night at 7:00 p.m. There is a preaching service for the adults, and the youth diverge in their Wednesday night youth groups. These Wednesday night youth groups consist of a toddler's class, an elementary to a middle school group, and then the high schoolers in the tiny house on the property next to the church.

On Sunday morning at 10:00 a.m., there is a Sunday Bible Study for the adults in the main auditorium. During this time, the youth also go into their small class groups for their age ranges. This time range on Sunday morning is not for preaching and is instead run by the pastor's

stepfather, who is a retired pastor, to further teach the adults about the Bible for a more in-depth explanation than the pastor usually gives due to time constraints. Also, this is the only time of the week for an additional small group of adults. This small group is geared toward single and married adults in their early twenties and thirties.

Once the Sunday Bible Study is over at 10:45 a.m., the Sunday service starts at 11:00 a.m. This service is geared more toward the visitors and seekers of Sunday morning. This is also where hymnal worshipping is done, along with the preaching by the senior pastor. Sunday morning service is also when the youth ministry is the strongest in number, which frequently impresses visitors of the church. The last service of the week is Sunday night at 6:00 p.m. Again, like the other services of the week, the church has the adults listen to the preacher preach, and the kids go to their youth classes for their age range.

The church itself reflects the two surrounding cities in that the church is composed mainly of the Caucasian race with strong Republican and Christian values. The church has an African American congregation member who is loved and involved in women's ministry. Other than this member, the only other members of the church who are not Caucasian are three of the Bus Ministry children who are African American. The congregations' genders are split in the fact that neither the female gender nor the male gender outnumbers the other. Faith Baptist Church's views align more with Complementarian views than Egalitarian views, which will be discussed later in this thesis paper.

With the church growing, some further changes are starting to impact the two local cities. Initially, when the current pastor took the position of pastor for the church, he was the only person of leadership employed by the church even though the previous pastor stayed at the church as a member. The current pastor's wife was in charge for a brief period until the pastor's

father-in-law was hired as the Youth Pastor and Associate Pastor. The church has two men holding the title of deacon, but neither are paid. One is an older gentleman who was an evangelist in his younger years, and the other is the pastor's brother-in-law.

All other positions in the church are volunteer-based and mainly ran by the pastor and his wife's family members. Other church congregants have tried to assume these different roles, but they get pushed out of these positions by the pastor and his wife's family members. But they run a tight ship, and their cohesion has allowed both the church and its ministries to grow both foreign and domestically. Unfortunately, the family members of the pastor and his wife have assumed influence over the church. It has caused several families to leave the church because of how some of these family members abuse their power. The church has also lost congregants to their restrictions of beliefs on what the female congregants can and cannot do within the church. One family that had a strong presence at the church left because one of their daughters felt called to become a preacher, and the pastor denied the calling based on the scriptures of 1 Timothy 2 and 3. This perplexity of understanding what women are and are not allowed to do in the church has caused tension and many congregants avoid discussing it.

Ministries

The ministries of the church seem to have some positive outcomes in the church and in the local communities. The ministries inside the church do pretty well. The men's and women's breakfast and Bible study do well because the attendance for the meeting times is usually high. They each meet one Saturday a month. The church's community outreach ministries are not very strong and lacking in quantity and quality. Every Tuesday, all are welcome for the visitation. Visitation is where church members visit the previous Sunday service visitors to speak to them

about Jesus and attending further services. Some of the men hold a prayer meeting before each service. In the prayer meeting, the men of the church meet in the pastor's office and say a few prayers for their illnesses and the illnesses of their loved ones. Some of the other ministries the church holds have already been mentioned thus far.

The youth ministry is the church's most substantial and thriving ministry. It is thriving because the church puts a lot of focus on the future generations of the church. The youth ministry has the smallest small groups and most teachers within the church. The youth ministry is also where the majority of community outreach for the church occurs. A few of the youth's ministries are a food pantry, prayers at the flag poles of the local community schools once a week, clothing donations, and witnessing. The witnessing is where some of the youth will take Gospel tracts and hand them out at local stores.

Finally, the church has and supports foreign ministries. The church's foreign ministry could be considered relatively strong for its size. However, the donations of the foreign ministry last year averaged around forty-five thousand dollars. While this seems a large sum, there were three hundred thousand dollars donated to other ministries in the church as well. Part of this could be because the church is building a new building. While this is higher than average, the difference in dollar amount shows that the focus is more on the church rather than the foreign ministries of the church. Other than the above-mentioned ministries that the church holds, there are no other regular ministries that the church focuses on besides random meetings for holiday meals for a chance for the congregation to fellowship.

Problem Presented

The problem at Faith Baptist Church is that there is disagreement on which roles women can serve in at the church. In the church, it is preached that both men and women are created equal. This idea is not always followed within the church. Both the adult Sunday school and Sunday sermon have a mixture between the genders, but this is not always followed in the youth programs. In some of the youth classes, the classes are taught coed, but some are segregated based on gender.

Based on 1 Timothy 3:12, the church has segregated classes so that only the gender of the class is allowed to teach that class. For instance, one group of classes had the idea of men teaching young boys how to become Christian men and the opposite for the females. It is not wrong for a woman to teach young boys how to become good Christian husbands, but when this idea was presented for this class, it was thrown to the side because only the like gender was allowed to teach these classes. Unfortunately, this segregation of the genders in the youth classes is not where it stops in the church.

The church's leadership consists of men solely based on 1 Timothy 2 and 3. Since only men are allowed to serve in church leadership, gifted women are set aside for smaller church tasks such as preparations and cleaning. Since the leaders of the church believe so heavily in the Scriptures condoning the submission of women and them not holding any authority over men, women are not given a chance to teach or preach unless it is in a youth class and to the girls. This contradicts the church's preaching that men and women were created equal. Since Galatians 3:28 gives equality to all Christians, the church's model of leadership leads to the church's women having limited means of serving the church and Jesus Christ.

Purpose Statement

This DMIN action research project aims to develop a small group curriculum to teach examples of leading women from the Bible. Eleven focus groups will be held where examples of leading women from the Bible will be discussed along with the Scriptures that restrict women from serving in church leadership roles. The idea of these focus groups is not to change the participants' minds or start any controversy within the church but to instead open the participants' minds to leading women of the Bible. Since the topic of women being leaders in a church is a sensitive subject, the goal is to use these focus groups to highlight examples of leading women of the Bible without imposing any significant theological or mind-changing ideas. Instead, the goal is to teach a small class curriculum on leading women of the Bible to provoke mindful thought on women's roles in a church and within the Bible.

Basic Assumptions

A few things can be assumed about conducting this research project in a more conservative Christian church. There will be eyes and ears watching and listening to the research being conducted to ensure that the research project does not interfere with the church's beliefs. The pastor will ask questions to ensure that the research project stays respectful of his parameters. It can be assumed that since there are already presumed assumptions of potentially negative effects on the research project, preparation can be conducted to do the research effectively and respectfully to the pastor's wishes. This is why it is important to not impose negative views on the church but instead stay neutral and respectful when conducting the research. As long as this is done effectively, the research project should be effective in provoking the thought of the research attendees.

It can also be assumed that this project may impact the more moderate congregation members. It will probably offer little change to the more conservative-leaning congregation members. With the church's conservative beliefs and views, it is assumed that this study will not provoke any significant changes within the congregation or church. The aim is to open the congregation's eyes and minds to biblical examples of leading women from the Bible. Hopefully, this will allow the church members to question whether they are using women and their spiritual gifts to their fullest potential.

Definitions

Some terms may not be apparent in every writing the first time reading through a paper. In this paper, there is no exception to this reality, so it is essential to offer definitions of words used in this paper that people may not have a strong familiarity with. Some keywords used in this paper are authority, Complementarian, deacon, Egalitarian, fundamentalist, patriarchy, and submission. These words are essential to this paper; therefore, it is important to clearly define them.

Authority – Authority is used in many different contexts in Christianity. Some standard terms that are often associated with authority are biblical authority and the authority of God. When discussing authority, John Piper and Wayne Grudem concluded, “The leadership structures of state, church, and home do not become meaningless even though Christ alone is the absolute authority over each one.”¹ Romans 13:1 gives good insight into how the Bible describes authority. In Romans 13:1, the Bible concluded, “Let every soul be subject unto the higher

¹ John Piper and Wayne Grudem, *50 Crucial Questions: An Overview of Central Concerns About the Manhood and Womanhood* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2016), 23.

powers. For there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God,” (King James Version).

Complementarian – In the debate on what roles women can have in the church, the Complementarians are on the more conservative side of the discussion. When discussing Complementarian beliefs, Carolyn Curtis James concluded, “Believe the Bible establishes male authority over women, making male leadership the biblical standard. According to this view, God calls women to submit to male leadership and take up supportive roles to their husbands and to male leaders in the church.”² Another definition can be seen as both genders are equal and benefit from one another.³

Deacon – Another role of the church is that of the role of deacon. Some churches have different classifications and job duties for deacons. However, a common understanding of deacons is understood by Cornelis Van Dam as being that “Deacons are those charged with ministry of mercy to show the love of Christ by providing for the poor and afflicted.”⁴ Mark Dever and Jonathan Leeman offer further insight on the clarification of the role of deacon by concluding, “The word *deacon* is a transliteration of the Greek term *diakonos*, which normally means ‘servant’ or ‘helper.’”⁵

² Carolyn Custis James, *Half the Church: Recapturing God’s Global Vision for Women* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 93.

³ Piper and Grudem, *50 Crucial Questions*, 18.

⁴ Cornelis Van Dam, *The Deacon: Biblical Foundations for Today’s Ministry of Mercy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2016), 7.

⁵ Mark Dever and Jonathan Leeman, ed, *Baptist Foundations: Church Government for an Anti-Institutional Age* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2015), 311.

Egalitarian – The other side of the debate on women's roles in the church is known as Egalitarian. When discussing Egalitarians, Carolyn Custis James concluded,

Believe that leadership is not determined by gender but by the gifting and calling of the Holy Spirit, and that God calls all believers to submit to one another. At the heart of the debate is whether or not God has placed limits on what women can or cannot do in the home and in the church, although the discussion inevitably bleeds into other spheres of life.⁶

Grudem offers a similar understanding of Egalitarian by concluding, “A movement that claims there are no unique leadership roles for men in marriage or in the church.”⁷

Fundamentalist – In Christianity, there are many different classifications for a denomination of Christianity or even Christians themselves. One such term that is often misunderstood is defined by Julie Scott Jones when she concluded,

This return to “the fundamentals” asserted a view that the Bible was the inerrant word of God; that believers should lead morally upright lives informed directly by scripture; that “true” believers should live separate lives from non-believers, else they may be morally and spiritually “corrupted”; and that scientific theories, like evolution, should be rejected.⁸

Patriarchy – In Christianity, men often are shown as having power over women in the churches and homes. Many people use the scriptures on the headship of the husband over the wife to defend this sense of control. This type of power of men over women in the churches and homes is called patriarchy. When discussing patriarchy, Alice Mathews concluded, “When that hierarchy has a woman under a man’s direction or rule, it’s called patriarchy.”⁹

⁶ James, *Half the Church*, 93.

⁷ Wayne Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth: An Analysis of More Than One Hundred Disputed Questions* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2012), 20.

⁸ Julie Scott Jones, *Being the Chosen: Exploring a Christian Fundamentalist Worldview* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2010), 17.

⁹ Alice Mathews, *Gender Roles and the People of God: Rethinking What We Were Taught About Men and Women in the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2019), 35.

Submission – The word submission usually has a negative connotation because submission means giving authority to someone else and making yourself lesser than they are. In Christianity, submission is not always viewed as being negative in the Bible. When discussing submission, Alan G. Padgett concluded, "Christian mutual submission is a free and loving act by which we take up the role of a servant for our brothers or sisters as a means of discipleship in Christ. This definition implies that the submission is not permanent, nor is it one-way."¹⁰ Another definition on submission is using the wife's gifts to follow her husband's leadership and to help carry through his wishes.¹¹

Limitations

In every research scenario, some limitations are placed on the researcher that is out of their control. Parameters will inevitably either be set on the researcher or come to unveil themselves while conducting research. Limitations are something that a researcher cannot control from happening, but they can try to place certain measures to prevent limitations from happening in their research. The following section will discuss the limitations expected for this research project.

Time

In preparation for this research, a discussion with the senior pastor at Faith Baptist Church was done in advance. In this conversation, it was revealed that the time that would be allotted for this research project is Sunday mornings at 10:00 a.m. with the young adult and

¹⁰ Alan G. Padgett, *As Christ Submits to the Church: A Biblical Understanding of Leadership and Mutual Submission* (Grand Rapids, MI: 2011), 41.

¹¹ Piper and Wane Grudem, *50 Crucial Questions*, 22.

married couples. The first limitations are that this group only meets once a week, and the time that would be allotted to this small group is less than twenty minutes. This is not a lot of time to do the small group sessions, in addition to having time for the attendees to ask questions.

Topic

The topic chosen for this research project is stigmatic in many churches worldwide. The senior pastor hesitated when discussing this topic as research being conducted in his church. Specific parameters were asked to be respected while researching the church. The largest being not starting a divide within the church and provoking negative feelings from the research attendees.

Group

The small group class is a limitation and a delimitation to this research project. The pastor decided that small groups of young adults and married couples would be the group in which the research would be allowed to conduct this research project. The age range of the participants in this study would range from eighteen years old to mid-thirties. With the church's average congregation size averaging around fifteen to twenty people in the group it can be expected that the small groups will be around ten to fifteen people.

Pastor

Another limitation that could potentially reveal itself is the pastor of the church. If he feels the research project crosses the parameters that he wishes to be respected, he could shut down the research project. It is essential to respect his wishes so the project may continue and

come to an end. With this said, this research study intends to discuss examples of influencing women and their roles in the Bible. The study is not designed to affect the attendees negatively but to instead provoke thought on the topic.

Delimitations

Since research projects have limitations either imposed on them or unveiled when conducting the research, it is essential to plan how to counter these potential limitations. To do this effectively, time must be spent on how to conduct research effectively with parameters out of the researcher's control. The delimitations that this research project has are as follows.

Topic

The topic is both a limitation and a delimitation. Since the topic is stigmatic, the research project needs to respect the parameters that the pastor has asked to be respected. This means that when discussing the individual women of the Bible in the eleven small group classes, it is important to teach equality of the subject and to attempt to eliminate any views that could be considered negatively. This is why careful consideration will be taken before each small group considering potential pitfalls.

Group

The pastor selected the group that was chosen for this research which will be conducted at the church. Considering this small group class of young adults and married couples makes a perfect age range for research. This group is the best choice for the research project because this

age range is the most progressive other than the church's youth. This group selected could potentially have the most success over any other small group choices at the church.

Thesis Statement

Since there is perplexity in the church on what roles women can serve, it is integral to look at what has been written to form one's own opinion. It is essential to research what others have written on the subject. It is more crucial to consult the Bible to help further form a decision on the matter. This writing aims to show the data found from the research and develop it into a well-written literature review. Once allowed to do in-person research, a session of small group lessons will be formed to give information to the small groups, not to alter their mind on the women's roles in the church, but more to provoke thought. If these small group lessons effectively teach the leading women of the Bible, then the disagreement of women's roles in the church may come to a further agreement amongst the church's congregation on what roles women are allowed to serve in the church.

CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Since there is disagreement in many churches worldwide on which roles women can serve in their churches, it is essential to ask, is it biblical to limit women from serving in all church roles? To answer this question, it is necessary to perform literature research and consult the Bible to discern the biblical model for women's serving positions in the church. In this chapter, the two views of this debate will be introduced, their viewpoints on women's serving roles in the church will be discussed, and examples they use to further their viewpoints will be divulged.

Literature Review

With churches being divided on women being allowed to serve in church leadership positions, two sides of the debate have come to light. Scholars refer to the two sides of the discussion as Complementarian and Egalitarian. When discussing these two groups of the debate, John G. Stackhouse, Jr. concluded, "Usually this discussion is conducted in terms of two polar opposites: patriarchy ('rule by the father') on one side and feminism ('advocacy for women') on the other."¹² Complementarians are known as the more traditional side of the debate on women's roles in church leadership. Egalitarians are known for the more moderate view on the discussion of women's roles in church leadership. They understand that there should be no restrictions placed on women from serving in any church leadership roles.

¹² John G. Stackhouse, Jr., *Partners in Christ: A Conservative Case for Egalitarianism* (Downers Grove, IL: 2015), 12.

Complementarian View

In some Complementarian Christian churches, men hold the leadership positions of the church based on the Scriptures of Genesis 1-3, 1 Timothy 2 and 3, 1 Corinthians 11 and 14, Titus 1:5-9, and 1 Peter 3:1-7. When discussing Complementarian Christian churches, Rachel Green Miller concluded, “In conservative Christian circles, many conversations about women and men start and end with authority and submission.”¹³ To further add to this, when discussing the Complementarian view, Piper and Grudem concluded:

We are persuaded that the Bible teaches that only men should be pastors and elders. That is, men should bear primary responsibility for Christlike leadership and teaching in the church. So, we believe it is unbiblical, and therefore detrimental, for women to assume this role.¹⁴

Many Complementarian churches also look and pay attention to the Scriptures for their beliefs and role restrictions in their churches. They also look at the church's history and see that many previous influential churches and Christian figures held these same opinions throughout the church's history. When discussing Galatians 3:28, Lewis Johnson, Jr. concluded, “It appears that none of the major teachers in the history of the church thought Galatians 3:28 abolished the male-female role distinction in marriage or the church.”¹⁵ Because Complementarian churches believe that only men are allowed to lead in specific leadership roles based on the above Scriptures, women are asked to serve the Lord in other serving roles in the church, excluding Pastor, Elder, and Deacon. In these churches, women are often not allowed to teach adult men because it could be perceived as women trying to exert authority over men, which is supported

¹³ Rachel Green Miller, *Beyond Authority and Submission: Women and Men in Marriage, Church, and Society* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing Company, 2019), 29.

¹⁴ Piper and Grudem, *50 Crucial Questions*, 21.

¹⁵ Lewis Johnson, Jr., *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021), 153.

by the Scripture of 1 Timothy 2. When discussing Complementarian churches and women teaching adult men, Lucy Peppiatt concluded:

The Catholic and the Orthodox Churches still have a male-only priesthood, and Catholic priests are referred to as father. Certain Protestant denominations exclude women both from pastoring and from teaching or preaching altogether. Others allow women to lead if a man is placed over her or permit women to teach only women and children.¹⁶

As mentioned, in many Complementarian churches, as long as the doctrine of the above Scriptures is not threatened, and women show no sign of having authority over men, women can serve in many different roles. When discussing 1 Timothy 2 and women having authority over men, Mathews concluded, "This text is the basis on which Complementarians prohibit women from preaching and teaching the Bible and doctrine in the church."¹⁷

In many Complementarian churches, women are happy to follow and serve in subordinate roles and never raise a fuss about it. Instead, these women seem satisfied with caring for their children and the church's children, and they appear to be happy to serve in lesser roles and allow the men to hold the more significant positions. When discussing this, Thomas R. Schreiner concluded, "Not all ministries that are valuable are public or official ministries. Providing food and support for others is crucial, and this ministry should not be scorned, even if one does not get public recognition for it."¹⁸ Many families that attend Complementarian churches grew up in these similar churches. Thus, when they become adults, they fall in line with their church's beliefs and continue the process of instilling their beliefs in their children. When discussing Christian parents instilling Christian ideologies into their children, George W. Knight III concluded, "The care and management of the home and children is another area in which

¹⁶ Lucy Peppiatt, *Rediscovering Scripture's Vision for Women: Fresh Perspectives on Disputed Texts* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2019), 10-11.

¹⁷ Mathews, *Gender Roles and the People of God*, 101.

¹⁸ Thomas R. Schreiner, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021), 207.

Christians need to implement biblical principles carefully.”¹⁹ Problems begin to present themselves when a church congregant or congregation begins to question the church’s doctrine on the submission of women from serving in church leadership. Shannon Smythe concluded, “Without a doubt, the discussion of women in ministry has divided many well-meaning Christians throughout history, making this an issue that can further isolate and polarize those in the church who disagree on the topic and arrive at differing conclusions.”²⁰

Egalitarian View

The opposite view on roles for women in the church is the Egalitarian view. The authors who hold an Egalitarian view believe that women should be allowed to perform every role in the church. This is shown by Hans Küng concluding, "The gospel contains enough pointers for women not only to be assured of their own dignity in general but also on their own rights to participate in all spheres of church and society, rights which in no way fall short of those of men."²¹ The same Scriptures of Genesis 1-3, 1 Timothy 2 and 3, 1 Corinthians 11 and 14, Titus 1:5-9, and 1 Peter 3:1-7 that Complementarians use to argue their beliefs on role restrictions for church leadership are used by Egalitarians to argue for equality in church leadership positions. Egalitarians feel that the examples from the Bible of female leadership and the fact that Paul showed women as coworkers helping him build the new churches show further validity to their beliefs on women's roles in church leadership.²² Some of these churches feel that submission from the Bible has been taken out of context and its original meaning is an act of being humble

¹⁹ George W. Knight III, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021), 207.

²⁰ Shannon Nicole Smythe, *Women in Ministry: Questions and Answers in the Exploration of a Calling* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2015), 2.

²¹ Hans Küng, *Women in Christianity* (New York, NY: Continuum, 2005), 94.

²² Mathews, *Gender Roles and the People of God*, 90.

towards one another and not holding authority over one another.²³ They also believe that submission and authority were never meant to have a negative connotation and that the only real submission and authority were meant towards God.²⁴

The Egalitarian view argues that women should be allowed to serve in every role based on equality. They look at the same Scriptures as the Complementarians but delve into the Scriptures and use the examples of leading women from the Bible to support their premises of equality for church leadership roles. Egalitarian churches look at other examples to further their concept of equality, including marriage, Adam and Eve, how women were used in the Bible, and the Scriptures used to impose submission of women in both the family and church. They also look at the examples of God using women in leading roles in the Old Testament and how Jesus did the same in the New Testament to support their ideas of equality in their churches. Interestingly, both sides of this discussion start their arguments with the Scriptures of Genesis 1-3. Egalitarians consider Adam and Eve to be created equally in all things, including their marriage. The premise for this is to show that in Adam and Eve, God created a marriage of equality, which should transition into all realms of a faithful Christian.²⁵

The feeling that men and women are both spiritually called to God's work is shared in this view.²⁶ The view of submission in the churches is not towards gender but towards lifting each other up to worship God and further God's callings.²⁷ Judges 4 and 5 show an example of this in the example of how Deborah used Barak to lead the Israelite army. Also, the true intention of God's creations was equality. God will restore the true relationships of His creation. They will

²³ Miller, *Beyond Authority and Submission*, 21.

²⁴ Ibid., 21.

²⁵ Peppiatt, *Rediscovering Scripture's Vision for Women*, 107.

²⁶ Smythe, *Women in Ministry*, 12.

²⁷ Ibid., 14.

share in the interests of one another rather than creating a hierarchy amongst one another.²⁸

There is a shared understanding that these churches have no room for hierarchy. Instead, men and women were created equally and should work equally to serve the Lord.²⁹ Both sides of the debate agree and have a shared understanding of Adam and Eve. Both sides agree that there was equality in their relationship from the creation of God. The difference in understanding Adam and Eve's relationship comes from understanding their relationship's hierarchy.

Adam and Eve

In the Scriptures of Genesis 1-3, the creation of Adam and Eve is recorded. When discussing the creation and Adam and Eve, Raymond C. Ortlund, Jr. concluded,

While Genesis 1 teaches the equality of the sexes as God's image-bearers and vice-rulers on the earth, Genesis 2 adds another, complex dimension to biblical manhood and womanhood. The paradox is this: God created male and female in His image equally, but He also made the male the head and the female the helper.³⁰

Some Egalitarian churches point to Genesis 1:26 as a basis of equality in the creation of man and woman: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (KJV).³¹ Some Complementarian churches like to emphasize man's authority over women from the examples of Genesis 2:19-20, 23. Since Adam named both God's creations and Eve, men have authority over women.³²

When discussing Adam and Eve's marriage, Ortlund concluded, "In the partnership of two spiritually equal human beings, man and woman, the man bears the primary responsibility to

²⁸ Stackhouse, *Partners in Christ*, 48.

²⁹ Ibid., 156-157.

³⁰ Raymond C. Ortlund, Jr., *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021), 153.

³¹ Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced are in the King James Version (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2016).

³² Miller, *Beyond Authority and Submission*, 78.

lead the partnership in a God-glorifying direction.”³³ The authority in marriage was Adam over Eve before sin entered their relationship.³⁴ Both Complementarians and Egalitarians emphasize man and woman being created equal in Genesis 1:26. Egalitarians point out that the context of the creation of Adam and Eve found in Genesis 1-3 must be considered to understand Adam and Eve fully.

When discussing the context of Adam and Eve in the Scripture of Genesis, Pauline Kollontai concluded, “The Creation story in Genesis is said to demonstrate that Adam and Eve are identical in their human nature, thus making them equal as human beings.”³⁵ Egalitarians point out that when looking at why Eve was created, one can see that God never meant for Adam to have authority over Eve. Instead, they believe that Eve was created because God wanted Adam to have a companion and not be alone: “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him” (Gen. 2:18, KJV). Eve was created so Adam would no longer be alone and that Adam could have a helper and companion.³⁶ A Complementarian view of Genesis 2:18 points out that Eve is shown as Adam’s helper and not Adam’s equal in this piece of Scripture.³⁷

In Genesis 2:21-22, God created Eve using a rib from Adam. As some Egalitarian authors show, there is vital information in the relationship that people can gather from looking at the creation of Eve from Adam. The reason is that God could have created Eve by using the flesh or bone from anywhere else on Adam’s body. However, God chose to use Adam’s rib because of its

³³ Ortlund, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 91.

³⁴ Mathews, *Gender Roles and the People of God*, 26.

³⁵ Pauline Kollontai, “Contemporary Thinking on the Role and Ministry of Women in the Orthodox Church,” *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 15, no. 2 (May 2000): 166.

³⁶ Mathews, *Gender Roles and the People of God*, 144.

³⁷ Ortlund, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 98.

location. The rib is placed on the side of the human body, so God decided to use Adam's rib and not a piece of flesh from Adam's back, a bone from Adam's back, or the opposite. It shows the symbolism of God's original intention for their relationship. God choosing to use Adam's rib symbolizes that Eve was created to be by his side as a companion and helper, not a subordinate for Adam to have authority over, but to show equality in Eve's creation from Adam.³⁸ Wendy Alsup offers an opposite view, concluding, "While Adam was given the ultimate responsibility to rule the earth, Eve was charged to help him as he fulfilled his responsibility. Thus, the relationship is one of complementing roles, where Adam leads under the authority of God while Eve follows Adam, helping him to fulfill his God-given responsibility of stewardship."³⁹

Also, when looking at Adam and Eve's marriage, the Egalitarian authors point out the equality found in the Scripture of Genesis 2:24, which reads, "man shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh" (KJV). Again, in Genesis 2:24, the symbolism of equality is that Adam and Eve's marriage joined their flesh and souls. Egalitarians point out that this does not leave room for any submission or authority unless one examines the relationship between man and woman as a form of lifting one another up instead of one holding position over another. Complementarians acknowledge the headship that was created in Adam and Eve's relationship.

Both Egalitarians and Complementarians agree that God's original intention for the relationship of man and woman was altered by Adam and Eve's sin found in Genesis 3. The Egalitarian authors believe that no authority was implemented in Adam and Eve's marriage. Egalitarians further consider the authority in Adam and Eve's relationship never came into place

³⁸ Miller, *Beyond Authority and Submission*, 29.

³⁹ Wendy Alsup, *Cultural Engagement: A Crash Course in Contemporary Issues*, ed. Chatraw, Joshua D. and Karen Swallow Prior (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2019), 101.

until the Fall in Genesis 3.⁴⁰ Complementarians feel that the fall altered the relationships between man and woman forever, internally and externally.⁴¹

In Genesis 3:12, Adam tried to blame Eve by saying, “she gave me of the tree, and I did eat” (KJV). From this point on, the relationships between men and women would never be how God originally intended. To further this point, the Egalitarians feel that Adam and Eve’s relationship was altered from the Fall but is reestablished through Jesus to their original intention of equality.⁴² Complementarians share the same understanding. When discussing Jesus, reestablishing the original intentions for man and woman, Eric Mason concluded, “Jesus is how everything will be restored.”⁴³ Since both sides of the debate try to prove their views by using the examples found in Adam and Eve’s relationship, it is essential to look at the other Scriptures that both sides use to further their arguments.

Other Scriptures

Besides the Scriptures of Genesis 1-3, Complementarian churches use the Scriptures of 1 Timothy 2 and 3 and 1 Corinthians 11 and 14 to show support for man’s authority over women and the reasoning for women only being allowed to serve in specific roles in their churches. Complementarian authors try to justify limiting women from certain positions by only discussing certain verses of the above scriptures to prove their points. Only men have the responsibility of these offices.⁴⁴ One instance of this is shown in 1 Timothy 2:12, which Complementarians use to

⁴⁰ Mathews, *Gender Roles and the People of God*, 26.

⁴¹ Alsup, *Cultural Engagement*, 106.

⁴² Smythe, *Women in Ministry*, 56.

⁴³ Eric Mason, *Manhood Restored: How the Gospel Makes Men Whole* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2013), 42.

⁴⁴ Piper and Grudem, *50 Crucial Questions*, 39.

support the restriction on women's rights to church leadership. When discussing this and the context of 1 Timothy 2 Mathews concluded, “The more immediate context of 1 Timothy 2:12 is the whole of chapter 2.”⁴⁵ Therefore, looking at the above Scriptures is essential to understand the Complementarian and Egalitarian views better.

1 Timothy 2

In the Scriptures of 1 Timothy 2, Complementarian churches use verse 12 to show why women are not allowed to serve as pastors or ministers. These churches point to the fact that Paul says women should not teach or have authority over a man (1 Tim. 2:12). It is argued that included in the Scripture of 1 Timothy 2, Paul is disclosing that women are not to hold any position that allows them to teach, preach, or have a position of authority over men.⁴⁶ Also, in verses 13 and 14, Paul further shows the reasoning for not allowing women to hold these positions. It is pointed out that since Eve was deceived and Adam was not (1 Tim. 2:13-14), women could be easily deceived by false teachers and, therefore, cannot be trusted to hold such positions. When discussing Eve’s deception, Philip H. Towner concluded, “v. 14 not only reminds women of their complicity in the fall and of the present unfinished nature of Christian existence, but it does so in a way that aptly illustrates the deception of wives/women in Ephesus by false teachers (2 Cor. 11:3).”⁴⁷

Both Complementarians and Egalitarians look at the context of why Paul wrote this letter. When discussing the intent of 1 Timothy, Schreiner concluded, “Paul wrote 1 Timothy to

⁴⁵ Mathews, *Gender Roles and the People of God*, 99.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 101.

⁴⁷ Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus: The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006), 201.

counteract a specific situation in the life of the church.”⁴⁸ Egalitarian churches point out that in 1 Timothy 1 and 2, Paul warns Timothy about women spreading false teaching.⁴⁹ Some Egalitarians feel that 1 Timothy 2:12 does not limit women’s rights to teaching or authority in the churches, and they use the example of Priscilla in Acts 18:26.⁵⁰

1 Timothy 3

In 1 Timothy 3, Complementarian churches show that women do not qualify for the authority roles of bishops and deacons. When discussing 1 Timothy 3, Schreiner concluded, “Many Complementarians are persuaded that women were not deacons. Unfortunately, the text is unclear, so certainty is precluded, and we are limited to a study of two verses!”⁵¹ In contrast to this quote by Schreiner, Peppiatt concluded, “There is now a growing number of scholars who argue that Paul is referring both to male and female deacons here and also could be referring to women as overseers or bishops as well.”⁵² They do this by using the examples of 1 Timothy 3 that Paul showed for these roles as being gender-specific to *man* (1 Tim. 3:1-12).

The context of 1 Timothy shows that both men and women were acting unruly, giving Paul a reason to instruct Timothy to impose these certain restrictions in the church of Ephesus in his letter of 1 Timothy.⁵³ They also argue that 1 Timothy 3 was written to help use Paul’s status

⁴⁸ Thomas R. Schreiner, *Women in the Church: An Interpretation and Application of 1 Timothy 2:9-15*, 3rd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 122.

⁴⁹ Mathews, *Gender Roles and the People of God*, 104.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Thomas R. Schreiner, *Two Views on Women in Ministry*, ed. Stanley N. Gundry and James R. Beck (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 282.

⁵² Peppiatt, *Rediscovering Scripture’s Vision for Women*, 132-133.

⁵³ Peppiatt, *Rediscovering Scripture’s Vision for Women*, 102.

in the churches to help strengthen Timothy's leadership in the Ephesus church.⁵⁴ Egalitarians feel that even if one does think that 1 Timothy 3 restricts these roles to only men, it doesn't always mean that men only fit the description of 1 Timothy 3 and should be allowed to serve in these roles exclusively.⁵⁵

1 Corinthians 11

From the Scriptures of 1 Corinthians 11 and 14, Complementarian churches show further support for their beliefs of disallowing women to serve in specific church roles. In 1 Corinthians 11, Complementarian churches look at verses 3-16. In 1 Corinthians 11:3, the argument for a man being over a woman is made. Specifically, by stating that the head of the woman is the man (1 Cor. 11:3), men have *headship* over women and, therefore, authority over women.⁵⁶

Egalitarian churches, again, look at the full context of the Bible and the purpose surrounding Paul's writing of 1 Corinthians and notice that the churches of Corinth were performing immoral acts. Therefore, this is why Paul, again, imposed these restrictions on the church of Corinth. Egalitarians view headship as an order for men to lift women up rather than to keep women down.⁵⁷ This is in contrast to Complementarians feeling that a husband's headship in the marriage of the home transitions into the church.⁵⁸

Complementarian churches point out that in 1 Corinthians 11:5-16 women were praying and prophesying in dress and manner that was not affirming the headship of the male church

⁵⁴ Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 213.

⁵⁵ Miller, *Beyond Authority and Submission*, 137.

⁵⁶ Mathews, *Gender Roles and the People of God*, 97.

⁵⁷ Sarah Sumner, *Men and Women in the church: Building Consensus on Christian Leadership* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 189.

⁵⁸ Piper and Grudem, *50 Crucial Questions*, 21.

leadership.⁵⁹ 1 Corinthians 11, however, does not place a total silence on women in churches.⁶⁰ Egalitarians show that this was not Paul imposing restrictions on the Corinthian women but on the Corinthian men.⁶¹ When discussing 1 Corinthians 11:13-16, Peppiatt concluded, “The connection between these two ideas (headship and the order and purposes of the creation of man and woman) are the reasons given in this passage for why a woman should wear a head covering and why a man should go bareheaded.”⁶²

1 Corinthians 14

In 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, Complementarian churches support women's subordination and submission in their churches.⁶³ Complementarian churches point out that Paul is shown allowing women to pray and prophesize in the church.⁶⁴ Again, Egalitarians point out that it is easy to see how Complementarian churches feel this way when just looking at these verses alone instead of considering the examples of leading women found in both Testaments of the Bible. When discussing this and how Jesus used women in His ministry Teny Pirri-Simonian concluded, “After Jesus commissioned his disciples to go and teach (Matthew 28:19), the women who had accompanied Jesus went with some of them. Mary Magdalene went to Ephesus, where she continued her mission until her death.”⁶⁵ Egalitarian churches feel that readers of the Bible need to look at the context of the Scripture and Bible. They compare the culture of the Scripture

⁵⁹ Piper and Grudem, *50 Crucial Questions*, 42.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 41.

⁶¹ Peppiatt, *Rediscovering Scripture's Vision for Women*, 56.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Mathews, *Gender Roles and the People of God*, 98.

⁶⁴ Piper and Grudem, *50 Crucial Questions*, 41.

⁶⁵ Teny Pirri-Simonian, “Prophetesses, Martyrs, Saints – Roles of Women in the Church Through the Ages,” *The Ecumenical Review* 60, no. 1–2 (Jan – Apr 2008): 64.

to today before forming an opinion on a matter. Egalitarians show this by discussing examples of Jesus and noting that Jesus had women disciples, befriended women, and used them as leaders and builders of the Kingdom of God.⁶⁶

Complementarians and Egalitarians show that the context of 1 Corinthians 14:34-34 showcases that Corinthian women were speaking during the lessons and asking questions during the sermon, which was not normal for women to do in a time of a heavily dominated male culture. They were disrupting the male leadership of the Corinthian church.⁶⁷ They also feel that the reason that Paul wrote these verses was to limit people from disrupting service.⁶⁸

Complementarians note that in both 1 Corinthians 11 and 14 Paul thinks that women were disrupting the church and not acknowledging the church's male leadership.⁶⁹ In contrast to this opinion and when speaking on the context of 1 Corinthians 14, a well-known Complementarian named Gordon D. Fee concluded,

This is fully in keeping with what we meet later in 1 Corinthians 14, where Paul variously says that “*all* speak in tongues” (1 Cor 14:23), that “*all* may prophesy, one by one” (1 Cor 14:29), and that when they assemble, “*each one* of you has [some participatory role]” (1 Cor 14:26). No distinction is made between men and women in these matters, and our present text makes it certain that the *all* means what we should expect it to mean: that women and men alike participated in verbalized expressions of worship in the early house churches.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ James, *Half the Church*, 101.

⁶⁷ Piper and Grudem, *50 Crucial Questions*, 42.

⁶⁸ Mathews, *Gender Roles and the People of God*, 110.

⁶⁹ Piper and Grudem, *50 Crucial Questions*, 42.

⁷⁰ Gordon D. Fee, *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity without Hierarchy*, ed. Ronald W. Pierce and Rebecca Merrill Groothuis, 1st ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 148.

Women of the Bible

Both views feel that God and Jesus used women to fulfill their missions and ministry in the Old Testament and New Testament. When looking at examples of women leaders in the Bible, Complementarians focus on why these women were exceptions or instances where God had no men to step up. One example of this is found in Deborah, the prophetess and Judge of Israel is shown as an exception and also shows how Barak and the other Israelite men were weak and not worthy of leadership.⁷¹ Or other biblical examples of women leaders were unusual examples from the Bible, so these examples only work for unusual times.⁷² Also, each instance of these women holding their positions in the Old Testament never showed them as qualifying for the office of a priest found in the Old Testament.⁷³ In contrast to that, in 2 Timothy 3:16, the Bible says, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (KJV). With that being said, wouldn’t stating that these biblical examples of women leaders were exceptions or not true leaders imply a level of incorrectness to the Bible? But, just like any other publication, there is always room for interpretation. Inspiration from God can come in many forms and understandings.

Old Testament

Examples of godly chosen women are numerous within the Old Testament’s verses. Examples of leading women chosen by God include Sarah, Shiphrah and Puah, Miriam, Deborah, Esther, Ruth, Huldah, the Proverbs 31 woman, the daughters of Zelophehad, and many

⁷¹ Piper and Grudem, *50 Crucial Questions*, 44.

⁷² Mathews, *Gender Roles and the People of God*, 33.

⁷³ Piper and Grudem, *50 Crucial Questions*, 45.

more. These women were not only used as leading women by God in the Old Testament, but their life decisions had tremendous results. Therefore, it is essential to look at a few of these women that the Egalitarian authors use to further their support of women serving in all church roles.

Miriam

Miriam is known mainly as the sister of Moses in most churches of Christianity. However, Miriam is shown in the Old Testament as much more than just the sister of Moses. For example, the Scripture of Exodus 15:20 refers to “Miriam the prophetess” (KJV). Miriam was also referred to as a leader in Micah 6:4.⁷⁴ She was also in such a position that she could question her brother Moses (Num. 12:1).

Miriam was important enough that the people in the story of Exodus and Numbers did not move on until she was able to return to camp (Num. 12:15). Even though Miriam is often outshined by her brothers, Moses and Aaron, it is essential to note that the Bible gives quite the opposite impression of Miriam and shows that she was not just an ordinary woman. Instead, Miriam was a leader who was given a chance to be used and judged by God, just as her brothers Moses and Aaron (Num. 12:4-6). God used Miriam, and she further aided her brother Moses in helping with the Israelite's exodus from Egypt.

Deborah

Deborah would take first place if there were an award for the most discussed woman of the Old Testament by Egalitarian authors. Deborah's examples of leadership are highly discussed

⁷⁴ Miller, *Beyond Authority and Submission*, 89.

to further their points on women in the church. Deborah is found in the Scriptures of Judges 4-5. In these verses, Deborah is referred to as a judge.⁷⁵ She was also referred to as a prophet.⁷⁶

Deborah was also depicted as a military leader (Judg. 4:6).⁷⁷ It is hard to discount that Deborah was a significant woman that God used in many different roles with the given information. Complementarians feel that when God used women it was not God instilling these women's traditional roles that God kept separate from the men of the Old Testament.⁷⁸ When discussing this factor and Deborah, Linda L. Belleville concluded, "She assumed a variety of leadership roles, including 'prophet' (Judg 4:4, 6-7), 'judge' (Judg 4:5) and 'mother of Israel' (Judg 5:7)."⁷⁹

New Testament

Within the Christian churches, the women of the New Testament seem to be more highly discussed than those of the Old Testament. This may result from most of their stories intertwining with Jesus and His ministry. Many of these women were not ordinary women but were both used by God and Jesus to continue the path of Jesus' ministry. Some examples of these women are Mary the mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalene, Mary of Bethany, the Samaritan woman, Phebe, Priscilla, Lydia, and Junia. To counter the Complementarian view of these women as just being extraordinary women used in times when men were not available,

⁷⁵ Mathews, *Gender Roles and the People of God*, 61.

⁷⁶ Miller, *Beyond Authority and Submission*, 88.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 89.

⁷⁸ Piper and Grudem, *50 Crucial Questions*, 45.

⁷⁹ Linda L. Belleville, *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity without Hierarchy*, ed. Ronald W. Pierce and Rebecca Merrill Groothuis, 1st ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 111.

Egalitarians feel that many of these women are considered leaders, church planters, prophets, apostles, businesswomen, fundraisers, and teachers.

Lydia

Lydia is introduced in Acts 16:14 when the Bible shows her as a businesswoman, a “seller of purple” (KJV). She was the leader of her house (Acts 16:15). She was also Paul’s helper in Philippi.⁸⁰ Egalitarians point out that Lydia was wealthy, and she would have had influence and could have been a house church leader.⁸¹ In the New Testament, the church was held in homes and in smaller numbers for the congregation's safety. She was Paul’s first convert in Greece, and she was wealthy and provided a home for the new local Christian community in Philippi.⁸²

Priscilla

Egalitarians point out that Priscilla is another extraordinary woman found in the New Testament who again was used after the death and resurrection of Jesus. Her accountings in the Bible can be found in Acts 18, Romans 16, 1 Corinthians 16, and 2 Timothy 4. Unlike most women portrayed in the New Testament as holding leadership positions, Priscilla was often referred to along with her husband, Aquilla (Acts 18:2-3). Also, when Priscilla is mentioned in the New Testament, her name is contributed as being mentioned before her husband Aquilla,

⁸⁰ Mathews, *Gender Roles and the People of God*, 84.

⁸¹ Peppiatt, *Rediscovering Scripture’s Vision for Women*, 128.

⁸² Mathews, *Gender Roles and the People of God*, 82.

which shows she was highly regarded.⁸³ This meant that she could have been the more important partner in their ministry.⁸⁴ She is also understood as being an educated woman.⁸⁵

Egalitarians point out that both Priscilla and Aquilla were businesspeople and are shown as being such in Acts 18:3.⁸⁶ Egalitarians show that both Priscilla and Aquilla are attributed to being coworkers of Paul (Acts 18:18, 1 Cor. 16:19; Rom. 16:3-4). Priscilla and Aquilla are given credit for having taught Apollos (Acts 18:26), which would have been unusual and not commonly accepted in their culture. Priscilla and Aquilla held church in their house (Rom. 16:19). One Complementarian view points out that even though the biblical account of Priscilla is an impressive account, use of furthering the Egalitarian view on Priscilla cannot be used by the Egalitarians because so little is known about her.⁸⁷ This could also be understood about the other New Testament women leaders of the Bible since so little is written about them in comparison to the Apostles. Also, another point is offered by Douglas Moo, concluding, “It is hard to tell from the Acts account to what extent Priscilla taught Apollos since both Priscilla and Aquilla are named. It is precarious to base much on this text since it is an argument from silence to say that Priscilla was the primary teacher.”⁸⁸

Junia

Both Complementarians and Egalitarians discuss Junia as being introduced in Romans 16:7 by Paul regarding her as a coworker and apostle. Complementarians argue whether Junia

⁸³ Peppiatt, *Rediscovering Scripture's Vision for Women*, 128.

⁸⁴ Schreiner, *Two Views on Women in Ministry*, 147.

⁸⁵ Piper and Grudem, *50 Crucial Questions*, 63.

⁸⁶ Mathews, *Gender Roles and the People of God*, 84.

⁸⁷ Piper and Grudem, *50 Crucial Questions*, 38.

⁸⁸ Douglas Moo, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021), 153.

were a woman or a man and conclude that the differing translations make it hard to know for sure which gender Junia was.⁸⁹ Her circumstance would be important but not fitting for the office shown in 1 Timothy 2 and 3.⁹⁰ Egalitarians argue the church's historical patriarchy felt that Junia was initially shown as a man, but in modern times, she has been accepted as a woman of importance.⁹¹ Egalitarians feel that since Junia is regarded as an apostle in Romans 16:7, she can be seen as a teacher.⁹² This means that since Paul gave Junia the status of an apostle, Junia would have taught and had a leading role in the church.⁹³

Egalitarians feel that it can be gathered that Junia was a leader when it was uncommon for women to be considered such because Paul noted Junia's importance among the apostles in Romans 16:7.⁹⁴ Egalitarians feel that since Junia was given importance by Paul in Romans 16:7, the work that can be attributed to Junia, having been an active witness, as noted by Paul, meant that Junia would have been a woman with influence.⁹⁵

Jesus

Out of the examples shown thus far, Egalitarians feel that this section could arguably be the most influential backing for allowing women to serve in all roles of a church. It is important to note that this section on how Jesus used women in His ministry and lifetime has some gaps. The reason is that not many Complementarian churches give credit to the women of importance used by Jesus as the Egalitarians do. Instead, Complementarians point to the twelve disciples,

⁸⁹ Piper and Grudem, *50 Crucial Questions*, 58.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 61.

⁹¹ Peppiatt, *Rediscovering Scripture's Vision for Women*, 120.

⁹² Ibid., 124.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Mathews, *Gender Roles and the People of God*, 89.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 89.

who are shown in the New Testament as having high importance, as being all men.⁹⁶ In knowing this, both views agree that Jesus used women to aid in funding His ministry and furthering His ministry. Egalitarians use examples and highlight the importance of New Testament women being shown as leaders or important to spreading Jesus' ministry. Some examples can be seen as Lois and Eunice teaching Timothy in 2 Tim, 1:5, Anna sharing Jesus' coming in Luke 2:36-38, the Samaritan Woman at the Well shown as spreading the news of Jesus in a town of Samaria in John 4:39-41, and Mary Magdalene telling the disciples of Jesus' return in John 20:18.

Jesus, Himself, admitted that "He came not to destroy the law but to fulfill the law" (Matt. 5:17, KJV). Egalitarians show that Jesus did not follow the culture of the time but set an example of how things should be done. Since Jesus gave women importance in the important tasks he gave them, He went against the patriarchal hierarchy of the time.⁹⁷ Egalitarians show that Jesus did not follow the cultural hierarchies of the Israelites but instead showed the importance of living in a way that furthered the importance of women. He used women as disciples and witnesses, which can be seen in the account of the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4) and Mary of Bethany (Luke 10:38-42).⁹⁸

Complementarians point out that even though Jesus did use women, His disciples were all men.⁹⁹ Egalitarians disagree and show that this is important because the culture of the time attributed to the fact that women were not equal to men, and their testimony would have held no significance.¹⁰⁰ Egalitarians feel that through the examples of Jesus using women, God using

⁹⁶ Piper and Grudem, *50 Crucial Questions*, 61.

⁹⁷ Küng, *Women in Christianity*, 6.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 115.

⁹⁹ Stackhouse, *Partners in Christ*, 113.

¹⁰⁰ Mathews, *Gender Roles and the People of God*, 75.

women, and the biblical accounts of influential women, churches can find roles that women can serve in their churches.

Roles for Women

As mentioned, Complementarian churches disallow women from serving in specific roles within their churches where these roles could potentially have any authority over their male counterparts. Complementarians acknowledge a clear difference in the roles of men and women in God's created order.¹⁰¹ A specific Complementarian view on women's roles is offered by James A. Borland concluding, "Even though many women have excellent leadership qualities, God still has clear role distinctions in mind when apostleship and eldership are considered."¹⁰² Egalitarian churches believe that women should be allowed to serve in all church positions. Egalitarians also note that the Great Commission was not given to only men but instead to both women and men.¹⁰³

Church history shows important women who continued to witness to the world after Jesus' death and resurrection.¹⁰⁴ Also, the apostles recognized these women and their offices.¹⁰⁵ Jesus taught that the church can utilize men and women and that both genders are to lift the church up to its fullest potential.¹⁰⁶ In the end, gender in the church shouldn't be given as much attention as it currently is, but rather, equality is the fundamental that should be focused on in the

¹⁰¹ Piper and Grudem, *50 Crucial Questions*, 61.

¹⁰² James A. Borland, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021), 117.

¹⁰³ Sumner, *Men and Women in the Church*, 249.

¹⁰⁴ Pirri-Simonian, "Prophetesses, Martyrs, Saints," 64.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 63.

¹⁰⁶ Smythe, *Women in Ministry*, 14.

churches.¹⁰⁷ Egalitarians feel that from the examples above, and Paul's letters giving account to Priscilla, Lydia, Junia, Phebe, it can be determined that women can hold the position of coworkers with their male counterparts in a church.¹⁰⁸ From the example of the Samaritan woman at the well found in John 4, women can be evangelists.¹⁰⁹ From the examples of Priscilla and Phebe, women can be deacons. Women can hold church leadership positions and be church planters.¹¹⁰ From the example of Junia, women can be makers of disciples.¹¹¹ Also, from 1 Timothy 5, women can be in charge of widows' ministry. These are not all of the roles women can serve in a church, but they are a good start and hold essential significance in furthering Jesus' ministry and churches.

Culture

During the time of the Old Testament and New Testament, women were uneducated, and men were educated and held the power in marriage and society.¹¹² Further role distinction of the Bible is that women were to be good wives to their husbands and good mothers to their children.¹¹³ Women were thought of as being unequal or less than their male counterparts of the time.¹¹⁴ Some of these views of women have transitioned into the culture of some modern-day churches. When discussing this, Jennifer Anne Cox concluded, "The church is still divided over the matter of whether women can be ordained as Christian ministers, and particularly whether

¹⁰⁷ Küng, *Women in Christianity*, 98.

¹⁰⁸ Mathews, *Gender Roles and the People of God*, 90.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 71.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 86.

¹¹¹ Peppiatt, *Rediscovering Scripture's Vision for Women*, 114.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 107, 108.

¹¹³ Kollontai, "Contemporary Thinking on the Role and Ministry of Women in the Orthodox Church," 167.

¹¹⁴ Padgett, *As Christ Submits to the Church*, 13.

women should be permitted to teach and minister to men.”¹¹⁵ There is also a feeling that some churches have focused on women’s submission to their husbands so much that it has led to women becoming lesser citizens of the relationship of the home and in the church.¹¹⁶ There are explainable reasons as to why some feel this way about churches, and it has to do with the Bible's culture being different from today's culture.

Some acknowledge that the Protestant Reformation is the originator of the Egalitarian movement of the churches.¹¹⁷ One view on this is that the industrial revolution requiring women to enter the workplace started the change and view of women’s role in society and the church.¹¹⁸ With women becoming important in the workplace, the equality of men and women in secular society started a movement. The Socialists focused on equality and helped further evolve the idea of equality for women.¹¹⁹ Another movement that furthered the idea of equality for women in both the secular society and the church was that of the emancipation of women.¹²⁰ These movements and ideas have led women to seek a church that recognizes them and empowers them as leaders.¹²¹ In modern times women can serve as leaders in the government, business, and military but are not allowed to serve as a leader in some local churches.¹²² When discussing the culture of modern-day churches and role restrictions in the churches, Halee Gray Scott concluded, “A woman could go to seminary and receive all the appropriate degrees for ministry

¹¹⁵ Jennifer Anne Cox, “New Testament Prophecy and Its Implications for the Ministry of Women,” *Feminist Theology* 25, no. 1 (Sep 2016): 29.

¹¹⁶ James, *Half the Church*, 66.

¹¹⁷ Padgett, *As Christ Submits to the Church*, 14.

¹¹⁸ Küng, *Women in Christianity*, 98.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 84.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 85.

¹²¹ James, *Half the Church*, 19.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 18.

and still not be able to find a position in a local church.”¹²³ The question has to be asked, when modern society allows women to serve in whatever capacity that they want, what does it cost the church not to enable half of the church to serve in whatever roles that they desire to serve in?¹²⁴

Cause for Change

Complementarian churches feel there is no need for change because of their biblical view that God instilled in the creation of man and woman equally in His image.¹²⁵ Complementarians think the Bible teaches the responsibilities of specific church leadership roles held by men; the Bible implies that women cannot hold these offices.¹²⁶ Also, Complementarian authors offer that women can serve in many positions within the church as long as those positions cannot be deemed as having authority over men.¹²⁷ Some Egalitarians believe that there is a cause for change in all churches, and from their understanding of the examples of the Bible, there is a reason for a change in the churches.¹²⁸ Some Egalitarians feel that gender in church leadership is important but that the acknowledgment of the gifts from the Holy Spirit is of even more importance.¹²⁹ However, there is a gap between Egalitarian authors regarding reasons for a cause to change.

¹²³ Hallee Gray Scott, *Dare Mighty Things: Mapping the Challenges of Leadership for Christian Women* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 88.

¹²⁴ James, *Half the Church*, 20.

¹²⁵ Piper and Grudem, *50 Crucial Questions*, 18.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 54-55.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 40.

¹²⁸ Peppiatt, *Rediscovering Scripture's Vision for Women*, 1.

¹²⁹ James, *Half the Church*, 93.

Some Egalitarians feel that the Holy Spirit gives gifts to all genders of a church, and limiting certain roles to a specific gender hurts the church.¹³⁰ Equality in the world is being recognized and felt in the churches, and it should be the opposite of the world feeling equality from the churches.¹³¹ Egalitarians view that the research shows that women played a big role in the New Testament but also in the early church.¹³² Also, some Egalitarians pose the question, how can churches ask secular women who know equality from the world to conform to the ideal of submission when the examples of the Bible suppose the opposite?

Literature Review Summary

There are two sides to the discussion of women's roles in churches: the Complementarian and Egalitarian views. Both views rest their cases on the examples found in the story of Adam and Eve. Both views also use heavily debated Scripture primarily found in 1 Timothy 2 and 3 and 1 Corinthians 11 and 14. In both the Old and New Testaments, examples of how God and Jesus used women can be found. From the Gospels, it can be seen how Jesus treated and used women in His life. Lastly, from using the examples of the Egalitarians, some potential church roles that women can serve in have been discussed.

Theological Foundations

When looking at both the Old and New Testament, examples of equality in the biblical characters of both Testaments can be seen. An example of this is Moses and Miriam being considered leaders by the Israelites or how Jesus used both men and women in His ministries.

¹³⁰ Smythe, *Women in Ministry*, 2.

¹³¹ Peppiatt, *Rediscovering Scripture's Vision for Women*, 1.

¹³² Küng, *Women in Christianity*, 4.

Early on in the Old Testament, God teaches that equality is meant for His creation in humanity, with the creation of Adam and Eve having been created equal in His image (Genesis 1:26-27.) In the New Testament, the examples of how Jesus taught His disciples about equality are shown by how Jesus interacted with people (see Mark 12:31; 15:41, Matt. 28:1-10, and John 13:16). In both Testaments, it can be seen how God and Jesus use men and woman to show equality in the genders and also to show further teaching that people are to interact with one another as such. With this knowledge, the theological principles of the authority of God and scriptural authority can be further found in the equality models that both God and Jesus showed in the Bible.

Equality

The big picture of equality that Complementarians and Egalitarians agree on is the creation of Adam and Eve in Genesis 1:26-27. Where the two parties disagree is found in Galatians 3:28, when Paul discussed that all of humanity is considered equal through Jesus. The Egalitarian view uses the Scripture of Galatians 3:28 to show that humanity is deemed equal through Jesus. One view that shows a different perspective of Galatians 3:28 is offered by Craig S. Keener when he concluded, “In Genesis, husbands and wives become one flesh in marriage (Gen 2:24; 1 Cor 6:16; Eph 5:31); but all believers become one in Christ, to whom they are united as, in a sense, the feminine partner.”¹³³ Keener argues that Paul did not mean that males and females are equal in status but instead equals as Jesus’ bride found in 2 Corinthians 11:2.

Another view on this matter of equality found in Galatians 3:28 is given by Cardinal Albert Vanhoy and Peter S. Williamson when they concluded, “It is obvious that this denial of

¹³³ Craig S. Keener, *Galatians: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2019), 288.

distinction does not apply from the point of view of biology, psychology, and family life.”¹³⁴ In the above citation, Vanhoy and Williamson are separating the statuses of Galatians 3:28 and pointing out again that none of these classifications matter in Christian life through Jesus.

Another view on this matter is offered by Timothy George when he concluded, “Paul’s triad of Christian equality stands in marked, and probably deliberate, a contrast to commonly accepted patterns of privileged status and self-assertive prejudice in the ancient world.”¹³⁵ In this citation, George is similarly showing as the other citations on Galatians 3:28 that none of the statuses or classifications that Paul discerns in Galatians 3:28 matter in Christianity because of the equality found in Christians being equal in Jesus. George points out later in his commentary that the debate on feminine equality for church leadership cannot rely solely on Galatians 3:28; rather, the context of the whole Bible needs to be considered.¹³⁶

When discussing Galatians 3:28, David W. Kling concluded, “In his letter to the Christians in Galatia, the apostle Paul declares unequivocally that through faith in Jesus Christ, all persons have equal access to and equal standing before God. One Group is not privileged over another.”¹³⁷ Prohibiting women from church ministry was warranted in a particular time and context of the church but in no way has overt authority to apply to all ministries.¹³⁸ Nothing supports the prohibition of women leaders in the church; instead, women must be allowed to

¹³⁴ Cardinal Albert Vanhoy and Peter S. Williamson, *Galatians*, Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture, ed. Peter S. Williamson and Mary Healy (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2019), 118.

¹³⁵ Timothy George, *Galatians*, The Christian Standard Commentary, ed. E. Ray Clendenen and Brandon D. Smith (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2020), 598a.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹³⁷ David W. Kling, *The Bible in History: How the Texts Have Shaped the Times* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2004), 270.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 271.

participate in all aspects and roles of the church.¹³⁹ Whichever way one feels about the argument of equality between the genders in Galatians 3:28, one can easily see that, as Christians, all are equal through Jesus by their faith and, therefore, should be allowed to share the burden of all church roles.

This equality in Jesus can be further seen in Matthew 28:16-20, which is otherwise known as the Great Commission that Jesus gave to his disciples. This is specifically seen in Matthew 28:19, when Jesus said, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” (KJV). The importance of the Great Commission is that Jesus specifically commanded His disciples to share the news of Him to others and to convert them to Christianity. Many argue that Jesus’ disciples are shown as only being men in the Bible. However, as previously highlighted in the example of the Samaritan woman and Mary of Bethany, Jesus also had women disciples. Even though Matthew 28:16 does point out that the eleven disciples were present at the issuance of the Great Commission, it would be hard-pressed to find one modern-day church that does not press the issue that all Christians are to share the gospels and Jesus to the nonbelievers of the world in hopes of their conversion to Christianity.

The final opinion on this matter gives an interesting perspective on the subject. When discussing Matthew 28, Rodney Reeves concluded, “Jesus gave the good news first to the disciples who were the last ones to follow him all the way to the end (Matt 27:61; 28:1).”¹⁴⁰ Reeves is pointing out that the women at the resurrection of Jesus were first tasked as spreading

¹³⁹ Kling, *The Bible in History*, 299.

¹⁴⁰ Rodney Reeves, *Matthew*, The Story of God Bible Commentary, ed. Tremper Longman III and Scot McKnight (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017), 564.

the word of Jesus' resurrection. The next piece of Scripture that points to equality is 1 Corinthians 12, when Paul discussed the Spiritual Gifts given to humanity.

A well-known Complementarian offers a view on this matter, and he also does not acknowledge gender in the above Scripture; instead, he sums up Paul's point as being to the church of Jesus. When discussing 1 Corinthians 12, Schreiner concluded, "In the remainder of the chapter, various gifts are described, and Paul emphasized the equality of believers in Jesus Christ. No member of the body is inferior, and no member is superior."¹⁴¹ Schreiner highlights that equality for believers is again found in Jesus, just as the above authors did when discussing Galatians 3:28. The question is, how does the body come to an agreement on the equality of roles in the church? When discussing one possible solution to church unity as a body of believers, Andy Crouch concluded, "Recovery will involve revisiting the biblical story itself, where we discover that God is more intimately and eternally concerned with culture than we have yet come to believe."¹⁴²

Another perspective on 1 Corinthians 12 highlights the church rather than gender. When discussing 1 Corinthians 12, Charles R. Swindoll concluded, "Paul believed it is vital for Christians to have the right knowledge of spiritual gifts, understanding how they are to function in the lives of each believer and, more importantly, in the life of the church community."¹⁴³ Swindoll points out in the above citation that spiritual gifts are given to every believer of Jesus. Swindoll's view shows that *all* believer in Jesus are given spiritual gifts. The Bible does not highlight in the context of 1 Corinthians 12 that only men are given spiritual gifts, but rather the

¹⁴¹ Thomas R. Schreiner, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, ed. Eckhard J. Schnabel and Nicholas Perrin (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2018), 251.

¹⁴² Andy Crouch, *Cultural Engagement: A Crash Course in Contemporary Issues*, ed. Joshua D. Chatraw and Karen Swallow Prior (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2019), 351.

¹⁴³ Charles R. Swindoll, *1 & 2 Corinthians*, Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2017), 181.

Bible highlights that every believer is given a spiritual gift from the Holy Spirit. When discussing roles in the church, Swindoll concluded, “I’m not suggesting we set aside the relatively few restrictions set down by the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. I merely mean for us to begin viewing the role of women in the church through a lens of opportunity instead of constraint.”¹⁴⁴ The last point of this section to be discussed is found in 1 Timothy 3.

Complementarians point to the gender restrictions of 1 Timothy 3 being that of the male gender in Christian churches in the argument for women being allowed to hold positional leadership roles in Christian churches. When commenting on 1 Timothy 3, Andrew Davis stated, “These requirements stand over every elder and challenge him to grow into them by the power of the Spirit.”¹⁴⁵ One conservative denomination known as Baptists joins the two offices of elder and deacon into the same office.¹⁴⁶ When discussing 1 Timothy 3 and the office of deacon, Donald Guthrie concluded, “Yet a third possibility is that an order of women deacons is in mind analogous to Phebe (Rom 16:1).”¹⁴⁷ Guthrie acknowledges that Paul referred to Phebe as a deacon and, also, with the knowledge that the office of deacon is combined with the office of elder in many denominations Phebe could then be also classified as an elder.

With the acknowledgment of Guthrie’s citation, 1 Timothy 3 does not explicitly classify the church leadership role of deacon as only being that for men and many scholars have come to find that 1 Timothy 3 shows women as being overseers and bishops as well.¹⁴⁸ Interestingly

¹⁴⁴ Charles R. Swindoll, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, Swindoll’s Living Insights New Testament Commentary (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2014), 52.

¹⁴⁵ Andrew Davis, *Baptist Foundations: Church Government for an Anti-Institutional Age*, ed. Mark Dever and Jonathan Leeman (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2015), 292.

¹⁴⁶ Swindoll, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, 54.

¹⁴⁷ Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, ed. Leon Morris (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 77.

¹⁴⁸ Peppiatt, *Rediscovering Scripture’s Vision for Women*, 132-133.

enough, Paul wrote Romans and 1 Timothy, so why would Paul acknowledge Phebe as a deacon in Romans but discount her role as a deacon in 1 Timothy 3? And to further this, Swindoll acknowledges that Paul is referring to women deacons in 1 Timothy 3:8-11.¹⁴⁹ Swindoll later points out that even though some modern churches combine the roles of 1 Timothy 3, the early churches separated the roles.¹⁵⁰

Theoretical Foundations

Based on the above information, one can further look into the theoretical reasoning behind this research project using examples of previous research on the subject. With the knowledge of 2 Timothy 3:16 and with the understanding that God inspired the Bible, one can confidently surmise that the Bible is without error. This understanding provides the basis for the theoretical reasoning of this project with the model of church inclusiveness and the establishment of church equality for everyone, including women, to fulfill all church leadership roles.

The previous writings and research in these dissertations show that women's rights in the churches are important and interesting to other Christians. After all, if the Devil can keep half of the church restricted from using their Holy Spirit-inspired gifts and serving in specific church roles, then the Devil has won.¹⁵¹ When discussing the reasoning for her research, Beverly Brooks Summers stated, "Provide an avenue in which participants can gain knowledge of biblical foundations and historical examples for women in ministry leadership."¹⁵² Summers' reasoning

¹⁴⁹ Swindoll, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, 68.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Mathews, *Gender Roles and the People of God*, 236.

¹⁵² Beverly Brooks Summers, "The Inspire Me to Dream Leadership Development Curriculum: An Online Transformational Renewal Modular Training for Women Aspiring Roles in Ministry Leadership," (DMin diss., Regent University, 2021), 14, ProQuest Dissertations & Thesis Global.

for her research project is similar to the reasoning of this research project, which provokes the participants' thoughts on the small groups of this research project. Suppose it is possible to expand the participants' minds of this research project. By planting the possibility that women can lead a church based on the biblical context of the Bible and the further understanding of biblical equality, a change could happen within the church to allow women to serve in all church leadership positions.

Another author highlighted the purpose of their research from a slightly different perspective. When discussing her reasoning for her research project Melissa Jill Small concluded, “The empirical significance of this study is to contribute to the literature connected to women’s ministry in the church and fulfillment of church leaders’ responsibilities to meet the needs of their congregation members.”¹⁵³ As highlighted in the Theological Foundations section of this writing, gifts are given to everyone, and these spiritual gifts must be used to further the church of Jesus. The congregation suffers by not allowing every church member to use the spiritual gifts given to them by the Holy Spirit, which hurts Jesus’ church; when half of the church is not allowed to serve in their fullest capacity.¹⁵⁴

The following research project showed similar reasoning regarding wanting to advance their church to its fullest potential. Sharon Allen shows this reasoning by concluding, “This research may prove instrumental in shaping policy and practice for the Presbyterian Church (USA), ultimately removing barriers and facilitating the emergence of females into senior

¹⁵³ Melissa Jill Small, “Exploring Successful Women’s Ministry Employment: A Comparative Case Study of Two Churches in Virginia,” (PhD diss., Liberty University, 2015), 19, ProQuest Dissertations & Thesis Global.

¹⁵⁴ James, *Half the Church*, 6.

leadership positions.”¹⁵⁵ As in the previous projects, Allen wanted to show that women could serve in church leadership positions. Allen even went further in hoping to change the policy of a whole committee of a denomination rather than just one church. In her paper, she highlighted “The value of ensuring that others feel they have a voice and are heard; this trait is invaluable in building a community of trust and cooperation.”¹⁵⁶

Like Allen’s reasoning for her research, Derric A. Carter sought change for his church and academy in church inclusiveness and equality for women in church leadership roles. When discussing his reasoning for his research project, Carter stated, “The theoretical frameworks used in this study offer new opportunities for the academy to do further research on the lack of higher education and the relative absence of women in leadership roles within the Pentecostal movement.”¹⁵⁷ It can be seen that society influences the church daily and leads to progressive change within the church.¹⁵⁸ Therefore, it is essential to discuss their research methods to highlight their methodology and findings in their research projects so this research project can be aware of their successes and downfalls.

One researcher highlighted a part of their research methodology as doing interviews. When discussing their research methodology, Gloria Robinson Boyd stated, “Replicating their methodologies, I conducted extensive interviews with three female pastors.”¹⁵⁹ Although interviews can be an effective research tool, Boyd’s sample size is relatively small to gain a wide

¹⁵⁵ Sharon Allen, “An Examination of the Role of Grit and Related Indicators for Breaking Through the Stained Glass Ceiling for Women Leaders in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc.,” (EdD diss., Spalding University, 2018), 17, ProQuest Dissertations & Thesis Global.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 101.

¹⁵⁷ Derric A. Carter, “Pentecostal Churches: A Multiple Case Study of Education and Youth Women and Leadership,” (MDiv, Wright State University, 2019), 12, ProQuest Dissertations & Thesis Global.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 126.

¹⁵⁹ Gloria Robinson Boyd, “Gender Dynamics in Sanctified Storefront Churches: A Study of the Roles and Challenges of Female Pastors in Mississippi County, Arkansas,” (PhD Diss., Arkansas State University, 2016), 11, ProQuest Dissertations & Thesis Global.

array of findings based on such a small research pool. She interviewed three women for her study.¹⁶⁰ Research groups or participants must be larger to give a vast collection of information and potential findings.

Another researcher's methodology uses technology to their advantage for their research project. Brooks discussed that she offered webinars to teach about her research project to the pool of participants partaking in her research.¹⁶¹ Since Brooks used technology for her research, it is essential to mention that her approach had no real consequences for the participants partaking in the study. In-person classes could have proven more beneficial for Books because they would have given the participants a more personal interaction with Brooks when conducting her research. Using technology in research projects can be excellent, but cautious behaviors must be accounted for to interact personally with the research participants.

Small did her research similarly using small groups. Small discussed using surveys to find her research data from her research participants in her study.¹⁶² Small's research methodology is more personal than the previous examples given thus far. By doing in-person research, Small allowed herself personable interactions with the research participants, gaining their trust and willingness to participate in the study Small conducted. Similarly to Small using surveys for her research methodology, Allen also utilized surveys in her research.¹⁶³

The above findings offer a vast array of knowledge for research on women being included and allowed to serve in church leadership roles. In his conclusions, Carter highlighted

¹⁶⁰ Boyd, "Gender Dynamics in Sanctified Storefront Churches," 11.

¹⁶¹ Summers, "The Inspire Me to Dream Leadership Development Curriculum," 21.

¹⁶² Small, "Exploring Successful Women's Ministry Employment," 65.

¹⁶³ Allen, "An Examination of the Role of Grit and Related Indicators for Breaking Through the Stained Glass Ceiling for Women Leaders in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc.," 50.

the importance of females mentoring one another for accountability and gaining knowledge.¹⁶⁴ Boyd found that women in church leadership face gender bias in their roles.¹⁶⁵ Allen noted that change in church culture and policies are needed for the inclusion of women in church leadership to be possible.¹⁶⁶ Small revealed that churches that already have women in church leadership are thriving.¹⁶⁷ Summers' research also discovered that women's mentorship is important in furthering women's church leadership roles.¹⁶⁸

From the above findings of previous researchers studying women's roles in church leadership, the results are promising for this project. It can be seen that some congregations are open to women being in church leadership roles. Also, women need one another to help achieve equality and inclusion in their churches. Additionally, the research shows that there are optional methods of research styles that can be adapted to this research project for the potential research success of this project.

¹⁶⁴ Carter, "Pentecostal Churches," 118.

¹⁶⁵ Boyd, "Gender Dynamics in Sanctified Storefront Churches," 202.

¹⁶⁶ Allen, "An Examination of the Role of Grit and Related Indicators for Breaking Through the Stained Glass Ceiling for Women Leaders in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc.," 96.

¹⁶⁷ Small, "Exploring Successful Women's Ministry Employment," 141.

¹⁶⁸ Summers, "The Inspire Me to Dream Leadership Development Curriculum," 24.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The research intervention for this project will be explained for the in-person part of this research. The research has been designed with a purpose so that the research study will have an effective change or provoke thought and new ideas from the study in Faith Baptist Church's research participants. It is essential to mention that all good studies must be designed so that others can implement this research module if desired. Therefore, explaining how this intervention methodology will flow in sequence and order is vital.

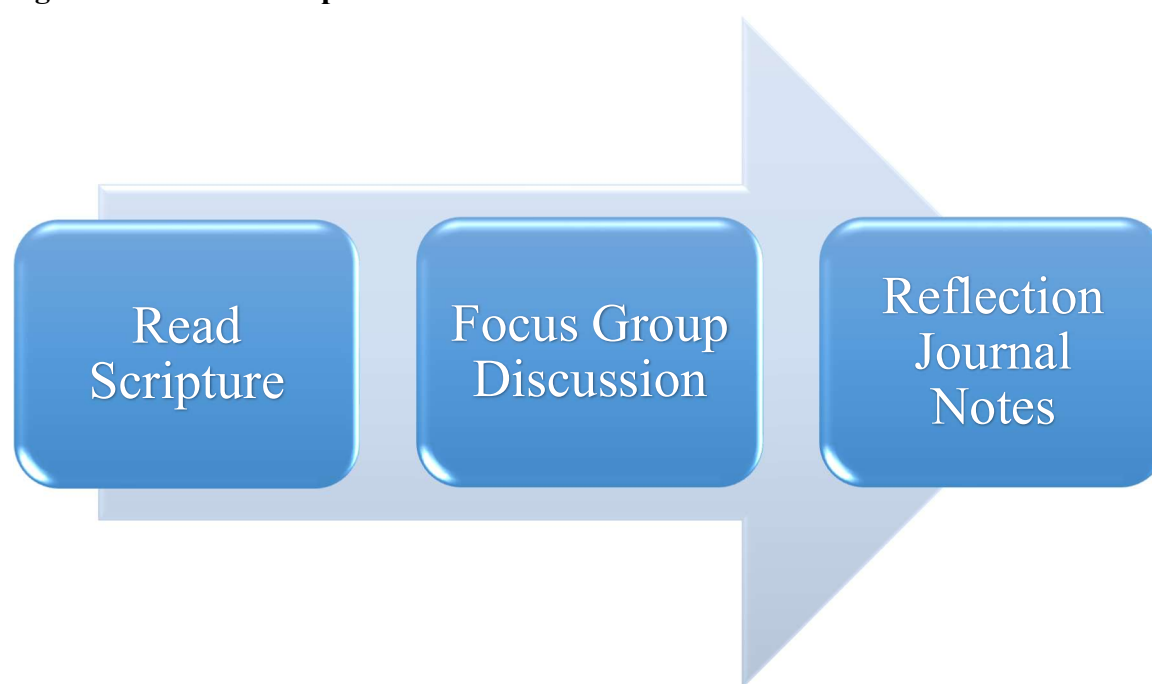
Intervention Design

The intervention plan is threefold. The study will consist of three different methods designed for gathering data. The first method that will collect data is questionnaires. In this study, two questionnaires will be used to gather data. The first questionnaire (see Appendix F) will be used at the start of the study to gauge the research participants' knowledge and feelings on women's roles in church leadership. The research study title that will be presented to the potential research participants and pastor is "Characteristics and Roles of Church Leadership." The study was designed this way to prevent any biases that participants or people involved in the in-person study may have. The second and last questionnaire (see Appendix G) will be used midway through the research study to gauge the research participants to see if the study helped change the participants' knowledge and feelings towards women serving in Christian leadership positions in the church up to that point. It is important to mention that both questionnaires must be taken anonymously to protect the research participants' identities.

The second research method will be focus groups. Eleven focus groups will be held at Faith Baptist Church, with an expected group of fifteen to twenty research participants. It is

important to mention that in preparation for the focus groups, a curriculum (see Appendix H) has been designed for the research study to go along with these focus studies. The flow of the focus groups can be seen in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1. Focus Group Flow.



Before each focus group, the participants will be asked to view and read two online commentaries to help the participants see two different views on the following week's Scripture. The first set of five focus groups shows examples of female leaders from the Bible that are seen holding various leadership positions and being used by God and Jesus in both Testaments of the Bible. Egalitarians use these first five Scriptures to further their arguments on women's rights to serve in all church leadership roles. Complementarians use the second set of Scriptures to advance their ideas on placing restrictions on church leadership roles.

Once the researcher has read the Scripture to the participants, the room will be turned over to the participants for discussion amongst themselves. For the first five focus groups, three questions were prepared for moments of silence in the focus group discussions, and the three

questions will stay the same for each of the first five focus groups. These three questions can be seen in table 3.1.

Table 3.1. First Set of Focus Group Questions.

Question 1	Please name the examples of biblical leaders from the covered Scriptures.
Question 2	Please list the characteristics of the biblical leaders that you found that you value from the covered Scripture.
Question 3	Please describe the findings from the covered Scriptures that you may not have understood before participating in this study.

For the remaining six focus group discussions, there were five questions prepared. There were more questions prepared for the last six focus groups than for the first five group discussions because the last six focus groups deal with Scriptural evidence of placing restrictions on women's rights to serve in church leadership positions. There is expected to be a level of silence in the last six focus groups that the first five focus groups may experience. These five questions can be seen in table 3.2.

Table 3.2. Second Set of Focus Group Questions.

Question 1	In what ways does the Scripture indicate that a woman must lead when a man is present? How does it indicate limitations?
Question 2	Can a woman lead a church as a whole? Why/Why not?
Question 3	What other roles in church can a woman serve in?
Question 4	Comparing today's culture against the New Testament age culture, do the practices of worship still remain the same? How do they differ? What qualifications allow these differences?
Question 5	Based on all covered Scriptures from both sessions, what conclusions or opinions can you draw of women holding leadership roles in church?

The last research method that also plays into the focus groups is the usage of reflection journals. The researcher will record valuable data uncovered in the focus group participants' discussions. During these discussions, the researcher will record data in a reflection journal. It has been determined that all research participants will be given confidentiality to respect their privacy. It has also been determined that if a research participant is referred to in future research writings or future publishing, the researcher will only refer to the research participants using pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality for the research participant being referred to.

The research plan is shown in table 3.3, which shows the study's sixteen-week perspective research plan.

Table 3.3. Sixteen Week Plan for Research.

Week One	Meet with the pastor to go over documents for the research project. Hand out the Consent Form and First Questionnaire to focus group participants.
Week Two	Start the first focus group covering Miriam in Exodus 15:1-21. Record focus group discussion in reflection journal.
Week Three	Focus group two covers Deborah and Jael in Judges 5:1-31. Record focus group discussion in reflection journal.
Week Four	Hold a meeting with the pastor to keep him in the loop. Focus group three covers Samaritan Woman at the Well in John 4:27-42. Record focus group discussion in reflection journal.
Week Five	Focus group four covers Martha and Mary of Bethany in John 12:1-11. Record focus group discussion in reflection journal.
Week Six	Focus group Five covers Phebe, Priscilla, Mary, Junia, and more in Romans 16:1-27. Record focus group discussion in reflection journal. Pass out the second questionnaire.
Week Seven	Focus group six covers 1 Timothy 2:1-15, which lays out restrictions on women's leadership in the churches. Record focus group discussion in reflection journal.
Week Eight	Focus group seven covers 1 Timothy 3:1-16, which lays out restrictions on women's leadership in the churches. Record focus group discussion in reflection journal.
Week Nine	Focus group eight covers Titus 1:5-9, which lays out restrictions on women's leadership in the churches. Record focus group discussion in reflection journal.

Week Ten	Focus group nine covers Titus 2:1-15, which lays out restrictions on women's leadership in the churches. Record focus group discussion in reflection journal.
Week Eleven	Focus group ten covers 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, which lays out restrictions on women's leadership in the churches. Record focus group discussion in reflection journal.
Week Twelve	Focus group eleven covers 1 Corinthians 14:26-40, which lays out restrictions on women's leadership in the churches. Record focus group discussion in reflection journal.
Week Thirteen	Spend two weeks to find common themes from gathered data to gauge if any changes occurred in the research participants' understandings of the research topic from the eleven focus groups.
Week Fourteen	Second week to find common themes from gathered data to gauge if any changes occurred in the research participants' understandings of the research topic from the eleven focus groups.
Week Fifteen	Update thesis template graphs with newly found data.
Week Sixteen	Continue working on thesis template and conclude sixteen-week research project.

Table 3.3 shows what will be done and covered weekly for the sixteen-week research study, which will cover women and Scriptures in the first five focus groups. In the second set of six focus groups the content that will be covered includes the Scriptures that Complementarians use to argue restrictions on women's leadership roles in the church. There will also be three separate meetings with the pastor to ensure that the research project stays respectful of Faith Baptist Church's beliefs of the congregants and pastor.

Table 3.3 does not record that the researcher will first ask for permission to do the research at the Faith Baptist Church from the church's pastor. This permission request is shown in Appendix C. Also, a permission response letter (see Appendix D) will be given to the pastor to record his permission for the researcher to conduct the study at Faith Baptist Church. After the researcher has been approved to start the research by the IRB board and the Faith Baptist

Church's pastor, the student will attend the Sunday morning adult Bible study and present these congregants with a research recruitment verbal script (see Appendix A).

After this, a research consent form (see Appendix B) will be given to each potential research participant so they can consent or waive their participation in the study. The next step for the participants who agree to the study will be asked to answer an anonymous introductory questionnaire (see Appendix F). The participants will be asked for the following eleven weeks to attend eleven individual focus groups where the selected Scripture for these focus groups will be held. During these focus groups, the researcher will confidentially write down any potentially useful information uncovered in the focus groups in the reflections journals that will be later used to ascertain any potential data for the research project paper.

Halfway through the research study, and in the middle of the two sets of individual focus groups, the research participants will be asked to answer the second questionnaire (see Appendix G) to gauge any changes in understanding the presented information. It is important to note that there will not be a third questionnaire because it is determined that by the culmination of the eleven weeks of focus group, change should be noticeable in the responses of the focus group discussions and research participants. Next, the researcher expects that there will be four weeks needed to organize the data gained from the research study for this research writing. The hope of this research project is not to cause any immediate sudden change in the research participants or the Faith Baptist Church but to provoke thought in the research participants to the possibility of female church leaders by showing the research participants biblical examples of leading women from the Bible. However, this will only be done with a layer of neutrality to ensure that the researcher and research study stay respectful to the Faith Baptist Church's pastor and research participants' views and beliefs.

The changes found in the data from the first questionnaire, with the aid of the weekly commentary readings, focus groups, reflection journals, and second questionnaire data, will be compiled and given to the pastor to implement the changes in their church. The hope is that the pastor will implement these changes, but since the church is conservative, there may not be any significant changes at the church level. However, there may be more minute changes in the research participants, which may be enough for the future generations of the church to have effective change due to the thoughts and ideas sparked from this research. Unfortunately, most of the church congregation is of older generations, which holds more traditional views, so this researcher has doubts that the pastor will initiate any immediate changes in the church. Still, at least he will be allowed to recognize that there is a needed change in the church, and maybe God will weigh this on his heart so that the change will have an immediate effect on Faith Baptist Church.

The research study will be gauged as successful in multiple ways. First, the research study will be deemed to be successful if the research study continues without being shut down by the pastor for violating any guidelines he may wish to be respected. The second way the research study will be deemed successful is if any research participant admits that the study provoked thought in their minds on the subject of women being allowed to serve in church leadership. Lastly, the research study will be deemed successful simply by the possibility of provoking the thought in the research participants' minds about the potential of women being allowed to serve in church leadership roles. This last option of success for the research study would be gauged by changes of opinions from the two research questionnaires and focus group discussions.

This research study's approach differs from the research done in comparable studies because the researcher will use focus groups to provoke thought. In preparation for this research

study, other researchers have used online resources, surveys, and participant observations to conduct their research. The previous research studies were covered in chapter two of this writing. The particular tools and software used for this research study are potentially Bibles, pens, paper, Microsoft Word, and Microsoft Excel to compile graphs that could be useful to convey the data gained from the research study. This research study is designed to seek more qualitative data than quantitative data, so it is not expected that the usage of graphs and charts will be a significant portion of future writings for this paper.

If a participant wishes to drop out of the research study, their wish to do so would be respected. The research participant would be given a debriefing statement (see Appendix E). The debriefing statement conveys that this research study intended to understand the roles women can serve in churches rather than simply understanding the characteristics and roles of potential Christian leaders. However, it would be explained that since the two questionnaires were taken anonymously, any data from the focus groups were recorded confidentially using pseudonyms. So, it would still be expected that any data resulting from their participation in the research study would still be used for this research writing. However, if a research participant were to demand that this not be the case, their wishes to do so would be respected, and any given data from their involvement in the research study would be destroyed.

Implementation of the Intervention Design

The research study was designed using multiple research tools. Also, the participants for the research study were recruited in multiple steps for the study. The first step of the research study was getting permission from the church pastor to do the research at his church and with his church congregants. To obtain permission, the pastor knew the study's purpose and agreed to

allow the research study to take place at his church as long as no ideologies were enforced during the research. To permit the research study, the pastor had to read a Permission Request form (see Appendix C). He also had to sign a Permission Response form (see Appendix D).

After this, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) application was submitted containing the above appendixes for the review board. During the IRB application review process, and waiting for the review board's approval, the pastor gave a heads-up to the congregation that once approval was given to start the research study, there would be research done at the church. The pastor let the congregation know that participation in the research study was completely volunteer-based, and no one was forced to participate in the research study if they did not want to be involved. He also informed the congregation that the research study had to be approved by a board to ensure their safety before participating in the research study. The pastor also informed the congregation that once permission was given to start the research study, more information would be given to the congregation to help them decide whether they wanted to participate in the research study. Once the IRB board approved the research, the study would start the following week. The congregation was filled in on what the study was about and how the study was going to work.

In the first week of the research study, the purpose was introduced as being about finding characteristics and roles of Christian leadership and what roles women can serve in a church setting. The research study was designed purposefully with this in mind to try to limit the bias of opinion in the research study. After presenting the research study's purpose to the congregation, the researcher informed them that there would be a Recruitment Letter (see Appendix A) given to them that had more information about the research study for them to read. The participants were also given five minutes to ask questions before signing the agreement to participate in the

study. The congregation was also informed that if they wanted to participate in the study, they would have to sign the Participant Consent Form (see Appendix B) and must be above the age of eighteen. The congregation was then given ten minutes to read through the two forms and decide if they wanted to participate in the research study or not.

Afterward, the participants who wanted to participate in the study handed in their consent forms and were asked to answer the first questionnaire (see Appendix F). The participants were then given fifteen minutes to answer the questionnaire. Once they were done answering the questionnaire, the participants handed the questionnaires back in and were told to keep the last page of the packet handed to them, which was the curriculum for the following weeks of the study (see Appendix H). The participants were asked to read two online commentaries before next week's focus group (see Appendix H). Later that night, the researcher tallied the number of consent forms signed by the study participants to twelve people who planned to participate, concluding the first week of the study.

The second week kicked off the first five focus groups that consisted of Scriptures that Egalitarians use to argue for the rights of female leadership in the churches. The remaining six focus groups consisted of Scriptures that Complementarians use to argue for restrictions placed on church leadership roles. It is important to note that all the focus groups started with a piece of Scripture being read to the research study participants by the researcher. Then, the room was opened up for discussion among the participants and the researcher. It is essential to note that the researcher made sure never to interject any reasonings or ideologies into the discussions.

The only time the researcher spoke during these focus groups was to thank the participants for adding to the focus group. The researcher would ask if anyone else wanted to contribute to the discussion. If the room went silent, the researcher would then ask questions that

were prepared to help provoke thought from the participants. For the first five focus groups, three questions were prepared for moments of silence in the discussions; for the remaining six focus groups, five questions were prepared. In all eleven focus groups, if the room became silent, the researcher would ask the prepared questions to further jump-start the discussions. For the first five focus groups, the three questions that were specifically designed for the focus groups are:

1. Please name the examples of biblical leaders from the covered Scriptures.
2. From the covered Scripture, please list the characteristics of the biblical leaders that you found that you valued.
3. Please describe the findings from the covered Scriptures that you may not have understood before participating in the study.

Since the remaining six focus groups were not discussing leading examples of women from the Bible but rather the Scriptures used by Complementarians to limit leadership roles in the churches, different questions were prepared for the remainder of the focus groups. This set of questions contained an increase from three to five questions to get more research data. It was felt that the last six focus groups would be uncomfortable for some of the research participants since the last six Scriptures suggest limitations on women's leadership roles in the churches. For the last six focus groups, the five questions that were used are:

1. In what ways does the Scripture indicate that a woman must lead when a man is present? How does it indicate limitations?
2. Can a woman lead a church as a whole? Why/Why not?
3. What other roles in the church can a woman serve in?
4. Do the worship practices remain the same, comparing today's culture against the New Testament age culture? How do they differ? What qualifications allow these differences?
5. Based on all covered Scriptures from both sessions, what conclusions and/or opinions can you draw of women holding leadership roles in the church?

If there were moments of silence in the focus groups, the researcher would then ask either the above three questions for the first five focus groups or the above five questions for the remaining six focus groups to provoke thought from the research participants. If either set of

questions needed to be asked to aid the discussion of the focus groups, it is important to note that the participants were given ample time to discuss their answers to whichever question was being asked at that particular moment.

One common theme found in all focus groups is that even though there were a significant number of participants in the focus groups, the same people did most of the talking during the focus group discussions. The rest of the participants sat in silence during the discussions and hardly added anything to the discussions. The researcher continuously asked if others wanted to say anything. However, this had no effect because only the participants that felt comfortable with speaking during the discussions would speak, and the rest of the participants sat there silently for the conclusion of the focus groups.

For every focus group, the researcher took field notes on what was being discussed in the focus groups. Week two was exciting because the research study was new, so not many people wanted to talk during the focus groups. Instead, there was a feeling in the room that the research participants were uneasy and wanted to see what the focus groups were about. Even though there did seem to be some uneasiness from the research participants in week two, there was still a decent amount of discussion, but week two had the least amount of discussion during the focus group.

The following weeks followed week two's design, and nothing unexpectedly came about during the focus groups. Since week twelve was the last focus group, week twelve would be the only focus group that did not follow this pattern. There was a difference with week six being the halfway mark of the focus groups. The second questionnaire (see Appendix G) was handed out to the participants to fill out and give back to the researcher after the week six focus group concluded. Also, it is essential to note that the research participants were given fifteen

minutes to complete the questionnaire and turn it in. After the study, the data gained from the study was gathered and organized to look at themes and changes in the research participants utilizing the data collected from the focus groups and two questionnaires.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The results from the research study are shown in this section of the paper. There were both expected and unexpected results. The data gathered came from the research study, which consisted of multiple research resources that have already been mentioned in this paper. These research resources consisted of an Introductory Questionnaire (see Appendix F) and a Second Questionnaire (see Appendix G). Also, the other research resources used in this study to gather data were eleven focus groups and their corresponding field notes taken during the groups' meeting. The results from these research resources are exciting and show that a change of opinion took place for some of the research participants. It is also important to mention this section will flow in order of how the research study took place, starting with the first questionnaire, the first five focus groups, the second questionnaire, and ending with the culmination of the last set of six focus groups.

Introductory Questionnaire

The introductory questionnaire was handed out on week one of the study. This first questionnaire was designed as a way to gauge the research participants and see their viewpoints on the subject matter. The research participants were given fifteen minutes to answer the questionnaire. The questionnaire itself had five questions for the participants to answer. As expected, the results from the questionnaire do show some common themes that were uncovered from the participant's answers to the questionnaire. The themes from the Introductory Questionnaire were compiled and shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1. Introductory Questionnaire Themes.

Introductory Questionnaire	Themes
Question One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sound Doctrine • Loving • Being Humble • Biblical • Integrity • Commitment • Always Learning
Question Two	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gospels • 1 Timothy 3
Question Three	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unsure • 1 Timothy 3
Question Four	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers • Pastor • Leader • Spiritual Gifts • Loving
Question Five	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moses • Noah • David • Paul • Peter • John

As mentioned, table 4.1 shows some common themes that were uncovered from each question of the Introductory Questionnaire. However, to fully grasp these findings, the themes must be discussed to better understand the results. In table 4.1, question one's themes show that in the participants' minds, the qualities and characteristics that they believe a Christian leader should hold are: sound doctrine, loving, being humble, biblical, integrity, commitment, and always learning.

Sound doctrine is important in a preacher because, for many Christians, the preacher is where they get their fill of the Bible. It is where they hear and learn about God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. Not many people read their Bibles in modern times, or they will have read it once and believe that it is good enough. This is why a preacher of sound doctrine is important because if not, the preacher could lead their congregation astray from the doctrine of the Bible. The Bible

itself even has a lot to discuss about the importance of doctrine for a preacher and believer (1 Tim. 6:3; Titus 1:9; 2:1; Heb. 13:9; Eph. 4:14; Rom. 16:17; 2 Tim. 4:2; John 7:16). When discussing doctrine and its importance John Piper concluded, “That you women who have a deep grasp of the sovereign grace of God which undergirds all these spiritual processes; and that you be deep thinkers about the doctrines of grace, and even deeper lovers of these things.”¹⁶⁹

The participants also felt that a preacher needs to have a loving character. A lot could be said about the importance of a preacher being a loving person. Jesus showed the importance of love in his ministry. He even washed His disciples’ feet who thought of Him as more important than them (John 13:1-17). From the examples of Jesus and the Bible, a preacher is to learn how to love his flock as their shepherd (1 Peter 5:2-4). 1 Corinthians 13:13 even shows that love is more important than faith or hope.

A good example of love in leadership is shown in the leadership style Jesus conveyed in the Bible, called servant leadership. When discussing servant leadership, Larry W. Boone concluded, “Servant leaders place the needs of others first, share power, involve others in decision-making, and help people reach their full potential.”¹⁷⁰ In modern times, where gender equality is a heavily-focused topic, it is hard for a loving preacher to justify telling someone they cannot preach based on their gender and then wonder why the church is slowly declining in its number of attendees. In the Bible, Jesus is never shown as telling women they cannot do something; instead, he used them to further His ministry. Mark 5:27-34 shows a sick woman who touched Jesus’ clothes without His knowledge, turned to her and healed her because of her faith and His love for her and her faith. Mark 5:27-34 is important because it shows Jesus’

¹⁶⁹ John Piper, *What’s the Difference? Manhood and Womanhood Defined According to the Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001), page number.

¹⁷⁰ Larry W. Boone, *Servant Leadership: Attitudes, Skills and Behaviours* (Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2018), 5.

reciprocating love for a woman who would have been considered unclean by other men of the time, and instead of chastising her for touching him while being unclean, he healed her for her faith.

The following important characteristic is being humble or humility. When discussing humility, William P. Farley concluded, “Humility is the ability to see spiritual reality, to see things as they are. It is the capacity to see myself in God’s light, in the context of His holiness and my sinfulness.”¹⁷¹ Preachers have to see their imperfections when compared to God in order to shepherd a congregation in a biblical manner. Again, Jesus would exemplify humility for preachers to model themselves after.

The research participants value the following characteristics in a church leader: biblical and integrity. They are similar in their characteristics, with righteousness at the core. According to 1 John 3:7, anyone can show righteousness. Romans 1:17 says that righteousness is shown in faith. This means that a church leader who is biblical and has integrity is a church leader that conveys faith. When discussing faith Meici Sun concluded, “In the book of Joshua also, we find the Canaanite woman Rahab who, because of faith, hid two Israelite spies.”¹⁷² Rahab was also recorded in the book of Matthew as being a part of Jesus’ lineage (Matthew 1:5).

Question two showed some common understanding from the participants that the Scriptures that outline roles and characteristics of Christian leadership are the gospels and 1 Timothy 3. Of course, there were other answers, but the gospels and 1 Timothy 3 were the only two answers that were shared amongst more than one research participant. Multiple participants felt that the gospels lay out the values and characteristics a Christian leader should attribute in

¹⁷¹ William P. Farley, *Gospel-Powered Humility* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing Company, 2011), 14.

¹⁷² Meici Sun, “A Biblical Perspective on Women’s Role in the Church,” *Chinese Theological Review* 28, no.? (2017): 66.

their leadership. It makes sense because the gospels highlight Jesus' ministry. Since Christians are to resemble Jesus as much as possible, it follows that the gospels would be a source of understanding of roles and characteristics that the participants would list as Scriptures that lay out these guidelines for Christian leadership.

It was good to see that some participants knew that 1 Timothy 3 is a Scripture that lays out roles and characteristics for church leaders. It was concerning that 1 Timothy 3 was the only Scripture that was found as a theme amongst the participants. It shows that there is a lack of understanding in the churches on the roles and characteristics a church leader should have according to the Bible. As this paper has discussed, there are other Scriptures that highlight the roles and characteristics of a church leader (i.e., 1 Cor. 11:2-16; 14:26-40; 1 Tim. 2:1-15; Titus 1:5-9; 2:1-15).

Question three showed a common understanding amongst the research participants that they did not know of any Scriptures that limited Christian leadership roles besides 1 Timothy 3. This can be seen by the misunderstanding of roles and characteristics from question two. It is worth noting that multiple participants listed in their questionnaires that they did not know of any Scriptures that limited who could serve as a Christian leader. It brings to question whether they knew some Scriptures that limited Christian leadership or if the participants who said they did were uncomfortable in sharing the Scriptures even though the questionnaire was taken anonymously. From the questionnaire, concerning questions two and three, multiple participants listed 1 Timothy 3 as a Scripture discussing Christian leadership and limitations to Christian leadership roles even though, as pointed out in the above paragraph, many more Scriptures are about this subject. Questions two and three further show a misunderstanding of who can serve in church leadership or what characteristics a church leader should have. Instead, congregants

typically do not question church leadership unless it pertains to them. For example, one congregant mentioned a restriction in teaching a class due to gender from a previous church. That congregant mentioned that they had no issues with leadership until this point was brought to light.

Question four asked the participants to list the roles that Christian leaders can serve in. Some common themes uncovered from the questionnaires were teacher, pastor, leader, spiritual gifts, and loving. The Scriptures that were mentioned in question two outline the roles of teacher, pastor, and leader and are the Scriptures used to discuss role restriction for church leadership and some of the other known roles of church leadership, such as deacon and elder. A biblical example of a deacon would be that of Paul, who labeled Phebe as a deacon of the church of Cenchreae (see Romans 16:1). Jesus would be another example for church leadership to be modeled after. First Corinthians 12 would be the Scripture that discusses spiritual gifts. The participants also found loving to be a role theme, but love is more of a characteristic of a church leader which was discussed in question one. Outside the other three themes that question four shows from the participants, there were no different roles mentioned amongst the answers for question four.

Question five was the last question of the questionnaire, and question five asked the participants to list ten examples from the Old and New Testaments that they valued as biblical leaders. One questionnaire was an exception to the other because the participant listed examples of female leaders from both Testaments. Coincidentally, the participant listed some examples of female leadership that were chosen to discuss during the focus groups for the study. However, as mentioned, this participant was the exception because the rest of the participants listed male leaders from the Old and New Testaments. The common themes of biblical leaders that the

participants agreed upon were Moses, Noah, David, Paul, Peter, and John. There were some other examples of biblical leaders that individual participants listed, but these examples above were the common examples among the participants. Now that the introductory questionnaire has been discussed, the themes from the focus groups can be addressed.

First Five Focus Groups

As mentioned, the research study consisted of eleven focus groups. In the first set of five focus groups, a piece of Scripture was read to the participants by the researcher, and then the research participants discussed the Scripture that was read to them. The researcher then gathered data using field notes from each focus group discussion. As expected, some common themes were uncovered from each focus group discussion. Some interesting values were discovered during these discussions that the research participants held as well.

Focus Group One

The Scripture that was discussed for focus group one was Exodus 15:1-21. The focus group was given the full Scripture of Exodus 15:1-21 so that they could discern for themselves the context of the Scripture, but for the purposes of this paper on discerning roles for church leadership, Exodus 15:20-21 is the text in question. In Exodus 15:20-21 the Bible says, “And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. And Miriam answered them, ‘Sing ye to the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea’” (KJV).

The book of Exodus is the narrative of God helping His chosen people (Israelites) out of slavery in Egypt and into the promised land. More accordingly, the Scripture of Exodus 15:1-21

is written in song or poetry. When discussing Exodus 15:1-21, R. Alan Cole concluded, “This may be further subdivided: 1-18 ‘song of Moses and the people of Israel,’ while verse 21 is specifically described as the song sung by ‘Miriam... and all the women.’”¹⁷³ The context of Exodus 15:1-21 is praise or worship for God. When discussing the context of Exodus 15:1-21, Victor P. Hamilton concluded, “Chapter 15 focuses on our appropriate response to what God has done.”¹⁷⁴ The culture of the Scripture would be that of a male hierarchy which was normal during this timeframe. When discussing the culture of Exodus 15 Ralph K. Hawkins concluded, “Feminist interpreters have noted that the author of the book of Exodus was likely influenced by the patriarchal values of his day.”¹⁷⁵

In Exodus 15:20, Miriam is given a role distinction as “prophetess.” When discussing Miriam’s role distinction, William D. Johnstone concluded, “Miriam, identified here as Aaron’s sister (not Moses’, perhaps because of their similar public functions; cf. their collusion against Moses in Num 12:1), is called a ‘prophetess’”¹⁷⁶ Miriam being called a “prophetess” has importance because it means that God spoke to her just as He did with Aaron and Moses.¹⁷⁷ Since Miriam is given a role distinction, it is important to look at the original language of the word “prophetess.” Miriam is given this title before Moses is even given the title.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷³ R. Alan Cole, *Exodus*, vol. 2, *Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries*, ed. Donald J. Wiseman (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), page number.

¹⁷⁴ Victor P. Hamilton, *Exodus: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2011), 232.

¹⁷⁵ Ralph K. Hawkins, *Discovering Exodus: Content, Interpretation, Reception* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2021), 157.

¹⁷⁶ William D. Johnstone, *Exodus*, Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2019), 58.

¹⁷⁷ Hawkins, *Discovering Exodus*, 157.

¹⁷⁸ Hamilton, *Exodus*, 239.

Micah 6:4 even gives a level of equality in the roles between the three siblings (see Micah 6:4). Since Miriam is given the role of “prophetess” it is important to look at the original translation which is “נְבִיאָה” and according to Warren Baker, the definition is, “prophetess.”¹⁷⁹ In verse 21, Miriam’s song comes to a conclusion, and no further role distinction is awarded to her in the above Scripture. It is also important to look at some common themes from the focus group discussion. The first focus group discovered some common themes that are reflected in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2. Focus Group One Themes.

	Themes
Focus Group One (Exodus 15:1-21)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moses’ Leadership • Reflection on God • Trust in God and Moses • How Worshipful Moses was • Miriam’s Leadership

Table 4.2 shows that the participants identified three examples of leadership in Exodus 15:1-21. The participants showed a common theme on the importance of reflecting on God and His power, that trusting God and His chosen leaders is important, and how worshipful Moses was and what that meant to them. The participants acknowledged that the Scripture did give Miriam the leadership role distinction of “prophetess.” They admitted that both Moses and Miriam were highlighted as the two main characters and that both of them were shown as having a level of leadership in the text. They also noted that Miriam and Moses were portrayed as being worshipful toward God. Since focus group one was the first of the eleven focus groups, not many people chose to add to the discussion. Although many participants did not add to the discussion

¹⁷⁹ Warren Baker, *The Complete Word Study Old Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG International, Inc., 1994), 2337.

through speech, they did add through their body language. For instance, they would shake their heads in agreement to what was being said by the other participants.

Focus Group Two

Focus group two was one of the most significant focus groups out of the eleven. For focus group two, the chosen Scripture was Judges 5 because the Scripture highlights the importance of Deborah to the Jewish people of her time. Again, the participants were given the Scripture of Judges 5 for context, but for this paper, only the verses about Deborah's importance will be discussed (Judg, 5:1-2, 7, 12, 15). In Judges 5:1-2, 7, 12, and 15, the Bible says:

Then sang Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam on that day, saying, Praise ye the LORD for the avenging of Israel, when the people willingly offered themselves...The inhabitants of the villages ceased, they ceased in Israel, until that I Deborah arose, that I arose a mother in Israel...Awake, awake, Deborah: awake, awake, utter a song: arise, Barak, and lead thy captivity captive, thou son of Abinoam...And the princes of Issachar were with Deborah; even Issachar, and also Barak: he was sent on foot into the valley. For the divisions of Reuben there were great thoughts of heart (KJV).

The overall context of the Scripture of Judges is Israel not obeying God. When discussing the context of the book, P. Deryn Guest and Gerald West concluded, "Israel does evil in the eyes of Yahweh; is subsequently given over to the hands of enemies; cries to Yahweh; Yahweh raises up a leader to resolve the crisis; the spirit of Yahweh comes upon the leader; the enemy is defeated; peace is regained."¹⁸⁰ In Judges 5 the literary context is poetry. In further discussion of the literary context and Deborah's role of leadership, N. Scott Amos, Timothy George, and Scott M. Manetsch concluded, "Deborah is named first here, because she was a prophetess, and (as on

¹⁸⁰ P. Deryn Guest and Gerald West, *Judges and Ruth*, Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2019), 14.

this ground it is probably thought) the composer of this song, and in every respect the leader in this business, as we see in the former chapter.”¹⁸¹

Since Judges 5 is attributed as being a song, it is important to look at what the particular context of Judges 5 is. When discussing the context of Judges 5, David J. H. Beldman concluded, “Deborah witnesses not only to the people of God but also to the nations about what has just transpired. Her song is, nevertheless, to Yahweh, who has a particular relationship with Israel (i.e., ‘the God of Israel’).”¹⁸² Essentially, Deborah is praising and worshiping God for the success of battle as leader and prophet of Israel. In Judges 5 Deborah is shown as a leader of Israel, mother of Israel, and prophet. Deborah is also given the title of Judge, which means she was instituted and empowered by both the Lord and the Holy Spirit in her roles.¹⁸³ This implies that Deborah received her calling from God and God alone. With Deborah given the role of “mother” in verse 7, it is important to look at the original text and the meaning of this role. The original language for mother is shown as “אִמָּה” and it is given the definition of “mother.”¹⁸⁴

Now that Judges 5 has been looked at, it is important to note what happened in focus group number two. The second focus group flowed much more smoothly because more participants seemed comfortable adding to the discussion than in focus group one. What was intriguing about this particular focus group is even though most of the participants acknowledged the importance of Deborah’s leadership, a few male participants felt it necessary to recognize that Deborah was not the typical leader of the time period, and therefore was not the typical leader of the time being that she was not male and was instilled as a leader because there were no

¹⁸¹ N. Scott Amos, Timothy George, and Scott M. Manetsch, ed., *Joshua, Judges, Ruth*, Reformation Commentary on Scripture: Old Testament IV (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2020), 267-268.

¹⁸² David J. H. Beldman, *Judges*, The Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2020), 81.

¹⁸³ Pelt, *Deuteronomy – Ruth*, 706.

¹⁸⁴ Baker, *The Complete Word Study*, 2301.

good men at the time for the role of leader. One of the male participants implied that Deborah had limited power because Barak was in control of the armies of the time. This participant explained that Barak was in control and Deborah was not a real leader.

A connection was even made to the modern-day church, and it was acknowledged that men were to hold higher leadership roles in the church. This was done by one of the male participants discussing the head coverings covered in 1 Corinthians 11. There was also some tension between a wife and husband during this focus group. The wife recognized the leadership of Deborah in the Scripture, and her husband disagreed about Deborah's leadership. The two were in disagreement on what Scripture is actually contributing to Deborah's leadership in Judges 5. Even with this disagreement happening during the discussion, some common themes came to light from the focus group and are shown in table 4.3.

Table 4.3. Focus Group Two Themes.

Focus Group Two (Judges 5)	Themes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deborah Highlighted • Praise is Given to God • Relationship between God and Man • Deborah was the Exception of the Time Period

Some common themes the participants showed in focus group two are Deborah's leadership and that praise must be given to God, the significance of the relationship between God and Man, and the insignificance of Deborah's leadership. Table 4.3 shows that the participants felt that Deborah was a leader. The participants that felt that Deborah was a leader pointed to verse seven, showing Deborah as a leader of Israel. Some participants contradicted this feeling and voiced that Deborah's leadership was an exception to the times because Barak is shown with her as a leader in the Scripture. During the discussion, it was discussed that Deborah could not be

considered a leader since her leadership was displayed through Barak being in the power of the army of the Israelites. This theme contradicts the view in verse seven, showing Deborah teaching the people of Israel what it means to follow God.¹⁸⁵ Table 4.3 shows that the participants felt that the Scripture highlighted the importance of praise being given to God. The participants also showed a significance that needs to be respected regarding the relationship between God and Man and that Christians must remember that God deserves praise and worship.

Focus Group Three

The Scripture that was chosen for focus group three was John 4:27-42. This Scripture was picked for the study because the Scripture highlights the importance of the Samaritan woman at the well. Since this story is so long and famous, the participants were only given the last portion of the story of the woman at the well because the focus groups were expected to culminate within a certain time frame. For this paper, the whole story will be discussed, but only some verses will be looked at in detail. The particular verses of John 4 are v.29 and v.39-42. In John 4:29, 39-42, the Bible says:

Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?...And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did. So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days. And many more believed because of his own word; and said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world (KJV).

The literary style of John is a narrative of Jesus' life.¹⁸⁶ It is believed that John's recounting of Jesus was written for the early patriarchal church.¹⁸⁷ The understanding that John's

¹⁸⁵ Evans, *Judges and Ruth*, 83.

¹⁸⁶ Martin and Wright, *The Gospel of John*, 21.

¹⁸⁷ Osborne, *John*, 13-14.

Gospel was written for the early church to recount the life of Jesus gives the context of the overall Gospel. The context of John 4 is the recounting of Jesus heading to Samaria to further His ministry and to also speak to the Samaritan woman. When discussing the context of John 4, Johannes Beutler, SJ concluded, “Jesus’s starting out from Judaea to Galilee and his stay in Samaria in John 4 is clearly the beginning of a new section.”¹⁸⁸ It is outside of the town in Samaria that Jesus encounters the woman at the well, converts her, and uses her to further His ministry in Samaria (see John 4:7, 29, 39-42). Michael Card gives the culture of John 4 by discussing the disciples' reaction to Jesus talking to the Samaritan woman by concluding, “They are surprised that Jesus is talking to a woman. Perhaps the deep division between men and women in Jesus’ day was as deeply ingrained as the schism between the Samaritans and the Jews.”¹⁸⁹ It is noted that during this time, women were not allowed to speak to men in public, and their testimonies were meaningless.¹⁹⁰ Yet Jesus used her even knowing the culture of the time.

In verse 29, the Samaritan woman is shown leaving Jesus to evangelize to the people of the Samaritan town.¹⁹¹ Because of verse 29, the Samaritan woman is even accounted to have a prophet role.¹⁹² Verse 39 shows that the Samaritans of the town believed in Jesus because of her testimony.¹⁹³ In verse 39, the word “testified” is originally in Greek as “μαρτυρέω” and means

¹⁸⁸ Johannes Beutler, SJ, *A Commentary on the Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2017), 88.

¹⁸⁹ Michael Card, *John: The Gospel of Wisdom*, Biblical Imagination Series (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 70.

¹⁹⁰ Osborne, *John*, 78.

¹⁹¹ Martin and Wright, *The Gospel of John*, 90.

¹⁹² Osborne, *John*, 78.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 91.

“to witness,”¹⁹⁴ which was already shown as not being culturally appropriate for the time, and even with this known, Jesus still used her to further His ministry.

Focus group three was where the first instance of change showed itself in one of the research participants. This change was noticed because one of the church members was baptized during the week of focus group three. Then after her baptism, the pastor prayed out loud that the female congregant has a leadership role in the church, just as Deborah was shown to have a leadership role in Judges 5. This is important because the pastor was one of the original men who disputed Deborah’s leadership in focus group two. This was significant because this instance of change happened outside of the focus groups and intertwined with the actual church service.

Focus group three was similar to the two prior focus groups because common themes emerged from the focus group discussion. These common themes from focus group three can be seen in table 4.4.

Table 4.4. Focus Group Three Themes.

	Themes
Focus Group Three (John 4:27-42)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gospel is Not About Gender Roles • Jesus was Extraordinary • Leaving Comfort Zone • Everyone Matters • Importance of Evangelism

Table 4.4 highlights some common themes that the research participants showed in their discussion: that the Gospel does not display gender roles, that Jesus was extraordinary and went to uncomfortable situations, that everyone matters, and the importance of evangelism. When the participants were discussing the Gospel not having gender roles, the participants kept pointing to

¹⁹⁴ Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study New Testament: Bringing the Original Text to Life* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG International, Inc., 1992), 47.

John 4, showing Jesus using a woman to evangelize in Samaria at a time that this would have been frowned upon culturally. The participants acknowledged that the Samaritan woman was not someone Jesus should have been speaking to because of the differences between Jewish and Samaritan citizens. The participants also acknowledged that Jesus showed in John 4:27-42 that everyone is important to Him and that everyone is responsible for furthering His ministry.

The research participants acknowledged that even though the Samaritan woman was considered an outcast in her society, she mattered to Jesus. They also acknowledged that Jesus used the Samaritan woman to start His ministry in Samaria. The research participants believed that the Samaritan woman was given importance in John 4:27-42 not only by Jesus but also for her being accounted for evangelizing to the local community of Samaria. The research participants did not necessarily acknowledge the Samaritan woman as a leader, but the participants did recognize her as important to Jesus and His ministry in Samaria.

Focus Group Four

The Scripture for focus group four was John 12:1-11. The reason this Scripture was chosen is that the Scripture looks at the importance of Mary and her anointing of Jesus's feet with expensive perfume and using her hair to rub the perfume in (see John 12:3). The individual context and literary styles of John 12:1-11 are that of a gathering after Lazarus was resurrected from death by Jesus and is the foretelling to Jesus' death and resurrection, which is recognized by Mary of Bethany. Thus the literary style of is both that of the narrative style and prophetic style.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁵ Osborne, *John*, 188.

The key verse for this text is verse 3. In verse 3, Mary is shown honoring Jesus with anointing oil and using her hair to dry His feet, which is an attribute of Mary's character.¹⁹⁶ The accounts of Mary of Bethany usually show her sitting at the feet of Jesus, learning from Jesus.¹⁹⁷ This implies that Mary of Bethany was a disciple of Jesus.¹⁹⁸ Mary's anointing of Jesus shows her understanding of Jesus' teachings to the disciples that His death was coming.¹⁹⁹ In verse 3, the original Greek language for the word "anointed" is "ἀλείφω" which is translated as "anoint."²⁰⁰ Anointing in the culture of John 12 was typically preserved for the promotion of a role or office or used in scenarios of death.²⁰¹

In this particular focus group, many things were highlighted as being important. Only a few things that were pointed out amongst the participants showed a semblance of a theme. Some participants wanted to focus on Lazarus, Jesus, and Judas, but others wanted to focus on Mary being the most important figure in the Scripture next to Jesus. This particular focus group is where a divide between the female and male participants started to show itself. The male participants primarily focused on the male figures of the Scripture, but the female participants highlighted the importance of Mary in this Scripture. From the men focusing on the male characters of the story and the females focusing on Mary's anointing, it appears that the symbolism and importance of Mary's anointing of Jesus may have escaped the male participants. Some other themes that were discovered from the focus group discussion can be seen in table 4.5.

¹⁹⁶ Martin and Wright, *The Gospel of John*, 218.

¹⁹⁷ Card, *John*, 142.

¹⁹⁸ Mathews, *Gender Roles and the People of God*, 72.

¹⁹⁹ Beutler, *A Commentary on the Gospel of John*, 247.

²⁰⁰ Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study*, 9.

²⁰¹ Osborne, *John*, 188.

Table 4.5. Focus Group Four Themes.

	Themes
Focus Group Four (John 12:1-11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship to Jesus is Important • Jesus was a Leader • Mary was Important and a Leader • Willingness to Follow • Servitude for Others

Some common themes that were shared amongst the focus group participants are shown in table 4.5. The themes uncovered during focus group four are the importance of the relationship between Jesus and Man. Also, the participants acknowledged that Jesus was highlighted as an important leader in John 12:1-11. Some of the participants gave Mary credit for being important to Jesus. Additionally, some participants felt Mary was shown in John 12:1-11 as a leader amongst the disciples.

Some participants agreed that the Scripture highlighted that a willingness to follow Jesus is important and that Christians and Christian leaders need to have an attitude and value of servitude for others. This is important because Jesus taught this attitude of leading by serving His disciples.²⁰² Although there was a bit of a divide in acknowledging the important figures and leaders of John 12:1-11, it seemed that the participants clicked with one another during this focus group study and agreed that Mary was significant to the Scripture. They did this by eventually agreeing that Mary portrays how Christians should be sitting at Jesus's feet, learning and worshipping Him.

²⁰² Miller, *Beyond Authority and Submission*, 21.

Focus Group Five

Romans 16:1-27 was the Scripture that was chosen for focus group five. This Scripture was chosen because it highlights many important females that Paul acknowledges as important or that Paul acknowledges as having a leadership position in the early churches. The culture of the text is that of antiquity Roman society. When discussing the culture of Romans, Craig S. Keener concluded, “Given the different cultural orientations of congregations in the same city, probably at least as loosely connected as the different synagogues, it is not surprising that misunderstandings would arise between groups with a predominantly Jewish ethos.”²⁰³ The context of Romans is that of a reiteration of the gospels. When discussing the context and purpose of Paul’s letter Michael J. Gorman concluded, “Most scholars agree that there is a variety of reasons for Romans. For instance, the letter serves as a splendid introduction to the apostle and his teachings so that the Romans will both accept him when he comes (regardless of whether there were already some critics of Paul in Rome) and, he no doubt hopes, support him in his mission work, especially as he heads for Spain.”²⁰⁴

The literary context for Paul’s letter seems to be hard to classify as one particular genre and is referred to the writing style of Paul’s letters.²⁰⁵ The specific context of Romans 16 is a farewell and blessings to the house churches of Romans 16.²⁰⁶ Romans 16 highlights female leaders that Paul personally acknowledges their roles and their importance to him (see Rom 16:1-3, 6-7). In verses 1 and 2, Phebe (also known as Phebe) is highlighted by Paul. When discussing

²⁰³ Craig S. Keener, *Romans: A New Covenant Commentary*, New Covenant Commentary Series, ed. Michael F. Bird and Craig Keener (Cambridge, UK: The Lutterworth Press, 2011), page number.

²⁰⁴ Michael J. Gorman, *Romans: A Theological and Pastoral Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2022), 39.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 44.

²⁰⁶ Sherwood, *Romans*, 527.

the role distinction that Paul awards Phebe, David E. Garland concluded, “Paul also commends her as a deacon or ‘servant,’ depending on whether one regards the word diakonos as a reference to a church office or not. By itself, the term diakonos need only denote servanthood (13:4; 15:8; 1 Cor. 3:5; Col. 1:7; 4:7; cf. Mark 9:35; 10:43).”²⁰⁷ Yet Garland later admits that “One can reasonably infer, however, that she is a leader in the church.”²⁰⁸

In verse 3, Priscilla and Aquila are commended as “my helpers in Christ Jesus” (KJV). Some refer to Priscilla and Aquila being apostles as well.²⁰⁹ Verse 6 discusses, “Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us” (KJV). Mary doesn’t seem to get a role by scholars, but they acknowledge her work ethic as a hard worker.²¹⁰ Then in verse 7, the highly contested Junia is referred to as “apostles.” Some suggest that Junia may have belonged to the Jewish church in Rome before the Gentile church was incorporated.²¹¹

Looking at the original text to gain a better understanding is important. In verse 3, Phebe’s role is referred to “servant.” The Greek for this word is “διάκονος,” which is where the role of deacon comes into play and the meaning, according to Zodhiates, is “deacon, Minister, and Servant.”²¹² In verse 3, Priscilla and Aquila are referred to with the roles of “helpers” by Paul. The Greek for this is “συνεργός” and the meaning, according to Zodhiates, is “co-labourer.”²¹³ In verse 7, Junia is given the role of “apostle.” The Greek for this is “ἀπόστολος”

²⁰⁷ David E. Garland, *Romans: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 6, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*, ed. Eckhard J. Schnabel and Nicholas Perrin (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2021), 28.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 28.

²⁰⁹ Sherwood, *Romans*, 520.

²¹⁰ Gorman, *Romans*, 241.

²¹¹ Keener, *Romans*, 212.

²¹² Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study*, 23.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 69.

and the meaning, according to Zodhiates, is “ambassador of the Gospel.”²¹⁴ It appears that both Egalitarians and Complementarians could utilize these translations to benefit their point of view.

The common themes found in focus group five are in table 4.6.

Table 4.6. Focus Group Five Themes.

	Themes
Focus Group Five (Romans 16:1-27)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes a Village to Run a Ministry • More than One Leader • Thankfulness as a Leader is Important • Equality in Roles of Leadership and a Willingness to Serve • Phebe Acknowledged as a Deacon

Before focus group five, there seemed to be some changes in some participants. Focus group five seemed to be where the most change occurred for the group as a whole. This was because the groups came to a unified agreement that Romans 16:1-27 showed equality of leadership amongst the genders of the early church, which Paul acknowledged. Even the themes in table 4.6 seem to highlight a slight shift of values uncovered from this focus group. There seems to be more of a resemblance of a value of equality amongst the participants’ answers and understanding of Romans 16:1-27. The participants also acknowledged that Paul showed that all are called to serve in some leadership capacity as Christians. They did this by acknowledging all the different roles Paul gave the women and men in the text.

It is essential to look at the individual themes that were discovered in focus group five. One common theme in the discussion was that it takes a village to run a successful ministry. Also, the participants agreed that in Romans 16:1-27, Paul highlighted that there could be more than one leader in a church or ministry. Another theme the participants agreed upon is that

²¹⁴ Ibid., 15.

Christian leaders must show appreciation to those who help them in their ministry. Multiple participants agreed there must be a willingness to serve others. More than one participant acknowledged that they had never heard or seen anything about Phebe before that focus group. Many participants seemed bewildered that Paul recognized Phebe as a deacon.

Second Questionnaire

Halfway through the research study, the participants were asked to answer the second questionnaire. Two questionnaires were used to understand further how the participants felt about Christian leadership and to see if there was any change from the start of the research study to the middle of the study. As previously mentioned, a third questionnaire was assumed unnecessary for the research study because it was assumed that the focus group changed discussion answers and would signify any change amongst the research participants had occurred by the end of the research study. One of the research participants highlighted in multiple answers that their understanding of Christian leadership had changed from the study and that they came to an understanding of equality in leadership from the study. Overall, the data from the second questionnaire shows that there was a new understanding of Christian leadership. This was mainly shown by multiple participants' answers to question five of the second questionnaire, which asked the participants to list ten biblical examples of leaders from both Testaments. It was found that for the second questionnaire, more people listed women as biblical examples of leaders than what was originally found in the first questionnaire. Some other common themes that were highlighted in the second questionnaire can be seen in table 4.7.

Table 4.7. Second Questionnaire Themes.

Second Questionnaire	Themes
Question One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faith • Boldness • Humble
Question Two	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership Equality • Lead by Example • Teaching • Worshipping of God
Question Three	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study the Word • Lead by Example • Be Fearless • Relationship with God • Serving Others
Question Four	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No limitations • All are Called to Lead
Question Five	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Examples of Biblical Leaders • Deeper Understanding of Scriptures

It is worth noting that the second questionnaire also had five questions the participants were asked to answer. The themes were collected from the research participants' answers to these five questions. Question one asked the research participants to reflect on the five Scriptures of the focus groups and to comment on the change in characteristics and values that came from discussing them. Some common themes that were revealed from the questionnaires are that the participants valued the characteristics of faith, boldness, and humility that the five Scriptures highlighted as examples of biblical leadership.

Since humility in church leadership has already been discussed in the first questionnaire, it will not be discussed here. This leaves the examples of faith and boldness. According to the participants, faith is important for their church leaders to have within and outside of the church. One participant quoted Hebrews 13:7 in their answer, which says, “Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering

the end of their conversation” (KJV). When discussing the theme of boldness, the participants listed Jesus as the reason for this boldness.

For question two, the participants were asked to list the roles a Christian leader can serve and if there was any change of understanding before participating in the research study. From the participants' answers, some common themes can be seen in the questionnaires. It can be seen that the participants valued equality in leadership. It was found that multiple participants answered that everyone has a duty to be a leader in the church and that roles should be available for all to serve in. The participants also value leaders that lead by example. Multiple participants showed that they value a leader who is confident in their role and is God fearing, which exemplifies to the congregation how they are to act. Lastly, it can be seen that the participants value leaders who teach and show worship to God. The participants indicated that they value leaders who teach the Bible as it is and that they also value a leader who gives God the glory for their successes in their roles. Moses and Miriam from Exodus 15:1-21 are good examples of this.

Question three of the final questionnaire asked the participants how Christian leaders can lead by example using the covered Scriptures from the eleven focus groups. One common theme that the participants' value are leaders who lead by example (this was discussed in question two). The participants also showed that they value leaders that have their heads in the Bible and are always learning and conveying this in their leadership characteristics. The participants also showed a common theme of valuing fearless leaders. The examples that multiple participants agreed on for this value is that they value leaders who evangelize to non-believers. Also, the participants showed value for a leader in having a relationship with God. Multiple answers showed that a church leader could fulfill this value by having a prayerful life. The participants also showed value in a Christian leader's servant attitude toward others. Multiple people showed

that a Christian leader can display this value in their willingness to always be willing to help those in need. Again, Jesus was pointed to as an example of this value of willingness to serve.

Question four asked the research participants to explain any limitations they felt a Christian leader should not be allowed to display and to give examples of Christian leadership. The common themes that were uncovered from the participants' answers to question four are that the participants felt there should be no limitations. They conveyed this by answering that all are called to lead as Christians. The common example that was given was that when a person is filled with the Holy Spirit, they are called to lead the church. This can be seen from Acts 1:13-14, which lists both men and women that were present in the room where the Holy Spirit later entered into them in Acts 2 on the day known as Pentecost. This shows a significant change from where the focus groups started to where the focus groups ended.

Question five asked the participants to reflect on the ten examples of biblical leaders they listed in the introductory questionnaire and if any instances of change happened in their answers from the introductory questionnaire. No one listed any examples of biblical leaders. Instead, the participants acknowledged a theme that they gained new examples of biblical leaders from the covered Scriptures of the focus groups rather than listing individual examples. A few participants stated that the focus groups had given them a new understanding of who could be church leaders. The next week brought the remaining six focus groups.

Last Six Focus Groups

In week seven, the remaining six focus groups started. The research study was designed to have a break in between the two sets of focus groups because each set showed corresponding Scriptures that either supported the Egalitarian view or the Complementarian view. At the

beginning of the last six focus groups, the participants started to confront the issue at hand on whether or not the Scriptures limited women from serving in church leadership positions. This shift felt needed because these last six Scriptures are used by Complementarians to further support their argument on certain church leadership positions being reserved for men alone.

Focus Group Six

The Scripture that was covered for this focus group was 1 Timothy 2:1-15, which was picked because it places restrictions on women from teaching and usurping authority over their male counterparts in the church. Again, the full text of 1 Timothy 2:1-15 was given to the focus group so they could see the context of the Scripture. For this study, only 1 Timothy 2:11-12 will be discussed. In 1 Timothy 2:11-12, the Bible says, “Let the women learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence” (KJV). These verses place role restrictions on women, so it is essential to look at them specifically. It is fundamental to learn more about the Scripture first.

The context of 1 Timothy and 2 Timothy is that Timothy was struggling with his ministry in Ephesus, and Paul is trying to encourage Timothy to stay strong. When discussing the context of 1 Timothy and 2 Timothy, Robert W. Wall and Richard B. Steele concluded, “Timothy is asked to organize a Christian congregation in a pagan place and safeguard the Pauline tradition for the Next generation, tasks Paul himself was appointed to complete.”²¹⁵ This means the local culture of 1 Timothy and 2 Timothy would be that of non-Christians. When discussing the

²¹⁵ Robert W. Wall and Richard B. Steele, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus*, The Two Horizons New Testament Commentary, ed. Joel B. Green and Max Turner (Grand Rapids: MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012), 57.

culture of 1 Timothy and 2 Timothy, Swindoll concluded, “If the lure of money and magic didn’t add enough chaos, the city of Ephesus also attracted schools of philosophy.”²¹⁶

The literary style of these two letters is that of official and individual letters.²¹⁷ This means that the letters were written by a superior to give direction, and the letters were written with a semblance of compassion.²¹⁸ The specific context of 1 Timothy 2 was Paul giving ideas to Timothy about how the ideal church should behave under Timothy’s guidance. When discussing 1 Timothy 2’s context, David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida concluded, “Men and women should glorify God in the church by gladly submitting to the commands and patterns laid out in Scripture.”²¹⁹

In verses 11-12, Paul issued some restrictions on women in the church. Some keywords need to be looked at to understand Paul’s words further. The context of verse 11 makes it seem like women in the church were trying to control the conversations in the church.²²⁰ This is why verse 11 has two keywords: “silence” and “subjection.” Now that there are some keywords, it is important to look at the original language. “Silence” in Greek is “ἡσυχία” and according to Zodhiates, this means “stillness, silence, and quietness.”²²¹ For “subjection,” the Greek word is “ὑποταγή” and according to Zodhiates, this means “subjection.”²²²

²¹⁶ Swindoll, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, 10.

²¹⁷ Padilla, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 44.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida, ed., *Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus*, Christ – Centered Exposition (Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing Group, 2013), 34.

²²⁰ Padilla, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 111.

²²¹ Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study*, 35.

²²² Ibid., 75.

Verse 12 shows that the church was experiencing false teaching and women disturbing the church service.²²³ In verse 12, three keywords and phrases stand out: “teach,” “usurp authority,” and “silence.” When looking at “teach,” the Greek is “διδάσκω” and according to Zodhiates, this means “to teach.”²²⁴ The Greek word for “usurp authority” is “αὐθεντέω,” which, according to Zodhiates, means to “dominate.”²²⁵ Thus, from the scholarly context and looking at the original language and meaning, it appears that Paul was putting some restrictions on this church that was experiencing false teaching and disorderly women. In these instances, Paul’s direction would be beneficial to get the church back on track, but what if a church is not experiencing these issues? The biblical context of the full Bible doesn’t seem to support these restrictions when looking at examples from the Bible of Jesus using women to further His ministry, which has already been discussed in this paper.

Table 4.8. Focus Group Six Themes.

	Themes
Focus Group Six (1 Timothy 2:1-15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encompassing everyone in the church • Should not usurp authority man or woman • Culture has changed in the church allowing all to serve • No restriction found • Women receive the calling as well • Submission is respecting others • Context matters

Table 4.8 shows some common themes uncovered from the sixth focus group. One theme that the focus group participants agreed on about 1 Timothy 2:1-15 is that the passage encompassed everyone in the church, which means that the passage is useful for modeling

²²³ Montague, *First and Second Timothy, Titus*, 64.

²²⁴ Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study*, 23.

²²⁵ Ibid., 17.

church leadership roles for the whole church. The participants pointed out the word “all” that Paul used at the beginning of the text (see 1 Timothy 2:1-2, 4, 6). They felt that this “all” encompassed the whole church and not just men alone. Another theme that the focus group participants agreed upon was that the Scripture showed that males and females should not usurp authority over their counterparts. They showed this theme by discussing the context of the Scripture applied to that church and that men are guilty of acting out.

The research participants also agreed that the culture from 1 Timothy 2:1-15 is different than today’s culture. Therefore, these restrictions are no longer applicable in today’s churches because most churches are not experiencing the problems that Paul was addressing. The research participants found that 1 Timothy 2:1-15 shows no restrictions on who can serve in church leadership roles. Some participants voiced that “both men and women receive the calling.” They also agreed and found that “submission” refers to respecting and helping others. The last theme they discussed was that the context of the Scripture and Bible matters, and one could not simply look at a few verses of Scripture to form an ideology and, instead, keep the context of the whole Bible in mind to form an opinion. They did this by pointing to the earlier Scriptures of focus groups one through five, showing examples of female leaders.

Focus Group Seven

The above section of 1 Timothy 2 examined the author, date, culture, literary style, and context for the book of 1 Timothy. First Timothy 3:1-16 will be discussed in this area of the paper, excluding the findings from the above section. The context of this text is Paul laying out the qualification for two church leadership roles.²²⁶ The reason for this direction from Paul is that

²²⁶ Montague, *First and Second Timothy, Titus*, 72.

without leaders in the church, the congregation will be led astray.²²⁷ First Timothy 3:1-16 was chosen to discuss for one of the focus groups because it describes the offices of bishop and deacons. Verses 1-7 refer specifically to the office of bishop, and verses 8-13 refer to the office of deacons.

It is essential to discuss that in these verses, the gender for these offices is shown solely referring to men, which would seem to exclude women from these roles. Yet, a possibility is shown in verses 8 and 11, correlating that Paul is actually addressing women serving in the deacon's office.²²⁸ Some churches combine the office of deacon and bishop/overseer.²²⁹ Since Phebe was discussed as a deacon, recorded as such by Paul in Romans 16:1-2, this would imply that women could serve in both roles. It is also worth noting that for both offices, Paul suggests that they should be “the husband of one wife” (1 Tim. 2:1, 12), which would then disqualify Paul from serving in either of these roles because he is shown as a single man in the Scriptures (see 1 Cor. 7:7-9). Also, 1 Timothy 3 doesn't speak to a calling for these offices but instead speaks to the characteristics and spiritual maturity that these two offices should display.²³⁰ With these two offices being discussed in the text, the original meaning of these two offices needs to be looked at. The Greek word for “bishop” is “ἐπίσκοπος” and according to Zodhiates, means “superintendence and overseer.”²³¹ The Greek for deacon was discussed in focus group five and will not be discussed here.

²²⁷ Padilla, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 118.

²²⁸ Swindoll, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, 68.

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Wall and Steele, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus*, 92.

²³¹ Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study*, 31.

Table 4.9. Focus Group Seven Themes.

	Themes
Focus Group Seven (1 Timothy 3:1-16)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No role limitation on women • Trustworthy matters • Context matters • The culture was different than today's culture • Women allowed to serve in all roles

In table 4.9, the themes for focus group seven are shown. One theme that the research participants voiced in the focus group discussion is that they did not see any supporting evidence for role limitations for women in church leadership positions. Instead, they concluded that more restrictions are being placed on men than there are women, and they pointed to verses 8 and 11 discussing women and the rest of the text concerning men. There were still a few men who voiced that the Scripture limits women from serving in at least the offices of bishop and/or deacon. When this was expressed in the group discussion, another one of the males shared that the Scriptures show Jesus as the head of the church, and with Jesus being the head of the church, these positions hold no significance and cannot be counted as being the head of the church; therefore, women should still be allowed to serve in whatever capacity they want to in the church leadership. The Scriptures that support this man's claims are 1 Cor. 11:3; Col. 1:18; and 2:10. The research participants also voiced themes that context matters and that the culture of 1 Timothy 3 is different than today, which is therefore useful for guidance but does not apply to limiting church leadership roles. They spoke on how the context of 1 Timothy is shown as Timothy dealing with false teachers. The examples of leading women from the earlier focus group discussion show examples of women serving in these roles.

Focus Group Eight

In focus group eight, Titus 1:5-9 was picked because the office of elder is discussed. When discussing the literary style of Titus, Daniel M. Dorian and Richard D. Phillips concluded, “The letter to Titus shows that during this same general time frame (the early A.D. 60s), Paul had preached the gospel in Crete and then left Titus to carry on the church-planting work (Titus 1:5).”²³² The context of the Scripture is similar to 1 Timothy with there being a threat of false teachers and Paul warning and giving direction to the church to counter these false teachers.²³³ The context is also shown as the church of Crete dealing with Jewish Christians imposing that to be a Christian, one must practice the customs of Judaism first.²³⁴ This means that the culture Titus was dealing with, and the reasoning for Paul’s letter, was that the Jewish congregation was teaching that redemption was through Jewish customs and works.²³⁵

The context of Titus 1 is that there are new congregations in Crete, and Paul is instructing Titus to appoint leaders to lead these new congregations.²³⁶ In verse 5, the office of elder is introduced, and in verse 7, they are compared to the office of bishop. Leadership roles are often combined in the Bible, which is shown in the office of Elder, Overseer, and pastor.²³⁷ Paul gives the same qualifications for the office of elder as he did for the office of bishop and deacon in 1 Timothy 3.²³⁸ Since the role of “elder” is a new office introduced, it is essential to look at the original meaning and language. The Greek word for “elder” is “πρεσβύτερος,” which, according

²³² Daniel M. Dorian and Richard D. Phillips, *2 Timothy and Titus*, Reformed Expository Commentary, ed. Richard D. Phillips and Philip Graham Ryken (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2020), 23.

²³³ Wall and Steele, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus*, 280.

²³⁴ Swindoll, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, 284.

²³⁵ Wall and Steele, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus*, 282.

²³⁶ Montague, *First and Second Timothy, Titus*, 212.

²³⁷ Platt, Akin, and Merida, *Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus*, 235.

²³⁸ Padilla, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 248.

to Zodhiates, means “senior.”²³⁹ This further translates to a member of a church congregation who has some seniority in their faith or some seniority in the church and shows Paul highlighting the qualities of personal and public maturity.²⁴⁰ Similarly, focus group eight uncovered some common themes from the research participants’ group discussion. These common themes can be seen in the table 4.10.

Table 4.10. Focus Group Eight Themes.

	Themes
Focus Group Eight (Titus 1:5-9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different culture • God decides who is called to lead, not man • No restrictions on women's leadership roles • The church is supposed to be unified, not telling others what they can do and serve in • Scripture refers to all humanity, not one or the other

In table 4.10, the themes from focus group eight are shown. The research participants discussed that the culture was different than today because churches today send women to the mission field and did not do the same in the culture of Titus. The research participants also shared that God decides who is called to serve in the leadership positions of the church and not man. When discussing this, they highlighted that men have no right to decide who gets to be a church leader, but only God has this right. They also shared that the church's people need to respect if someone feels called to serve and should help rather than hinder them. This was conveyed by the mention of servitude in the congregation. Another theme they agreed on is that Scripture often encompasses all of humanity when it refers to “man” and means “humanity,” and that it is hard to discern in these instances of Scripture if the Scripture is encompassing humanity or if the Scripture is specifically referring to the gender of male or female. When discussing this,

²³⁹ Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study*, 60.

²⁴⁰ Wall and Steele, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus*, 287.

J. D. Douglas and Merrill C. Tenney concluded, “The phrase, in general terms, refers to human beings as changed by the Holy Spirit through Faith in Jesus Christ.”²⁴¹ This is why paying attention to the context of the Bible matters.

Focus Group Nine

For focus group nine, Titus 2:1-15 was the passage examined. The context of this Scripture is Paul teaching the church how to be godly men and women.²⁴² Paul is reminding the church how to have relationships with each other and the secular society.²⁴³ For this paper, verses 3-5 will be discussed. Titus 2:3-5 says,

The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed (KJV).

Titus 2 was chosen because it gives a role that women can serve in a church. In the above verses, it can be seen that older women of the church can serve in the role of a teacher to younger women of the church.²⁴⁴ They can disciple them and teach them the godly qualities that Paul lays out in verses 3-5 on how to be a godly woman.²⁴⁵ Since a role has been determined for women to serve in using the Scripture, it is important to look at the original meaning and language for the role distinction. In Titus 2:3, the Bible refers to “aged women,” and the Greek for this is

²⁴¹ J. D. Douglas and Merrill C. Tenney, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 887.

²⁴² Dorian and Phillips, *2 Timothy and Titus*, 30.

²⁴³ Padilla, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 260.

²⁴⁴ Swindoll, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, 324.

²⁴⁵ Wall and Steele, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus*, 294.

“πρεσβυτις,” which, according to Zodhiates means, “an old woman.”²⁴⁶ Table 4.11 below shows the common themes uncovered from focus group nine’s group discussion.

Table 4.11. Focus Group Nine Themes.

	Themes
Focus Group Nine (Titus 2:1-15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older women have a responsibility to teach younger women • Scripture does not limit any roles • Where is the man's leadership • Women are teachers • There is an importance placed on the family in the Scripture

In Table 4.11, one theme that the research participants agreed upon is that older women of the church have a responsibility to mentor the younger women of the church. They pointed to verses 3 and 4 to support the theme. They also felt that Titus 2 does not restrict women’s roles to serve in church leadership positions. They did this by pointing out that Titus 2 doesn’t show any restrictions like 1 Timothy 3 did from focus group seven. The research participants agreed that women often step up to church leadership roles because the church's men are absent. They talked about how some men no longer seek leadership roles in the church or home, forcing women to step up to the leadership role. The research participants also decided that the Scripture shows that women can be teachers, and they, again, pointed to verses 3 and 4.

Focus Group Ten

The Scripture that was chosen to discuss for focus group ten was 1 Corinthians 11:2-16. The people of Corinth were pagans and worshipped many gods, making it hard for the church of

²⁴⁶ Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study*, 60.

Corinth to fit into the local society.²⁴⁷ When discussing the literary style of the text, Mark Taylor concluded, “In 5:9, Paul mentions a prior letter he wrote to the Corinthians. This earlier letter, which is no longer extant, probably occasioned the Corinthians’ letter to Paul mentioned in 7:1.”²⁴⁸

The context of 1 Corinthians 11 deals with church worship and the Lord’s supper.²⁴⁹ Verses 3, 5-13, and 15 are the main verses of the Scripture that correlate to the purposes of this paper. In 1 Corinthians 11:3, 5-13, and 15, the Bible says:

But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God...But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven. For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered. For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman: but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels. Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God. Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?...But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering (KJV).

The head covering in this society was a culturally appropriated piece of clothing for women. Because of this, women wore them to church.²⁵⁰ The problem was that the Corinthian women were getting excited during church and removing the head coverings, which was causing distractions for the men.²⁵¹ The head covering in verse 3 reminds the church that God created

²⁴⁷ Schreiner, *1 Corinthians*, 3.

²⁴⁸ Mark Taylor, *1 Corinthians*, vol. 28, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2014), xvi.

²⁴⁹ Prior, *The Message of 1 Corinthians*, 164.

²⁵⁰ Schreiner, *1 Corinthians*, 166.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

man and woman out of man, but God is the head of both.²⁵² When discussing the head covering found in verse 5, Leon L. Morris concluded, “The verse plainly indicates that some Corinthian women prayed or prophesied in public worship. That Paul does not criticize the practice, but on the contrary, lays down how women should be dressed when engaging in it.”²⁵³ Paul’s point is that women must have a head covering when doing these things in public.²⁵⁴ This is not a culturally accepted thing in modern-day churches any longer.

In verse 6, the head covering not being worn by a woman was not culturally appropriate and was expected in the local society, so it would have shown that the women were disobeying their husbands and the local cultural appropriations for dress in public.²⁵⁵ Verse 7 implies that men are not to wear the covering because it was not culturally accepted and would bring problems to the church.²⁵⁶ In verses 8 and 9, Paul backtracks to the created order of creation found in the book of Genesis.²⁵⁷ There is no way to know for sure what Paul meant in verse 10 when discussing the angels.²⁵⁸ The angels could be referring to submission and correlating the relationship between husband and wife.²⁵⁹

Verse 11 refers to the relationship of husband and wife in the eyes of God.²⁶⁰ In verse 12, Paul reminds the church that a woman was born by man in God’s creation of man, but after that,

²⁵² Prior, *The Message of 1 Corinthians*, 167.

²⁵³ Leon L. Morris, *1 Corinthians*, vol. 7, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 151.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ Swindoll, *1 & 2 Corinthians*, 162.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ Schreiner, *1 Corinthians*, 220.

²⁵⁸ Prior, *The Message of 1 Corinthians*, 169.

²⁵⁹ Swindoll, *1 & 2 Corinthians*, 163.

²⁶⁰ Morris, *1 Corinthians*, 153.

man is born of a woman and that neither gender is independent of one other but is reliant on God.²⁶¹ Verse 13 is Paul asking the Corinthians if it is culturally appropriate for the Corinthian women not to wear a head covering in public.²⁶² Paul highlights in verse 15 that a woman's hair is something women are proud of in most cultures and is a way that characterizes women from men because men usually do not have long hair.²⁶³ From this discernment of the Scripture, it appears that the head covering of 1 Corinthians 11 is a culturally appropriate piece of dress specific to Corinth. However, now that the Scripture has been discerned it is crucial to look at a role specific word. In verse 10, the Bible uses the word "power" when referring to women, and the Greek translates to "ἐξουσίαν." According to Zodhiates, it means "authority, power, and or strength."²⁶⁴

Table 4.12. Focus Group Ten Themes.

	Themes
Focus Group Ten (1 Corinthians 11:2-16)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scripture shows the importance of family • The culture of today is different • Men need to step up • No restrictions are placed on what roles women can serve in • Traditions of man are different than God's commandments

In table 4.12, the common themes from focus group ten are found. The first theme uncovered is that the Scripture emphasizes the family's importance and roles. This was pointed out because the Scriptures have a lot of wording on the relationship of husband and wife. The research participants agreed that the culture of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 is different from the culture

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Swindoll, *1 & 2 Corinthians*, 164.

²⁶³ Ibid., 165.

²⁶⁴ Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study*, 30.

of most churches today because women no longer cover their heads in public. They decided that these head coverings placed on the women in 1 Corinthians 11 no longer apply to the churches of the modern day.

Another theme that the research participants found is that men in churches need to step up and be important figures within the church because they have a duty to their wives. The research participants found no examples of role restriction for women in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 and found the text to specifically discuss a culturally appropriate piece of dress in Corinthian society. Lastly, the research participants voiced that man's traditions differ from what God meant for the church, which means that men have corrupted the true intention of the church and modeled the church to how man sees fit and not how God sees fit. When discussing this, they were referring to the Lord's supper and how churches do not follow the original intention of it.

Focus Group Eleven

In the previous section, the literary style, context, and culture were discussed for 1 Corinthians. 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 will be looked at in this section. The particular context of the text is Paul addressing the spiritual gifts and tongues in the church.²⁶⁵ The more specific context of the text shows that the church was speaking in tongues to the people they were trying to convert, but they were overwhelming them with too many people speaking in tongues at one time, which was causing confusion.²⁶⁶ Verses 34 and 35 speak to women, specifically. In 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, the Bible says, "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience as also saith the

²⁶⁵ Prior, *The Message of 1 Corinthians*, 219.

²⁶⁶ Swindoll, *1 & 2 Corinthians*, 211.

law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church” (KJV).

In verse 34, Paul tells the women of the Corinthian church “to keep silent.” This is because women were disrupting the teachings and asking questions in a way that challenged the men of the time.²⁶⁷ This was causing a problem in the church because the cultural custom of the society was that women were to be modest in public and respect their husbands. Paul is calling for the women of the Corinthian church also to respect this local culture in the church.²⁶⁸ As mentioned, men received education in the times of antiquity, and women did not. When discussing this, and verse 35, Keener concluded,

Possibly Paul’s ideals on gender (7:2-4; 11:11-12; Gal. 3:28) had created conflict for the concrete milieu of the church. To suggest that the women should learn by asking their husbands at home (14:35) would sound repressive to most of us today (at least where questions can be asked in public meetings), but probably seemed comparatively progressive in Paul’s environment (and in some traditional cultures today).²⁶⁹

One reason this Scripture was chosen is that more needed to be discussed about Paul’s original intention in verse 34 when he says “keep silence.” When looking at “keep silence,” the Greek is “συνάω,” and according to Zodhiates means “to keep silent.”²⁷⁰

²⁶⁷ Schreiner, *1 Corinthians*, 297.

²⁶⁸ Morris, *1 Corinthians*, 193.

²⁶⁹ Craig S. Keener, *1-2 Corinthians*, The New Cambridge Bible Commentary, ed. Ben Witherington III (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 119.

²⁷⁰ Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study*, 65.

Table 4.13. Focus Group Eleven Themes.

	Themes
Focus Group Eleven (1 Corinthians 14:26-40)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Context matters • Culture was different than today • No restrictions on women leadership roles • Scripture speaks of the Law in vs 34 but we are under Grace • All are called by God to serve, not man alone

In table 4.13, the common themes from focus group eleven are shown. One of the themes established has been discussed in the previous sections of this paper: context matters when trying to understand the Bible further. They pointed at earlier examples of female leadership and prior discussions, such as focus group seven. Another theme is that the culture is different from the culture of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40, and this can be further seen in verse 34, discussing the Law. The participants commented that Christians no longer observe the Law, which was very specific to the church of Corinth. They went further in saying that Christians are under Grace and not the Law, so these restrictions do not apply to modern-day churches. The last theme that was uncovered in focus group eleven is that all are called to serve by God, and God's calling is not specific to man only. When discussing this, they referred to the inclusive language of "brethren" found in verses 6, 20, 26, and 39.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

The possible reasoning for future research will be discussed in this section. Also, it will discuss what the researcher learned from the study and how the results might have changed in a different setting. Since this is such a hot-button issue amongst church populations, it is important to learn more about the subject matter so that more decisive and equal decisions can be made to suit the entire church. By doing so, all of the church potentially gets the option to serve in leadership roles and not be excluded from doing so based off of their gender. No matter how one feels about the subject matter, more decisive knowledge on the subject matter can be gained from future research studies, which could yield better answers to future questions about women's roles in churches. More research allows more people to form their own opinions rather than the views of others who are not always correct in their understanding.

Themes of Changes

The changes that have been mentioned in the previous sections of this paper are more than what was expected from this research study. With that being recognized, the research study could be counted as successful since there was a good amount of change that was not expected to happen. Looking at the themes of change in the data uncovered from the study is essential. These themes of change can be seen in table 4.14.

Table 5.1. Themes of Changes.

	Themes
Changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willingness to accept women leaders • Realization it's everyone's duty to lead as a Christian • Saw the importance of Biblical Leaders such as Miriam, Deborah, Mary of Bethany, and Phebe as a Deacon • Questions about roles and gender • Context Matters • Culture is different from when the Bible was written • The Scriptures that were covered did not show limitations to roles in church leadership

The first change noticed from the data is a willingness to accept female leaders from the examples of Scriptures used in the focus groups. This change was seen in multiple instances in the collected data, but one primary instance happened in the week of focus group three. One of the male participants, who downgraded the leadership of Deborah the week prior in focus group two, showed an attitude of change in focus group three when discussing the woman at the well. A female congregant was baptized, and this male participant prayed that she would have the courage and leadership role as Deborah's is shown in Judges 5.

This next instance of change is found in the difference in answers between the two questionnaires. One example of this change is found in question five of the questionnaire. In both questionnaires, the participants were asked to list ten examples of leadership from the Bible, five being from the Old Testament and five from the New Testament. In the first questionnaire, the participants mostly listed examples of male leadership. This changed in the second questionnaire when no one used examples of leaders from the Bible. Instead, they listed that their leadership ideas now included female examples of leadership found in the Bible.

Another instance of change is the realization that all are called to serve in some leadership capacity as Christians. This instance of change is mainly seen in focus group five. The participants showed this change by speaking about the word “all” used in Romans 16, and then they concluded that this indicates that everyone is called to serve as church leaders. This showed a shift in change because of the restrictions of female leaders in focus groups one and two that some men pointed out in these two focus group discussions.

The next theme would be the acknowledgment of the female leaders from the covered Scriptures. In focus group one, some participants acknowledged Miriam as a leader in Moses’ time. There was a shift of perspective in focus group three when one of the male participants in acknowledged Deborah’s leadership after downgrading her leadership in the previous focus group. Some participants also acknowledged how instrumental the woman at the well was to furthering Jesus’ ministry in focus group three. In focus group four, Mary was acknowledged as a leader amongst the disciples because she anointed Jesus’ feet with her hair. Also, the participants acknowledged Phebe as a deacon from Romans 16:1-27 which is one of the roles from 1 Timothy 3 that some of the male participants pointed out in the first questionnaire as being a Scripture that restricts women’s roles of church leadership.

The following change that can be noted in the participants is their discussions about roles and genders from the covered Scriptures. This was seen by the fact that the participants agreed on leadership equality in the second questionnaire and also in focus group five when they discussed that all are called to be church leaders. One theme showed itself in focus group four when there became a clear divide between the male and female participants on acknowledging female leadership in the covered Scripture. This divide was presented by the men focusing on the male leadership examples in the covered Scripture and the females focusing on Mary. Yet, by

focus group five, this divide seemed to dissipate by the sense of unity in understanding equality for leadership amongst the research participants. This was caused by the participants agreeing that everyone is called to serve in church leadership roles.

The next instance of change was shown in focus groups six, seven, and eleven. In these three focus group discussions, the research participants agreed that the context of the Bible has to be kept in mind when forming an opinion. Participants pointed out that one cannot simply use a piece of Scripture to form an opinion without considering the full context of the Scripture or Bible when forming opinions on a matter of the Bible. This is different from when the focus groups first started because some male participants referred to 1 Timothy 3 to show their understanding of women's roles in church leadership. Through the culmination of the focus groups, only a few of the men participating in the focus groups did not change their viewpoints. These men are the male participants who did not have a change of opinion from participating in the focus groups on the role of pastor. Still, they did admit change for all the other roles of the church that women can serve in. This showed that the paper's purpose in provoking thought on the roles of women in church leadership appears to have resulted in some change in some of the male participants.

Another instance of change can be easily misunderstood, which is that the culture of the Scriptures has changed compared to the culture of modern-day churches. This was seen in focus group ten when the "head coverings" discussion was discussed from 1 Corinthians 11:2-16. Some of the research participants acknowledged that women of the modern-day have more freedom than the women of the Jewish nation did. This was shown when research participants quickly recognized that this does not mean that the Scriptures covered in the focus groups do not apply today in the churches. They admitted that not all of the Scriptures are culturally

appropriate anymore because the culture of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 is different from the culture of modern-day churches where women no longer wear head coverings in church.

The last instance that was uncovered from the focus groups is that most of the research participants did not see any restrictions on women's rights to serve in church leadership from the covered Scriptures of the eleven focus groups. This was shown in the focus group discussions and questionnaires when the participants were asked to list the Scriptures that are used to restrict women's rights to serve in church leadership roles. Instead, the majority of the research participants shared that after looking at all of the Scriptures for the eleven focus groups, there should be no limitations placed on anyone in the church if they feel called to serve in church leadership roles. This was pointed out in focus group nine when the participants pointed out that the calling is from the Holy Spirit, not man. There was an instance where two of the male participants agreed that they had changes of opinion on the roles that women can serve within the role of pastor or bishop. These men did not change their opinions fully on women's roles in church leadership but did acknowledge that women could serve in the church's other leadership roles like elder and deacon.

When this was discussed, another man pointed out that Jesus is the head of the church, and that man nor woman can be considered the head of the church. They are instead considered as a part of the body of the church, and therefore, there is an equalization of the body and no limitations placed on the roles of the church leadership. This was shown in focus group seven when discussing 1 Timothy 3, and the man pointed out that the roles in 1 Timothy 3 do not matter because, ultimately, Jesus is the ruler of the church. By the end of the group discussions, no participants placed any limitations on women serving in church leadership roles besides the two men who agreed that women could not serve in the office of pastor or bishop. Other than

that, the majority of the research participants agreed that there should be no limitations placed on women serving in church leadership positions. When asked if there were any situations where a woman could only teach in a man's presence, shown in any of the covered Scriptures, no research participants acknowledged any situations where a woman could only serve when a man was present. Instead, the research participants shared that from the Scriptures covered there were no situations that called for role restrictions to be placed on women from serving in church leadership roles. One example that was given was the equality shown in Romans 16 from focus group five.

Future Research

The results from the research study showed positive outcomes regarding the purpose of the study and the problem presented. Since the church had a problem with disagreement about what roles women could serve in, more research is needed to be done to help resolve this confusion. This led to eleven focus groups covering Scriptures from both the Egalitarian and Complementarian viewpoints. The first five focus groups' showed supporting Scripture examples of women leading in the Bible, which aligns with the Egalitarian views on the subject. The final six Scriptures are aligned with the Complementarian viewpoint and show role restrictions on church leadership and women.

Through discussion, the focus groups were designed to see if the research participants could create new ideas about what roles women can serve in a church setting. Initially, some of the research participants showed some Complementarian views of reservations about what roles women could serve in a church setting. However, the research participants changed their

perspectives on the matter through separate focus group discussions through the two questionnaires and the focus groups in which the research participants participated.

However, this does not answer the question of where future research on the problem should go? Unfortunately, this is a complicated answer because it is not a hidden fact that women's rights come into question daily in churches and society. When searching for a subject for this thesis, it was found through discussing with fellow Christians that Christians hold strong values and opinions and do not readily change these values or beliefs frequently. Instead, Christians will, at one point in their life, make up their minds on a matter and then hold true to that matter. Thus, change is not something that can be done easily in most churches. This leaves other Christians who feel differently on a subject scratching their heads and wondering how to get their fellow Christians to accept new ideas. If a suggestion has to be made on where the future research should go on the problem presented in this paper, then the suggestion would be to model the future research after the focus groups of the research study contained in this project.

This suggestion is made for future research because this study appeared to notice an actual change in the research participants. The research participants appeared to change their minds on what roles women can serve in a church setting by the end of the research study. As shown, the majority of the research participants openly acknowledged that there are no role restrictions that should be placed on women from serving in whatever church leadership role they wish to serve based on the Bible and the Scriptures shown in the discussions. This was seen in the group discussion responses when discussing the last six Scriptures and their answers to the second questionnaire showing that they saw no role restrictions on women in the covered Scriptures of the study. The research study results show that the research participants will initiate change amongst themselves by providing them examples of women leading from the Bible and

having a group discussion on these examples of Scriptures. The results show that the research participants who held more traditional views on women's roles in the church mostly appeared to change their minds by the end of the research study. Some of the male participants openly admitted that their views had changed by the end of the study. The results appear to show that simply having a discussion on the problem presented and having the Scripture in hand to support a decision on the problem presented will culminate in a decision as long as there is more than one group discussion on the subject matter.

Of course, since this research study's pool only consisted of a single church's congregation, expanding the research to more churches may yield further or conflicting findings. Similarly, Small suggested this same thing in her study when she concluded, "One study opportunity would extend the research to include churches from other denominations outside the Southern Baptist denomination."²⁷¹ Suppose other denominations were included in future research on this matter. In that case, differential views may come to light on the subject, and further findings on how to resolve the confusion about women's roles in churches may be determined. Even if no concrete decisions were to be made out of the future studies concluding other Christian denominations, at least these future studies would bring more exposure to the research subject matter in these denominations. In turn, this would expose these denominations' congregations to the problem that could potentially help bring change. This was seen by the reasoning of this study in that there was a disagreement on women's roles in the church ending with a result of a change in some of the research participants admitting that their views had changed on the matter of women serving in church leadership roles.

Another future research study could include different research resources to collect further data than those used in this one. A future researcher could try one-on-one interviews with the

²⁷¹ Small, "Exploring Successful Women's Ministry Employment," 158.

research participants. This could allow for more in-depth data on the subject matter since more time could be given to those individual participants. The data from these solo interviews could show a difference in data than that of a group voice from the focus groups used in this study.

Further training or teaching on the subject matter could be beneficial in more of a classroom-type setting. Similarly, this suggestion was shared by Allen in her research study when she concluded, “This research study resulted in a recommendation for leadership effectiveness training.”²⁷² This would allow all the information and context on the Scriptures to be presented to the research participants on the subject matter instead of them having to discuss the Scriptures through group discussion. Maybe training on the subject could be presented to church leaders so they could educate themselves and their congregations on the subject matter and allow more of an atmosphere of equality in their churches and amongst their congregations. Even if the training led to the same feelings on the subject matter, the church leader would be better equipped to defend their beliefs on the subject matter since they would have received further training.

The next suggestion is to help clarify confusion or disagreements on what roles women are allowed to serve in a church; maybe more can be done to empower women. Since women are half of the church, better education on the subject matter could allow them to defend their rights to serve where they want to serve in a church. This can also be seen by Summers having concluded, “It is vital to train and empower women in the area of ministry leadership.”²⁷³ Who better to stand up for women’s rights than women themselves? Women have a voice that matters in today’s society and often hold more status and power than what is given to them in churches.

²⁷² Allen, “An Examination of Role of Grit and Related Indicators for Breaking Through the Stained Glass Ceiling for Women Leaders in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc.,” 114.

²⁷³ Summers, “The Inspire Me to Dream Leadership Development Curriculum,” 154.

If women trained themselves on the subject matter, they could better defend their rights to serve in whatever capacity they wished to serve at a church. This could be done by holding a research study that included women only so they could openly express their feelings without intimidation from their male counterparts.

The last suggestion would be geared toward the youth of a church congregation. Maybe this study would be beneficial to do with a group of teenagers and/or older children. Churches teach their children how to become mature Christians and act as grown men and women. Why not teach these kids about the Scriptures that involve female leaders? This could be beneficial because it would teach the young women and men in the church the morals and values of biblical female leaders from the Bible. It would also teach these young women to defend themselves, as many biblical examples of female leaders did. There is no wrong in teaching church youth the Bible, even if one does not necessarily agree with the example of female leadership they would be teaching about. Even if they disagree with the example of female leadership from the Bible, they will still teach young church women to be strong adult Christian women one day using the examples from the Bible. This would also allow young men to see that women were shown to be leaders in the Bible, which could enlighten them to the rights women have to have the option to serve in whatever church roles they wish to without being told no because they were not born a man.

Things Learned

This study was very beneficial to the researcher. This study showed that women and men have very strong and opposite opinions on the subject matter. This was seen through the focus group discussions when the men participants held one belief on the Scripture, and the women

had another view on the Scripture. Focus group four illuminated that men and women see different things about Scripture that the opposite sex does not always notice about the Scripture. Still, through group discussion and listening to one another, new ideas can be made to create an environment of inclusiveness where everyone has the chance to voice their opinions.

This study also taught the researcher that future research projects and future researchers would have better results if the participants were more comfortable with the person conducting the research. It appeared that since some of the church congregation did not know the researcher very well, they were uncomfortable with partaking in the research study. With this fact having presented itself in the study, more results may have been lost by the unfamiliarity with the researcher that could have proven to further the study's findings. This highlights the importance of making oneself known amongst future research participants as a more appropriate and needed thing to do for future research projects. Familiarity leads to more trust, and unfortunately, it felt like some of the people who asked to participate in the study did not trust the researcher enough to want to divulge personal beliefs to the researcher.

This research study taught the researcher that more people have an interest in this subject matter than was to be expected. It was believed most adult Christians have already made up their minds on the beliefs of their religion, so it was thought that not much positive change would happen from the research study. Instead, the research showed that the subject matter is much more of a hot discussion topic than initially thought. The study also confirmed that people have a big opinion on the subject matter. Still, through the usage of Scripture and group discussions, changes of view on the subject matter are possible.

This research study further confirmed that future changes do need to be implemented in churches to ensure that all members of a church congregation are treated equally. This was seen

within the first five focus groups by the research participants' responses, which further agreed that leadership is the duty of every Christian. Initially, most of the church men felt that there were restrictions placed on women serving in specific church roles. Through the culmination of the study, this changed to only a few men feeling that one specific role of the pastor should be prohibited to women, but all other roles of church leadership should be open to women. Also, the participants seemed to agree that all church members should be welcome to serve in whatever role and leadership status they wish to serve in. The study showed that in the Scripture of Romans 16, there were no limitations to what women could or could not serve in. So why is it different in today's churches? This question must be confronted and resolved based on equality from Romans 16 and the other Scriptures of the Bible highlighting the rights of women to serve in all levels of church leadership if they so choose to do so.

From this research study, it was seen how both the Complementarian and Egalitarian views have good points of argument for their belief systems. This study taught the researcher that both sides of the argument make valid points. Still, this study also showed that since half the church feels strongly about an issue, that issue cannot go left unresolved when that issue restricts half of the church from experiencing their full potential to serve the church. Therefore, the problem presented in this study is significant. This study aimed to find an answer using a group to work their way through some Scriptures highlighting female leadership in the Bible. The Bible clearly shows examples of female leadership in its pages, so it cannot be ignored that women can serve in leadership roles in modern-day churches based on the Biblical examples of leading women of the Bible. Focus group ten gives an example of a Scripture that is used to restrict women's roles in church leadership. Still, through study and explanation of the Scripture of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, it was uncovered that the Scripture was speaking to the specific cultural

clothing of the Corinthian society being worn in the church because it was expected in that time that women followed the cultural expectation of the local community. The study and explanation of the text showed that Paul was not placing restrictions on women in the church for any other reason besides respecting the local culture, which does not apply in most modern-day society.

Unfortunately, ignoring a problem that so many feel strongly about will not cause the problem to disappear. Instead, that problem will keep gaining fuel until one day, it unpleasantly bursts into flames and results in the problem needing to be confronted. This is why churches need to discuss the complicated topics of the Bible, even if one doesn't necessarily agree with the outcome of the opinion being discussed. Ignorance cannot be accepted when half of a church's population is not given the potential they deserve to fulfill in Jesus' ministry. The Bible shows that Jesus respected and used women to further His ministry. He never told a woman they could not do something in the Bible.

This study shows that an idea does not need to be forced upon people to start a change in them. Instead, this research study showed that simple exposure and discussion were enough to provoke thought and a shift in perspective on the subject matter. This study showed that simply allowing the focus groups to come to their own realizations had exciting results of data versus if a resolution were to have been forced upon the research participants, they could have shut down and not wanted to proceed with the study. Therefore, this research study showed that it is best to let the outcome present itself rather than trying to provoke the desired result.

Results in Different Settings

The results gathered from this research study could be quite different if done in a different setting. For instance, if this study had been done in a more Complementarian

congregation, it could have been shut down before it started. Also, if the study were allowed to be done in such a congregation, one would expect more Complementarian views of the research study's results. The same can be said, though, if one did the study in a more Egalitarian congregation. That study could most likely yield more Egalitarian views of equality. This is one instance of a change of setting that could change the results gathered for this study.

A change could still have occurred at the same church where the research study was initially conducted. For example, as the research study results show, the male and female participants were initially not in agreement with one another on the subject matter. What if one side of the gender had more numbers on their side than the other? Could this have affected the data gathered from the research study? Since this research study coincidentally was both male and female participants, the results became more neutralized. The study shows that more opinion changes occurred with more exposure to the subject matter.

Another change that could be implemented that may affect the research would be the amount of focus group discussions and the amount of Scripture highlighting leading women of the Bible. For instance, what if fewer focus groups were held for the research study? Would this have changed the research study outcome? This would mean that the research participants would be exposed to less Scripture highlighting leading women of the Bible. Therefore, it is a possibility that this could have affected the research data for the research study. For instance, the first two focus groups show more of a Complementarian viewpoint amongst the research participants. It wasn't until focus group three that the research participants' opinions started to pinpoint the beliefs of the Egalitarian views.

What if there were more focus group discussions and more exposure to Scriptures highlighting leading women of the Bible? What effect could this have had on the research data

gathered for the study? Would it have changed the outcome of the focus group participants seeming to align more with the Egalitarian viewpoints the more that the research study went on? The research data seems to reflect that the answer to the above question is that the more exposure to focus group discussions surrounding examples of leading women from the Bible, the more the research participants aligned with Egalitarian viewpoints. So, it would appear that the more exposure the research participants had in focus group discussions surrounding leading women of the Bible, the more their initial perspectives changed and became geared toward a viewpoint of equality for the roles of church leadership. What if there was more of both? What could it yield if one did this for a month, six months, or even a year?

A scenario was discussed previously about doing future research with the church youth. If this research study were to be done with church youth, what would the outcome be? Would the young research participants hold as strong opinions on the problem presented for the research study as their church elders do? Or would the young research participants be less opinionated on the problem presented for the research study? One could suggest that the data could vary depending on the age group. For instance, the older the research participants are, the more time they have had to adapt to their parents and church elders' viewpoints and beliefs, allowing them to think of more complex answers.

What if the research study setting occurred in an unfamiliar location? Would the research participants be so open to sharing their opinions in an unknown place as they were in a familiar area? Would the research participants shut down and not voice their opinion because of the unfamiliar atmosphere? What if the location was more of a secular site than a religious area? Would the secular culture enforce ideologies of that culture instead of the cultural ideas that come with a church setting?

Changes that Require More Research

Changes that require more research are essential to discuss because these changes could be different in other churches than the church that this was done in. Questions arise on whether the study was done in a different setting or with a different pool of research participant candidates. Would the study still have had the same resulting changes, or would the resulting changes have been different if done in a different church? To answer this question, it is essential to discuss what changes need to be further studied to verify the validity of these changes.

The first instance of this is the research pool. As mentioned, this research study coincidentally had a mixture of female and male participants, which led to this study's collected data. It could be beneficial to do this study with a group of all male or all female participants to see if the research study data would still hold up to these hypothetical research participants. Would the data change if this research study had been done with all males or all females in segregated rooms?

The next instance of change that requires research is equality. Since this study uncovered that the research participants ended the study with an understanding of everyone being allowed to serve in all church roles, would this change if equality were implemented in their church? What if, for the purpose of the study, the pastor was female during the study? How would this change shape the data? Would the research participants still have had a change of opinion on equality for all roles in the church if a female pastor had been present during the research?

The last instance of change is what if everyone in the church was required to participate in the focus group discussions? How would this change shape the data if people were required to attend the study? In this study, some of the research participants never added to the group

discussions. When they did, they only expressed opinions through the body language of agreement on what was being said during the group discussion. What if, as a requirement to be a research participant, everyone had to talk in each discussion and were not allowed to passively spectate? Would the data still be the same, or would the data be different if everyone was forced to add to each focus group discussion?

Concluding Remarks

This research project expected that there would be minute changes if any changes were to occur from the research study. However, as the research results show, a remarkable change occurred among the research participants. This was demonstrated in some of the male participants admitting to a change of perspective on women being allowed to serve in church leadership roles. These results are exciting to the study because it shows that change can occur in people who initially hold a more Complementarian belief system through the exposure of Scripture showing opposing views to their belief system. This change was shown to have taken place in the study because the group concluded that no restrictions should be placed on women from serving in church leadership roles. Only a few of the participants still believed that the pastor of a church should be restricted from women. After the research concluded, the participants agreed that the culture and context of the Scriptures must be paid attention to before forming an opinion on a biblical matter. They voiced that Biblical matters and individual pieces of Scripture cannot be the sole basis of forming an opinion without considering these items. When asked if women could only preach and teach when a male was present, the participants concluded that the covered Scriptures do not support this idea.

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APPENDIX A

RECRUITMENT IN PERSON VERBAL SCRIPT

Hello everyone,

As a graduate student in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting a project as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Ministry degree. The purpose of my project is to look at the characteristics and roles of Christian leadership, and if you meet my participant criteria and are interested, I would like to invite you to join my study.

Participants must be 18 years of age or older. Participants, if willing, will be asked to complete two questionnaires lasting 10-15 minutes each. If you participate in the project, there will be weekly preparatory commentary readings for the next weeks lasting 30- 40 minutes. There will also be eleven focus groups on selected Scriptures, and weekly commentary readings, lasting 15-20 minutes each in which the selected Scripture will be discussed within the group. It should take approximately eleven weeks and 15-20 minutes of your time weekly to complete the procedures listed. Participation will be completely anonymous, and no personal, identifying information will be collected.

Would you like to participate? Yes ____ or No ____ . I understand. Thank you for your time.

A consent document is provided as the first page of the questionnaire and will be given to you one week before the focus groups start. The consent document contains additional information about my project. Because participation is anonymous, you do not need to sign and return the consent document. After you have read the consent form, please complete and return the questionnaire. Doing so will indicate that you have read the consent information and would like to take part in the study.

Thank you for your time. Do you have any questions?

APPENDIX B

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Title of the Project: Characteristics and Roles of Christian Leadership

Principal Investigator: Matthew Niles, Liberty University Doctor of Ministry Candidate

[Co-investigator(s): Name(s), credentials, institutional affiliation]

Invitation to be Part of a Project Study

You are invited to participate in a project study. To participate, you must be eighteen years or older to participate in the project study. Taking part in this project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this project.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to find out more information about characteristics and roles that Christian leaders can serve in by using biblical examples from the Bible. The reason for this study is to better understand the potential characteristics that people like yourself value in church leaders to hold and to exhibit in their Christian leadership roles in the church.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:

1. If you agree to participate in the project study, it will be asked of you to answer two separate questionnaires each taking about five to ten minutes to answer.
2. If you agree to participate in the study, there will be weekly assigned readings from two online commentaries lasting thirty to forty minutes combined.
3. If you agree to participate in the project study, there will also be eleven individual focus groups held lasting between fifteen to twenty minutes each. In these focus groups eleven individual pieces of Scripture will be read by the researcher and then the participants of the focus groups will hold group discussion. While the group discussions are being held the researcher will write down information presented in the discussions in their reflection journals.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

The direct benefits participants should expect to receive from taking part in this study are a further understanding of valued characteristics of church leadership and a further understanding of roles that Christian leaders can hold in a church.

Benefits to society include a further understanding of characteristics Christian leadership should hold and exhibit in their potential church leadership roles.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study include the risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

Liberty University will not provide medical treatment or financial compensation if you are injured or become ill as a result of participating in this project. This does not waive any of your legal rights nor release any claim you might have based on negligence.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Project records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. Data collected from you may be shared for use in future project studies or with other researchers. If data collected from you is shared, any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed before the data is shared to remain confidentiality.

- Participant responses for the questionnaires will be anonymous. Participant responses for the focus groups will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and a locked safe and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- Focus groups will be transcribed in a reflection journal. The reflection journals will be stored in a locked safe for three years and then shredded. Only the researcher will have access to these reflection journals and questionnaires.
- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. While discouraged, other members of the focus group may share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.

Does the researcher have any conflicts of interest?

The researcher serves as a student at Liberty University School of Divinity. To limit potential or perceived conflicts the study's questionnaires will be anonymous, so the researcher will not know who answered which questionnaires. The project focus groups, and reflection journals will be given confidentiality to respect the privacy of all participants of the focus groups. This disclosure is made so that you can decide if this relationship will affect your willingness to participate in this study. No action will be taken against an individual based on his or her decision to participate or not participate in this study.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data

collected from you apart from the questionnaires and reflection journals will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study. Focus group data, questionnaires, and reflection journals will not be destroyed, but your contributions to the focus group will be included in the study if you choose to withdraw because of the anonymity and confidentiality given to all participants of the project study.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Matthew Niles. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at 513-849-1449 or mniles@liberty.edu. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, [name], at [email].

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a project participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects project will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

Before agreeing to be part of the project, please be sure that you understand what the study is about. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. If you have any questions about the study later, you can contact the researcher using the information provided above.

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Printed Subject Name

Signature & Date

APPENDIX C
PERMISSION REQUEST

July 2022

Robert M.,
Pastor
Faith Baptist Church

Dear Robert M.,

As a graduate student in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Ministry degree. The title of my research project is “Characteristics and Roles of Christian Leadership,” and the purpose of my research is to look at the characteristics and roles of Christian leaders from the biblical examples of leaders from the Bible to further understand what roles that women can serve in church leadership. This will be determined through the discussion of biblical examples of female leadership found in the Bible and also through the discussion of the Scriptures that are used to support role restriction of women from serving in church leadership roles.

I am writing to request your permission to conduct my research at Faith Baptist Church and to contact members of your church to invite them to participate in my research study.

Participants will be asked to answer two questionnaires, have weekly assigned online commentary readings, and to participate in eleven focus groups surrounding eleven different Scriptures. Participants will be presented with informed consent information prior to participating. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary, and participants are welcome to discontinue participation at any time.

Thank you for considering my request. If you choose to grant permission, please provide a signed statement on an official letterhead indicating your approval. A permission letter document is attached for your convenience.

Sincerely,

Matthew Niles

APPENDIX D
PERMISSION RESPONSE

July 2022

Robert M.,
Pastor
Faith Baptist Church

Dear Matthew Niles:

After careful review of your research proposal entitled Characteristics and Roles of Christian Leadership, I have decided to grant you permission to conduct your study at Faith Baptist Church.

Check the following boxes, as applicable:

☐ I grant permission for Matthew Niles to contact church members to invite them to participate in his research study.

Sincerely,

Robert M.,
Pastor
Faith Baptist Church

APPENDIX E

DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

Title of the Project: Characteristics and Roles of Christian Leadership

Principal Investigator: Matthew Niles, Liberty University Doctor of Ministry Candidate

[Co-investigator(s): Name(s), credentials, institutional affiliation]

Thank you for being part of a research study.

You recently participated in a research study. You were selected as a participant because you are a member of the church congregation. Participation in this research project was voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask any questions you may have.

What was the study about and why was it being done?

The purpose of the study was to develop a research study on the roles women can serve in a church. The study was designed to show examples of biblical examples of female leaders from the Bible. The reasoning of the study is to provoke mindful thought into the research participants' minds on what roles women can serve in the church.

Why am I receiving a debriefing statement?

The purpose of this debriefing statement is to inform you that the true nature of the study or an aspect of the study was not previously disclosed to you.

You were originally told that the research was to find out more about characteristics and roles of Christian leadership. You were not told that the reason for the research project was to find out what roles' women can serve in the church using examples of biblical females leaders from the Bible.

Why was deception necessary?

Deception was necessary because it allowed for any biases that you may have on women serving in church leaderships roles.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. Data collected from you may be shared for use in future research studies or with other researchers. If data collected from you is shared, any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed before the data is shared.

- Participant responses will be anonymous. Participant responses will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms.

- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and in a locked safe and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic and physical records will be deleted.
- Focus groups will be transcribed in a reflection journal. The reflection journals and questionnaires will be stored in a locked safe for three years and then shredded. Only the researcher will have access to these reflection journals and questionnaires.
- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. While discouraged, other members of the focus group may share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

Because the questionnaires were anonymous, it is not possible to link your questionnaire to you and remove your questionnaire from the study. Your responses will be recorded and included in the study.

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you apart from the questionnaires and reflection journals will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study. Focus group data, questionnaires, and reflection journals will not be destroyed, but your contributions to the focus group will be included in the study if you choose to withdraw because of the anonymously and confidentiality given to all participants of the research study.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Matthew Niles. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at [REDACTED]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, [name], at [email].

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd, Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

APPENDIX F
INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Please describe the qualities and characteristics you believe a biblical Christian leader should display and practice in ministry.

2. To your knowledge, what Scriptures outline roles and characteristics of Christian leadership? Also, please explain your understanding of the Scriptures listed.

3. If there are, what Scriptures limit Christian leaders' capacity to serve in the church? Please explain how these, if any, determine what Christian leaders can serve in the church.

4. According to your beliefs, please list the roles Christian leaders can serve in. Please explain in detail your understanding of the particular roles you selected.

5. Please list five examples of biblical leaders from the Old and New Testaments. Then, please explain the characteristics that these five biblical leaders display that you value and feel that a Christian leader should exemplify.

APPENDIX G
SECOND QUESTIONNAIRE

1. From the five Scriptures discussed in the focus groups, please describe any new characteristics you discovered that you value while participating in the focus groups.

2. From the culmination of the focus groups, please list and explain your understanding of what roles a Christian leader can serve in. Also, how did your knowledge of this change before starting the focus groups?

3. From the covered Scriptures in the focus groups, how can Christian leaders display and practice the characteristics from the biblical examples found in the Scriptures covered in the focus groups? Please explain your answer in detail.

4. If any, please explain the limitations that a Christian leader should not be allowed to display as a Christian leader and to give examples of Christian leadership. Please describe your answer in detail.

5. From the five examples you listed in the initial questionnaire, how did the focus groups change your five examples of biblical leaders found in the Old and New Testaments?

APPENDIX H

RESEARCH STUDY CURRICULUM

Women and Their Roles in the Church Research Study Curriculum
<p>Objectives: This research study aims to teach the research participants examples of leading women from the Bible to clear up any misunderstandings about women being allowed to serve in church leadership roles.</p>
<p>Curriculum Outcome: This research study's outcome is to reduce any perplexity in the research participants' by giving examples of women leaders from the Bible and stimulating change in the participants' minds about the possibility of women serving in church leadership roles. The research participants will be tested for change from the first questionnaire answers by the eleven focus group discussions, assigned weekly readings, and the second questionnaire.</p>
<p>Intervention Methods and Methods Timelines:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. First Questionnaire (5 – 10 Minutes): Research study participants will participate in an initial questionnaire to test their knowledge of church roles and characteristics of Christian leadership figures. Participants will also be asked to test their knowledge of Scripture, potentially limiting women's chances of being church leaders. Participants will also be asked to pick five Bible characters from both the New and Old Testaments to test any bias to female leaders from the Bible. 2. Second questionnaire (5 – 10 Minutes): Midway through the research the participants will be asked to answer a second questionnaire to gauge if they learned and perhaps changed their stance on women's rights for being allowed to serve in church leadership roles. Since the participants have sat through a twelve-week focus group discussing Scriptures showing examples of biblical leaders, the participants will be asked if there are still any Scriptures that limit women from serving in leadership roles. Participants will again be asked to list five Bible characters from both the New and Old Testaments to test if there has been any change in their first questionnaire. 3. Focus Groups (15 – 20 Minutes): Research participants will partake in eleven individual focus groups. The focus group participants will listen to eleven individual Scriptures displaying different biblical women as leaders from the Bible. The participants will then discuss the Scripture within the focus group.
<p>Extra Resources:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/ 2. https://www.blueletterbible.org/commentaries/mhc/ 3. Bible

Twelve Week Lesson Plans	
Week One:	First Questionnaire. Weekly assignment reading of two online commentaries on Exodus 15:1-21.
Week Two:	Exodus 15:1-21. Biblical examples of women leadership: Miriam. Weekly assignment reading of two online commentaries on Judges 5:1-31.
Week Three:	Judges 5:1-31. Biblical example of women leadership: Deborah and Jael. Weekly assignment reading of two online commentaries on John 4:27-42.
Week Four:	John 4:27-42. Biblical example of women leadership: Samaritan Woman at the Well. Weekly assignment reading of two online commentaries on John 12:1-11.
Week Five:	John 12:1-11. Biblical examples of women leadership: Martha and Mary of Bethany. Weekly assignment reading of two online commentaries on Romans 16:1-27.
Week Six:	Romans 16:1-27. Biblical examples of women leadership: Phebe, Priscilla, Mary, Junia, and more. Weekly assignment reading of two online commentaries on 1 Timothy 2:1-15. Pass out second questionnaire.
Week Seven:	1 Timothy 2:1-15. Biblical example of restriction on women leadership. Weekly assignment reading of two online commentaries on 1 Timothy 3:1-16.
Week Eight:	1 Timothy 3:1-16. Biblical example of restriction on women leadership. Weekly assignment reading of two online commentaries on Titus 1:5-9.
Week Nine:	Titus 1:5-9. Biblical example of restriction on women leadership. Weekly assignment reading of two online commentaries on Titus 2:1-15.
Week Ten:	Titus 2:1-15. Biblical example of restriction on women leadership. Weekly assignment reading of two online commentaries on 1 Corinthians 11:2-16.
Week Eleven:	1 Corinthians 11:2-16. Biblical example of restriction on women leadership. Weekly assignment reading of two online commentaries on 1 Corinthians 14:26-40.
Week Twelve:	1 Corinthians 14:26-40. Biblical example of restriction on women leadership.

APPENDIX I

IRB APPROVAL LETTER

5/24/22, 8:27 PM

Mail - Niles, Matthew - Outlook

[External] IRB-FY21-22-935 - Initial: Non-Human Subjects Research

do-not-reply@cayuse.com <do-not-reply@cayuse.com>

Tue 5/24/2022 12:05 PM

To: Brawner, Jeff W (School of Divinity Instruction) <[REDACTED]>; Niles, Matthew <[REDACTED]>

[EXTERNAL EMAIL: Do not click any links or open attachments unless you know the sender and trust the content.]

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

May 24, 2022

Matthew Niles
Jeff Brawner

Re: IRB Application - IRB-FY21-22-935 Characteristics and Roles of Christian Leadership

Dear Matthew Niles and Jeff Brawner,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study does not classify as human subjects research. This means you may begin your project with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your IRB application.

Decision: No Human Subjects Research

Explanation: Your study is not considered human subjects research for the following reason:

(1) Your project will consist of quality improvement activities, which are not "designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge" according to 45 CFR 46. 102(l).

Please note that this decision only applies to your current application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued non-human subjects research status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

Also, although you are welcome to use our recruitment and consent templates, you are not required to do so. **If you choose to use our documents, please replace the word *research* with the word *project* throughout both documents.**

If you have any questions about this determination or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your application's status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.