

The Role of Men

By David Hutchison

Pre-Session Assignments

One week before the session, students will take the following assignments.

Assignment One

Read Ephesians 5:21–22; Colossians 3:18; and 1 Peter 3:1–7. Study the comments relating to Ephesians 5:21–22 in the section **It's in the Book**. Some people suggest that husbands should submit to wives in the same way wives submit to husbands. Prepare to share your answer to the following question: After reading all three of these passages, what do you think the Bible teaches?

Assignment Two

Read John 13:1–17 and Philippians 2:5–11 and study the comments relating to Ephesians 5:25 in the section **It's in the Book**. Prepare to share your answers to the following questions: In what ways did Jesus demonstrate humble service and sacrifice? How do you think men can follow this example?

Assignment Three

Read Acts 18:24–26 and the comments relating to 1 Timothy 2:11–12 in the section **It's in the Book**. Prepare to share your answer to the following question: How is the ministry Priscilla and Aquila performed different from serving as an overseer?

Scripture to Memorize

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her."
Ephesians 5:25

Session Goal

Consistent with God's Word and in the power of the Holy Spirit—by the end of this session, disciples will understand that men are the lead servants in the home and in the church.

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It's in the Book

30 minutes

Real-Life Scenario

Your older brother recently got engaged. Although he is older than you, you have been a Christian for much longer and far surpass him in Christian maturity. He wants to be a godly husband, but he doesn't know where to start. What would you tell him?

Men Are the Lead Servants in the Home

Read Ephesians 5:18–6:4 out loud.

Studying the Passage, vv. 21–22

The instructions here are part of a household code which describes the proper way for a godly household to function. Obeying these challenging instructions is possible for the Christian who offers his life as a living sacrifice to King Jesus.

Verses 21–22. Be subject to one another. Being subject to one another is a product of being filled with the Spirit (v. 18). Within a marriage the wife submits to her husband. Some suggest that both the husband and wife submit to each other in the same way. When we examine the rest of the passage and other passages which discuss submission, we discover that this is not the best interpretation. A great place to turn for help interpreting Ephesians is the similar letter Paul wrote to the Colossians. In addition, it is helpful to consider what another Bible author writes about the topic.

In order for a husband to live with his wife in an understanding way (1 Peter 3:7), he must seek to understand her. This involves listening and genuine concern for the opinions of the wife. Most often a husband and wife will agree on how to handle situations. In cases when that does not occur, the wife follows the leadership of the husband.

Assignment One Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment One** during the week should now share an answer to the question there.

Studying the Passage, vv. 23–24

Verses 23–24. As Christ is head of the church. The understanding above is strengthened by verses 23–24. The husband is the head of the wife as Christ is head of the church. It would certainly not be appropriate to reverse that statement. The church is not the head of Christ. As the head, the husband is the leader who cares for his wife. The wife submits to the husband in the same way the church submits to Christ. Christ does not submit to the church.

Verse 25. Love your wives . . . as Christ loved the church. Paul gives an incredibly challenging command to husbands. Far from being a self-seeking chauvinist, the husband must love his wife as Christ loved the church. This requires putting the needs of a wife ahead of one's own. This is a sacrificial love which may result in death. This is no walk in the park!

Jesus's humble service is the pattern for the way in which a husband leads his family. Following Jesus includes the big things and the little things. It's one thing for a husband to say he would die for his wife. It's another for him to wash the dishes.

Assignment Two Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment Two** during the week should now share answers to the questions there.

Important Limitations

Read Ephesians 5:25 out loud.

Studying the Passage, v. 25

Verse 25. None of the biblical writers command the husband to make the wife submit. Instead the wife chooses to submit. A husband has the responsibility to lead and serve his wife but never to make her submit.

Read Ephesians 5:22 out loud.

Verse 22. to your own husbands. The wife submits to her own husband. She does not submit to other men. A man is not the head of other people's wives.

Submission does not mean men are more intelligent, more spiritual, more faithful, or more important. It does not mean men get their way all the time. Submission is not an excuse for a man to talk down to his wife or to build himself up by tearing her down. Submission is never an excuse for abuse.

Read Ephesians 6:4 out loud.

Verse 4. do not provoke your children to anger. Being a father is not an excuse for being abusive. Leading children involves strength as well as gentleness. If fathers lead their children harshly, the chances of rebellion increase.

Men Are the Lead Servants in the Church

Read 1 Timothy 3:1–5 out loud.

Studying the Passage, vv. 2–4

Verses 2–4. the husband of one wife . . . manages his own household well. This passage as well as a similar passage in Titus 1 limits the work of an overseer or elder (the terms are used interchangeably in the letters) to men. In addition to being described as the husband of one wife, the overseer must manage his own household well. The pattern for leadership in the home transfers over to the church. Women can perform numerous ministries, but God has given this particular ministry to men.

Read 1 Timothy 2:11–12 out loud.

Studying the Passage, vv. 11–12

Verses 11–12. Women were encouraged to receive instruction (which was actually a step forward in the culture), but Paul does not permit women to teach men or to exercise authority over a man within the context of the church. Both tasks are necessary for an overseer. Some wish to limit these guidelines to the local situation at Ephesus, but the letter does not provide the necessary evidence to sustain that argument. Furthermore, Paul's rationale in the following verses is theological rather than situational. These guidelines are challenging in an age which focuses on rights, privileges, and self-promotion, but disciples and churches cannot set aside the clear teaching of Scripture.

Assignment Three Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment Three** during the week should now share an answer to the question there.

On Your Own

In the space below, write the instructions the passages above give to men and women regarding relationships in the home and the church.

Men

Women

Heart and Hands

8 minutes

Read again the **Real-Life Scenario** near the beginning of the lesson. Consider whether your answers have changed during the session.

Be silent for two or three minutes. Thank Jesus for His sacrifice and for the gospel. Adore Him for His glorious reign on the throne of heaven.

Then ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you:

1. A way the Scriptures you studied today will change your heart (the real you) for the glory of Christ.
2. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to stop doing something in your life for the glory of Christ.
3. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to do something for the glory of Christ.

Write what the Spirit says to you below and then be ready to share what you have written with the group.

Since Last Week

5 minutes

Grace-Filled Accountability

5 minutes

Planning for Evangelism, Missions, and Service

5 minutes

Prayer

7 minutes

At Home: Nail It Down

The Bible teaches us that men are the lead servants in the home and in the church. Within a marriage relationship the wife submits to her husband as the church submits to Christ (Ephesians 5:21–24). While the husband is the leader who cares for his wife, this does not mean he is more important. The Bible commands husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the church (Ephesians 5:25). This involves self-sacrifice and putting the needs of the wife ahead of one's own. Living with a wife in an understanding way (1 Peter 3:7) involves listening to and caring about her opinions.

The Bible never tells husbands to make their wives submit. Rather it commands wives to voluntarily submit. Additionally, a husband is the head only of his own wife. Women do not submit to all men but to their own husbands. Once a man has children, he is the lead servant in this relationship as well, but he must not provoke his children to anger (Ephesians 6:4). Leading in a harsh way is counterproductive and does not seek the best for the children.

The Bible teaches us that men are the lead servants in the church. God has designed the position of an overseer (elder) for a man (1 Timothy 3:1–5). The pattern for leadership in the home transfers over to the church. Women may not teach men in the church or exercise authority over men in the church (1 Timothy 2:12). Nonetheless, women can and should perform many ministries. Rather than focusing on what someone cannot do, wise disciples focus on the many things they can and should do. None of us can do everything.

The Bible's teachings are admittedly countercultural. At the same time the test of truth is never culture's morality, which changes as fast as fashion. For a wife to submit to her husband and for a husband to love as Christ loved are incredibly difficult. But both are possible for the disciple who offers his or her life as a living sacrifice and lives through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Parent Question

What does the Bible say about the role of a man in the home and in the church? What passages discuss these issues?

The Making Disciples curriculum is a gift from Southwestern Seminary to teenagers who, for the glory of the Father and in the power of the Spirit, will spend a lifetime embracing the full supremacy of the Son, responding to His kingly reign in all of life, inviting Christ to live His life through them, and joining Him in making disciples among all peoples.

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