

“Body Unity and the Centrality of Christ in the Local Assembly”
Proper Etiquette for Men and Women in Local Church Worship
 Issues of Ministry
 Understanding the Structure of the Church

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 Title: Proper Etiquette for Men and Women in Local Church Worship
 Text: 1 Corinthians 11:2-16
 Theme: Proper Etiquette for Men and Women in the Worship of God Reflect the Economical Order within the Godhead itself.

In verse 3 “Paul uses the word [head] to set forth the hierarchical, social structure in God’s economy.” (Rogers and Rogers, 373).

Paul’s illustration is unique to their historical and cultural context. What it would look like in our historical and cultural context might be different and perhaps always changing.

Introduction:

What is Paul’s big idea? The issue is local church worship. This idea demands that we define biblical worship. Biblical worship is an affirmation or recognition that He is all that He claims to be. Thus biblical worship has to be text-driven. Worship is not feeling based or driven. **Thus how you think is more important than how you feel.**

ILLUSTRATION:

For example, you might attend a Christian concert. When you leave you might say, “I was really worshipping God.” Chances are that statement reflects how you feel, not what you think. The flip side is also true. When you study the word of God regardless as to the context whether it is Sunday morning, Saturday morning, or a week night, you can worship God.

Paul’s intent in this passage is to make sure our conduct in worship communicates God correctly to the audience. Does how we conduct ourselves and what we say about God affirm all that He claims to be? Remember, the basis for Paul’s appeal is sourced in the structure of the Trinity.

After laying down the foundation for Paul’s principle in verse 3 he provides an illustration of the principle in local church worship.

I. The illustration of Paul’s principle (vv. 4-6)

The illustration that Paul uses was historically and culturally relevant. This same illustration would not be appropriate in our historical and cultural context.

Apparently it was customary during the days of the early church for men NOT to pray with a head covering (v. 4), whereas just the opposite was true for women. For a woman NOT to pray with a head covering was unacceptable (v. 5). For a woman to pray without a head covering was tantamount to having her head shaved (vv. 5, 6). Deuteronomy 21:12 speaks of a woman captured as a spoil of war having her head shaved if the victor desired to marry her.

Just the opposite is true concerning men. To pray with a head covering is a disgrace. To disgrace has the idea of “blushing.” It carries with it the thought of being embarrassed. It was a socially unacceptable practice.

The historical and cultural illustration is explained in verses 7-10.

II. The explanation for Paul’s principle (vv. 7-10)

Why was such a practice disgraceful? The thought behind the practice is rooted in verse 3, “But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ.” Verse 7 brings us back to this thought. It stands to reason since man is the image and glory of God, he should not cover his head, but since woman is the glory of man, she should cover her head.

Personally, I am not quit sure the reasoning behind all of this, but this is what the text says. Why is the man head of a woman, “Because man does not originate from woman, but woman from man (v. 8); for indeed man was not created for the woman's sake, but woman for the man's sake (v. 9). Therefore the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels (v. 10).”

Verses 8 and 9 calls back to Genesis 2:18-25 and verse 10 could be making reference to Genesis 6 where the Sons of God cohabitated with the daughters of men. However, this would be difficult to embrace though not impossible. Perhaps in the economy of God and the placement of angels inside of that economy their submission to God and our submission to authority reflect this divinely established hierarchy.

The point of the illustration is to establish a hierarchy of authority as to what constitutes a proper etiquette in the church gathered. Such statements as these have a tendency of forcing us to focus on the role of a wife and or women in the context of the local church. Yet the passage is equally suggesting that men are to be submitting to Christ. This does not negate a wife’s responsibility to submit to Christ, but in the outworking of God’s will a wife’s submission to her husband and to biblical authority is an expression of her submission to Christ.

When a man does not accept the responsibility of his position under Christ he is bringing disgrace to the Lord Jesus Christ and when a woman or a wife does not accept the responsibility of her position under her husband or biblical authority she is bringing disgrace to that divinely established authority.

APPLICATION: (What does this mean to me?)

A rebellious person in the home or a contentious church member is not submitting to Christ. And a husband that does not accept his responsibility in the home and in the church is not submitting to Christ.

Lest any thought of superiority or lording enters into the relationship between a man and a woman, verses 11 and 12 add a qualifier.

III. The qualification of Paul's principle (vv. 11, 12)

¹¹ However, in the Lord, neither is woman independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. ¹² For as the woman originates from the man, so also the man has his birth through the woman; and all things originate from God.

"The man is no more superior to her than God is to the Son. Subordination does not for one moment imply inferiority."

William J. Martin, "1 Corinthians 11:2-16: An Interpretation," W. Ward Gasque & Ralph P. Martin, eds., *Apostolic History and the Gospel. Biblical and Historical Essays Presented to F.F. Bruce*. Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1970. Hbk. ISBN: 085364098X. pp.231-241.
http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/corinthians_martin.pdf

First Corinthians 11:3-10 is a sustained argument in favor of male headship and female submission, yet with full participation in worship for women (something Christians today need to remember more often). Verses 11-12 function as a qualification so that the Corinthians will not misunderstand Paul's argument. Woman and man stand in interdependence in the Lord (11:11). Paul proves this statement in verse 12. Man is the source of woman, but all men ever since Adam have come into the world through women. Paul anticipates the problem that could arise if one stressed his argument in verses 3-10 too rigidly. Male and female could almost be construed as different species, and men as more valuable than women. That is not Paul's point at all. There is a profound interdependence and mutuality present in the male-female relationship and neither sex can boast over the other because the sexes are interdependent. Ultimately "everything comes from God."

Verses 11-12 demonstrate that Paul would utterly reject the notion that women are inferior or lesser human beings. "Head Coverings, Prophecies and the Trinity - 1 Corinthians 11:2-16," Thomas R. Schreiner. http://www.bible.org/page.asp?page_id=2820 Copyright 1997 Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood. All rights reserved.

I am going to make two applications from this idea. Both genders are interdependent. Each one needs the other. This is not simply noting the marriage union, but life in the church.

God designed genders to be distinct but interdependent. The idea of interdependent can be defined in the following manner “a relationship in which things depend on one another for survival.” www.treetures.com/Glossary.html.

It is “the idea that everything in nature is connected to everything else; what happens to one plant or animal also affects other plants and animals. www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/canwaters-eauxcan/bbb-lgb/library-bibliotheque/glossary-glossaire/index_e.asp

This recognition of distinction between the genders and interdependence between the genders is crucial to lay hold of. As much as I enjoy men’s ministry, I do not wish to have a world where only men exist. Such a world is dysfunctional. I came across the difficulty that exists in communicating with men so I thought that ladies in our fellowship would benefit from the following information.

The Language of Men

IT'S A GUY THING

Translated: There is no rational thought pattern connected with it, and you have no chance of making it logical.

UH HUH, SURE HONEY or YES DEAR

Translated: Absolutely nothing. It's a conditioned response.

IT WOULD TAKE TOO LONG TO EXPLAIN

Translated: I have no idea how it works.

THAT'S INTERESTING DEAR

Translated: Are you still talking?

HEY I'VE GOT MY REASONS FOR WHAT I'M DOING

Translated: And I sure hope I think of some pretty soon.

I HEARD YOU.

Translated: I haven't the foggiest clue what you just said and I am hoping desperately that I can fake it well enough so you don't spend the next three days yelling at me.

I'M NOT LOST I KNOW EXACTLY WHERE WE ARE.

Translated: No one will ever see us alive again.

Thus even though communication between the genders is almost nigh impossible to completely understand, it is absolutely crucial for us to realize that we need each other and there is a divinely established connectivity between us. This need and connectivity is necessary in two areas.

A. The need for interdependence in marriage

In marriage two people of the opposite gender become “one flesh.” This “one flesh” union is first mystical and then practical. I might be at war with my spouse, but I am still “one flesh.” This is biblical. There is a practical side to the “one flesh” union.

As couples we have to be weaving into the fabric of our union shared events. We have to be communicating and participating in each other’s life moments. I would encourage you to share in the life moments of your spouse. This creates the healthy interdependence that is to exist in marriage.

B. The need for interdependence in life

But life also is to be lived interdependently. As a fellowship we are to never lose sight of the fact that in the body of Christ there is neither male nor female. Functionally we do have distinctions, but this is never at the expense of interdependence.

APPLICATION:

1 Corinthians 12 will address the “many members but one body” principle. There is to be a mutual interdependence within the body of Christ. Each of us has different roles and responsibilities. Each of us functions on different administrative levels, but no one is more important than the other. We need each other.

Paul begins to draw his conclusion in verses 13-15.

IV. The conclusion to Paul’s principle (vv. 13-15)

Verses 13 through 15 provide a statement of the naturalness and common sense conclusion to the entire discussion.

Many have used this as an argument for legislating hair length on men and women. Yet this is not Paul’s point. Paul cares little as to the length of one’s hair. Long hair in our context does not communicate rebellion. This same idea might not have been true in the 1970’s. What Paul is arguing for (indirectly) is a distinction between genders and (directly) a communication of acceptance as it relates to one’s position in the hierarchy of God.

Yet the issue of hair length for men and women is not something that is legislated by the Bible. These things are defined by our historical and cultural context.

V. The condition to Paul's principle (v. 16)

Verse 16 adds a disclaimer in that the issue is not to be a point of contention or separation. If you disagree with this practice it is a practice that the churches of God follow; stop being contentious over this issue.

This particular word used for contentious is found only here in the New Testament (*philoneikos*). "It means, 'fond of strife'. Unfortunately, most churches have some who are fond of strife, who, as we say, would rather argue than eat." (Ralph Earle, Word Meanings in the NT, 234).

"There is no place in the Church for the deliberately contentious man or woman. There is a time to stand on principle; but there is never a time to be contentiously argumentative." (William Barclay, "Corinthians," DSBS, 100).

In the early church there was no such custom as women praying or prophesying with their heads uncovered. Responsible authority and voluntary submission is not something we can simply affirm verbally and not act on.

ILLUSTRATION:

Submission, To Divine Will:

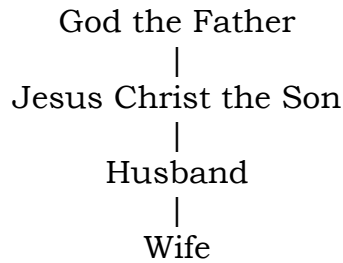
A newly retired couple cashed in their stocks and bonds to purchase one of the finest motor homes available on the market. One of the great features was the cruise control. As they were traveling up the West Coast, the husband became tired and asked his wife to drive while he went in the back to take a nap. As she was driving she put the camper on cruise control and it worked perfectly. After an hour of straight highway driving she got up to go to the bathroom. She thought cruise control was the same as automatic pilot, she told the Highway Patrol after the accident. The motor home was totaled in the accident, but neither partner was hurt. It is not only a true story, it is an illustration of many Christians who have put their lives on cruise control and are not [participating] in worship, prayer or Bible study.

<http://elbourne.org/sermons/index.mv?illustration+3292>

Today how you are exercising your authority appointment? Are you voluntarily submitting to the authorities over you? The point is not so much the custom as is the theology behind the custom.

"Not the custom as a custom is vital but *the significance* of a custom." (Lenski, Corinthians, 435).

The custom is an expression of God's working or administrative structure.



This has nothing to do with essence or quality, but with administration and economy.

"The root of the problem [was] the Corinthian pursuit of self-interest to the needs of others or the glory of God. Throwing off the head-covering was an act of insubordination which discredited God." (David K. Lowery, "1 Corinthians," BKC, 530).

Whether women today in church services should wear hats depends on whether the custom of head covering communicates a spirit of subordination and not simply a fashion statement. In marriage the husband is the head of the wife and in the church God establishes a hierarchy of authority that places at the head of His visible work men. In the outworking of God's purposes this is the pattern He has chosen to work in and through.

Hat wearing on women and long hair on men does not communicate the same message it did in the historical and cultural context of Paul's day. The issue is not hat wearing or long hair but how can we communicate a spirit of submission to the authority above us that has been established by God?

"In conclusion, we should affirm the participation of women in prayer and prophecy in the church. Their contribution should not be slighted or ignored. Nevertheless, women should participate in these activities with hearts that are submissive to male leadership, and they should dress so that they retain their femininity." "Head Coverings, Prophecies and the Trinity - 1 Corinthians 11:2-16," Thomas R. Schreiner. http://www.bible.org/page.asp?page_id=2820 Copyright 1997 Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood. All rights reserved.

"Dress is largely cultural and, unless what a person wears is immodest, [a reflection of clear rebellion] or sexually suggestive, it has no moral or spiritual significance. . . . It is the principle of women's subordination to men, not the particular mark or symbol of that subordination that Paul is teaching in this passage. The apostle is not laying down a universal principle that Christian women should always worship with their heads covered." (MacArthur, p. 256).

ILLUSTRATION:

How Members of the Symphony Orchestra Viewed Each Other

At a meeting of the American Psychological Association, Jack Lipton, a psychologist at Union College, and R. Scott Builione, a graduate student at Columbia University, presented their findings on how members of the various

sections of eleven major symphony orchestras perceived each other. The percussionists were viewed as insensitive, unintelligent, and hard-of-hearing, yet fun-loving. String players were seen as arrogant, stuffy, and un-athletic. The orchestra members overwhelmingly chose “loud” as the primary adjective to describe the brass players. Woodwind players seemed to be held in the highest esteem described as quiet and meticulous, though a bit egotistical. Interesting findings, to say the least! With such widely divergent personalities and perceptions, how could an orchestra ever come together to make such wonderful music? The answer is simple: regardless of how those musicians view each other, they subordinate their feelings and biases to the leadership of the conductor. Under his guidance, they play beautiful music. (Today in the Word, June 22, 1992)

As we think on the foundational truth behind the custom, let us be a people who are marked by glad submission and humble service. May we never find ourselves “kicking against the goads” of those whom God has placed above us. May it be said of us as it was of our Lord, “Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (Phil. 2:8).

APPLICATION: (What does this look like?)

The question confronting us in this study is simple, “Do I communicate a spirit of submission to the authorities placed above me?”

1. How to have 7 Sundays

Monday	What authorities has God placed in my life?
Tuesday	How do I express my submission to those authorities?
Wednesday	Do I see my submission to authorities as a submission before God?
Thursday	How do I view those over whom I am an authority?
Friday	How do I view the leadership of the church I attend?
Saturday	Am I submitting myself under their authority?

2. How have I applied (or can I apply) this passage to my life?

In what area do I need to submit that is causing me to become contentious?

3. How would a man, woman, married, single, youth, senior, seeker, etc., apply it?

Submission has no age qualifier. Everyone has someone over them and under them. What is my response in either case?

“A basic feature of this fact is that God gave the headship to the man and not to the woman. All attempts to abolish this headship and to place the [genders] on the same level must fail.” (Lenski, Corinthians, 450).

4. Can I give them a “take-home” application – something they can do at home, work or at school?

As a husband am I exhibiting a submissive spirit at work? Am I willing to shoulder my responsibility as an authority in the home and in the church?

As a wife am I exhibiting a submissive spirit at home? Am I willing to submit to the authority established in the church?

As a child am I exhibiting a submissive spirit at home?

5. How can I show them how to do it?

No one is exempt from authority. I am one in authority and under authority. How do I show my authority and submission?

6. Have I kept Christ in the application?

Christ is our role model. He has ultimate authority and yet He submitted Himself under His Father’s authority. May the Spirit of God show us those areas where we need to shoulder our responsibility in authority and submission under authority?

For the truth of Scripture to change your life through renewing your mind you must be in a right relationship with God the Father through Jesus Christ His Son. This relationship is built around four key ideas. They can be summed up in four words: God, man, Christ, and response.

GOD

God is our holy Creator and righteous Judge. He created us to glorify Him and enjoy Him forever (Gen. 2:7; 16-17; 18:25; Matt. 25:31-33).

MAN – RECOGNIZE

But *mankind* has rebelled against God by sinning against His holy character and law (Gen. 3:1-7). We’ve all participated in this sinful rebellion, both in Adam as our representative head and in our own individual actions (1 Kings 8:46; Rom. 3:23; 5:12, 19; Eph. 2:1-3). As a result, we have alienated ourselves from God and have exposed ourselves to His righteous wrath, which will banish us eternally to hell if we are not forgiven (Eph. 2:12; John 3:36; Rom. 1:18; Matt. 13:50).

CHRIST – REALIZE

But God sent Jesus *Christ*, fully God and fully man, to die the death that we deserved for our sins – the righteous for the unrighteous – so that God might both punish our sin in Christ and forgive it in us (John 1:14; Rom. 3:21-26; 5:6-8; Eph. 2:4-6).

RESPONSE – RECEIVE

The only saving *response* to this Good News is repentance and belief (Matt. 3:2; 4:17; Mark 1:15; Luke 3:7-9; John 20:31). We must repent of our sins (turn from them and to God) and believe in Jesus Christ for forgiveness of our sins and reconciliation to God.

Have you repented of your sin and turned to Jesus Christ as your only hope of eternal life? Today this can happen to you?

St. Irenaeus made the following statement. Let us see this as our prayer this morning.

“It is not [I] that shapes God but God that shapes [me]. If [I] am the work of God [I must] await the hand of the artist who does all things in due season. [I must] offer Him [my] heart, soft and tractable, and keep the form in which the artist has fashioned [me]. Let [my] clay be moist, lest [I] grow hard and lose the imprint of His fingers.”
<http://elbourne.org/sermons/index.mv?illustration+615>