



Bridgeway Christian Church's Position on Women in Church Leadership

Bridgeway Elder Board

10/22

Biblical Foundation: Bridgeway holds God's Word in high regard. We believe it to be inerrant and authoritative. Every decision we make for our congregation is scripture-soaked. We are not interested in promoting our personal agendas nor allowing the opinions of people to prevail. Either it's God's intent, in alignment with what He has expressed in His Scriptures, or it's not implemented at Bridgeway.

Gender Equity: We believe the Bible teaches that women are to be considered and treated with equity in the church. Based on deep study and hermeneutic examination¹, we conclude that Jesus Christ began a ground-breaking, New Covenant movement integrating women into ministry and church leadership. Paul the Apostle continued this movement in practice and instruction. In order to realize a fuller expression of the Church² as Christ intended, it is incumbent upon today's churches, Bridgeway included, to empower women to lead in the areas God has called and equipped them. Simply put, we support women serving at senior and executive levels of church leadership because we believe that's what the Bible most clearly teaches.

Women at Bridgeway: Women will be considered for every role within Bridgeway, including service on the Elder Board and leading/preaching from the pulpit. Jesus Christ has been named the Head of the Church; therefore, all other roles within the local church should be determined by calling, not gender.

¹ the study of interpretation

² Church with a capital C refers to the One True Body of Christ, time-wide and worldwide. The lower case c church refers to the local church or gathering of believers.

Appendix A Summary of Key Scriptures and Interpretation

Persuasive arguments for and against women serving in the highest leadership roles in the local church have been made for millennia. We do not pretend to know all of God's Truth, but we believe that most evidence heavily leans toward integrating women in key leadership positions within the church. The reasons, in part, are as follows:

- **Creation Intent and Reality** — When God created humanity, He created them male and female, with both bearing His image.³ Adam being alone⁴ was not good,⁵ so Eve was created to express the nature of God more fully and thereby allow for the commands of God to be followed.⁶ Before sin, man and woman worked in equality and necessity, akin to the example of the Holy Trinity. There were no tensions and no absolute hierarchy. It was a pure partnership under the authority of God. Each was using their unique gifts, nature, and abilities to fulfill the commands of God. It was how God wanted and designed it to be.⁷
- **The Impact of the Fall and Curse** — When Satan deceived Eve and thereby deceived Adam in relation,⁸ they chose to do things their way instead of God's. Sin entered the world, and chaos and death resulted. Because Eve was deceived initially through her desire for advancement in wisdom,⁹ she was cursed by God in her relational sphere.¹⁰ The hierarchy of men lording themselves over women was a consequence of sin. Humanity's sin nature built upon the effects of the curse and designed a construct of male domination.
- **The Israelite and Old Testament Pattern** — God set up a plan of redemption for His people that would ultimately be primarily enacted through Abraham's lineage, the Jewish people, Israel. The Old Testament records God's interaction with His chosen people. He set up a system that would work within the curse structure to provide them a means for atonement, sanctification, and

³ Gen 1:26-28; 2:7-24; 5:1-2

⁴ Genesis 2:18

⁵ Gen 2:18

⁶ The term used for Eve was 'Helper' (Ezer; ay-zer in Hebrew) which is used 21x's in Scripture. 2x's it's used of Eve, the majority of the other uses are of God Himself (i.e. Ex 18:4; Dt 3:7,26, 29; Ps 33:20). It's a definition of role and function, not value or identity. Clearly, God is not inferior or subject to man, even though He serves as a Helper in role.

⁷ 1 Cor 11:7-12 – cites that neither man nor woman is independent of the other, but all under God. Just because a boy baby is born from a woman's womb doesn't make him subject to her any more than Eve created from the side of Adam makes her subject to him. Just because a mom comes first doesn't make her more important than her grown son who came later. In the Lord, men and women are interdependent and under Him. He is the ultimate authority; they are fulfilling roles for Him. Creation order says nothing of hierarchy since mankind was created last as the ultimate expression of God's nature and woman was created after man (last), but no one is arguing she's better. It's all about intent, role, and function.

⁸ Gen 3:1-6, 17

⁹ 1 Tim 2:11-15. Even though Eve was deceived 'first', Adam was charged with the downfall of mankind (original sin went through the male lineage) due to his failure. So, who is given more responsibility for the fall of man? Both!

¹⁰ Genesis 3:16

redemption. This Old Covenant structure was hierarchical in nature¹¹, utilizing only men as priests and based upon a patriarchal system in the home and society. Women were subject to the authority of the men in their lives. This curse-based redemptive work was not God's full intent for His people forever, but a necessary and temporary redemptive element until Jesus came to usher in a new covenant. Just as slavery was allowed, disabled people were barred from serving in the temple,¹² and foods were declared unclean, there were temporary structures¹³ put in place to make spiritual illustrations, while not revealing God's heart on the matter.

- **Hints of More** — Although the main pattern and structure of the Old Testament was rigidly patriarchal and religious, we see hints at God intending and wanting more.¹⁴ God would, at times, break His own rules to demonstrate spiritual truths:¹⁵ Miriam, Huldah, Deborah, Esther, and Ruth were all strong and influential female leaders.¹⁶ God used women as prophetesses.¹⁷ There is no more important revelation role than speaking for God Himself as an oracle.¹⁸ Proverbs 31 reveals a different type of woman, one who is strong, independent, involved in business, and empowered (this sharply contrasts with normal descriptions of women in that day).
- **A Messiah with a New Covenant and Plan** — When Jesus arrived, He came as the second Adam.¹⁹ He was personally going to do what humanity was supposed to do in the first place (full obedience). By His life and death on the cross, Jesus secured a New Covenant for His people, one that is no longer curse-based or reactive, and took us back to the initial desire of the Father at creation.²⁰ Jesus began to deconstruct how things had been done and inaugurated a new way.²¹ Suddenly Jesus demonstrated the use of women as

¹¹ curse-reactive

¹² Lev 21:16-24

¹³ Example of rituals in Passover - Exodus 12:43-51; 28:12, 21, 29

¹⁴ Though the rules showed it should be Israelite men, Deborah was called to be an Israelite Judge, non-Jews like Ruth were used in God's plan.

¹⁵ i.e. the rule was the firstborn son was to be the one, but God kept picking the younger sons to lord over the eldest.

¹⁶ Ex 15; 2 Kings 22; Judges 4-5; 2 Kings 11:3; 2 Sam 14 & 20 record Joab's female advisors; Zipporah saved Moses' life; Abigail saved her husband's life from David; they wrote Scripture (Ex 15:21ff; Judges 5; Lk 1:42-45); were called by God as craftswomen, builders, furnishers, musicians, dancers and singers, changers, temple choir singers all in conjunction with the Tabernacle and Temple (Ex 35:22-26; Ps 68:25-26; Judges 21:19-23; 1 Sam 18:7; 2 Chron 35:22-26)

¹⁷ Miriam and Huldah were the most famous but there were others (Joel 2:28-32; Isa 8:3; Ezek 13:17-24; Neh 6:14). Phillip's daughters in the New Testament (Acts 21:9). Women are marked out consistently as prophetesses in the New Covenant (1 Cor 11:2-16; Acts 2:17). The role group of Prophet is listed 2nd after Apostles in importance of foundation for the church.

¹⁸ 1 Cor 14:3; Eph 2:20; 1 Cor 14:31 – preaching and prophesying are, at least, equal in influence to the early church's discipleship. By definition, prophecy is a public act, and this gifting is typically used in corporate settings.

¹⁹ Rom 5:14; 1 Cor 15:22, 45. Jesus came INTO the Old Testament system. He came INTO an Old Testament reality and worked within it to transform it and fulfill it. That's one of the reasons why He was male, why He chose all men as His initial 12, and why he related to the Father in such male terms all the time. Those truths meant something powerful in His context and it was working to redeem what the curse had stolen by starting where things were, to make them what they ought to be.

²⁰ Gal 3:28-29

²¹ What He did and talked about in the context of His day was radical. In a context of a low view of women, He exalted them. In a context of abuse and disrespect of women, He relied upon them and championed them. In a context of separation between genders, He united the two. He did things never done before in Israel.

ministry partners and disciples,²² personal focus on women individually,²³ positively using women as examples in his parables and lessons,²⁴ using contemporary women as living and breathing role models to follow,²⁵ calling them friends²⁶ and giving them honoring titles,²⁷ teaching women directly,²⁸ and by calling them to be the first witnesses to the risen Lord used them as apostles²⁹ to the Apostles!³⁰

- **The Impact on the Early Church** — Women were at Pentecost on purpose.³¹ They were anointed and gifted the same as the men at the inauguration of the Christian Church era.³² The Great Commission Jesus gave was not gender specific.³³ The gifts of the Spirit were called to be used for the whole church's building up.³⁴ In the Book of Acts, we see a surging integration of women in senior leadership roles.³⁵ It is believed by many scholars that this was the reason for Saul of Tarsus persecuting Christian women, which was frowned upon in that culture if they were not acknowledged leaders.³⁶
- **Paul's Ministry** — Perhaps the most confusing and problematic teachings regarding women in Christian ministry and leadership come from Paul's instructions to the churches in Ephesus and Corinth, namely in three passages³⁷ that we will address shortly. Admittedly, Paul is sometimes difficult to

²² Lk 6:17; Mt 27:55-56; Mk 15:40-41; Luke 8:1-3; Acts 9:36; Matt 12:46-50 (His group had mothers and brothers). But the biggest deal was how Jesus let Mary of Bethany sit at His feet as a full disciple learning from Him just like the men did (it freaked out Martha). Luke 10:38-39. Mary Magdalene used the term Rabboni when He rose in the Garden (Jn 20:16 which means her teacher as a disciple). Jesus even had married women in His ministry without their spouses! (Joanna, Salome). Jesus integrated Mary his mom in His story, Anna the prophetess, Martha's hosting, and women at the foot of the cross. Women funded His whole ministry! They anointed Him more than once (a possibly priestly function). They were used as witnesses to the resurrection and evangelism.

²³ Healing a crippled woman in the synagogue (Lk 13:10-17); meeting alone with the Woman at the Well; Letting a bleeding woman touch Him (Mt 9:20-22); Touching a dead girl (Mt 9:23-26). In an age when male rabbis, especially, didn't interact with women at all, it was shocking and noteworthy.

²⁴ Mt 24 women at task when the Messiah returns; Mt 25 virgins; widow of Zarephath reference (Luke 4); Luke 18:1-8 persistent widow of faith; kingdom growing woman in Luke 13:18-21; woman who found her coin (Luke 15:8-10; Matt 12:42 Queen of the South. Notice the juxtaposition of the Pharisees vs. the Sinful Anointing Woman with oil in Luke 7:36-50, the woman comes out stronger. Notice Nicodemus hiding and the Woman at the Well evangelizing.

²⁵ Poor widow (Mk 12:41-44); Syrophenician's faith (Mt 15:21-28; Mk 7:24-30); Woman at the Well's evangelistic impact (John 4:39-43); Martha's Messianic acknowledgement (Jn 11:18-27)

²⁶ Jn 11:5

²⁷ Lk 13:16

²⁸ Martha on the way to the tomb of Lazarus; wailing women on the crucifixion road; Mary Magdalene post resurrection; Mary from Bethany at His feet. (John 11; Lk 23; Jn 20; Lk 10)

²⁹ Apostolos means 'one sent as an ambassador'. Later the term Apostolos was used to describe the 12, but later we see apostle being used of non-Twelve members (e.g. Paul the Apostle). When it's capitalized in this document it's referring to the official group of the Twelve, when it's not, it's referring to fulfilling the role of an apostle as a *sent one* by Christ.

³⁰ They saw the risen Lord first and were sent to tell the male apostles. In an age when women weren't allowed to testify in court it's significant.

³¹ Acts 2:17-18; Acts 2:1

³² Acts 2:3 – the tongues of fire didn't just rest on the heads of men.

³³ Matt 28:19. Cf. 2 Tim 3:16-17 of all believers being fully equipped and using Scripture fully.

³⁴ Consider together 1 Cor 12:28; Eph 4:11; 1 Cor 14:19 to see the integration of the gift-mix. Yet we also must consider that Paul called prophesy a higher gift in 1 Cor 14:1, and that is clearly given to women for the whole church's blessing.

³⁵ Bridgeway does not negate roles in the home between a husband and wife, nor that of the children. Bridgeway believes that the husband is the spiritual head of the home, just as the parents are the spiritual head of the children.

³⁶ Acts 8:3 says men and women were persecuted. In Middle Eastern culture and in the ancient world, women and children were usually left alone in official direct persecution and the focus was on the men as the instigators and leaders.

³⁷ 1 tim 2:8-15; 1 Cor 11:3-16; 14:26-40

understand,³⁸ but it doesn't help when Bible translators use male terms for non-gender specific words with bias.³⁹ Therefore, the best way to interpret any difficult passage of Scripture is to look deeply into the context and match it with how that instructor acted in real life. What we find is that Paul the Apostle integrated women into the highest levels of leadership in his ministry.⁴⁰ Paul established churches in the homes of Lydia,⁴¹ Chloe,⁴² and Nympha.⁴³ Paul named five women as fellow hard workers in the ministry: Mary, Tryphena, Tryphosa, Persis, and Apphia.⁴⁴ He highlights Priscilla before her husband Aquila as key fellow workers, indicating her leadership role.⁴⁵ He records two women, Euodia and Syntyche, 'labored side by side with me in the gospel' in Philippians 4:2-3. He called Phoebe a deacon at Cenchrea.⁴⁶ Although it's hotly debated, the best scholarship reveals that Paul refers to Junia, an obvious female,⁴⁷ as an apostle in Romans 16:7.

- **Paul's Teaching on Women and Wives in the church** — When it comes to his teaching, the seeming prohibitions of the few complicated passages are, under greater examination, to be found as instructions curbing the specific behavior of particular women,⁴⁸ in specific contexts, not universal commands against all Christian women. In Ephesus, where Timothy was leading, and in Corinth as well, there were specific contextual challenges due to a *liberating* atmosphere and unhealthy female-dominating movement. Those churches' unique situations and problems called for specific teachings to curb specific people. It is in light of that context that they should be read. For example, consider the following passages:
 - **1 Corinthians 11:3-16** — This passage talks about women wearing head coverings. Which, intriguingly, most of those that struggle with women in

³⁸ 2 Peter 3:15-16

³⁹ 2 Tim 2:1-2 tells Timothy to 'entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.' But the word isn't 'men' it's *anthropoi* which can be either male, female, or both. Clearly, they have a bias in the ESV. In 1 Timothy 3:8-11 it reads 'their wives' but it actually says, 'the women', meaning female deacons in 1 Tim 3:8-11 and the list of expectations are almost identical between genders. Female deacons are attested to historically in writing.

⁴⁰ 17% of Paul's named workforce are female.

⁴¹ Lydia of Philippi (first European Christian convert) had a church in her home (Acts 16:11-15, 40). Again, we see God building off women (1st convert selection). Paul also had no problem meeting with her openly in public.

⁴² 1 Cor 1:11

⁴³ Col 4:15

⁴⁴ Rom 16:6, 12, Phm 1-2.

⁴⁵ Acts 18:2, 18-26. She is named first 4 out of the 5 times they are mentioned together (Acts 18:24-26, Ro 16:3-4, Acts 18:2, 1 Cor. 16:19). Notice that she was named first in the context of as well of training and teaching Apollos the preacher, a male.

⁴⁶ Rom 16:1-2. The same word used for Phoebe is used for Apollos, Epaphras, Timothy, and Paul himself! She was likely the church leader at Cenchrea, and most scholars believe that she was entrusted with taking Paul's letter of Romans to the church of Rome, which she would read in public before them all and explain it. Additionally, she is mentioned 1st in Paul's end list of workers in the Book of Romans. Deacons were not just helpers, they were leaders. They were people like Stephen, Philip the Evangelist. Everyone could preach, but Overseers/Elders HAD to preach. Acts 6-8; Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 5:17; 1 Pet 5:1-5; Titus 1:9).

⁴⁷ As N.T. Wright highlights, "not a single historical or exegetical argument is available to say she was a man, Junias, despite some arguing it." Church fathers: John Chrysostom, Origen of Alexandria, Jerome, and Martin Luther taught that she was a female apostle.

⁴⁸ Remember the word for wife and woman are the same in Greek and we are supposed to use context to tell the difference. We believe the usage about authority and teaching used in 1 Timothy 2:8-15 is more geared toward *wives* than *women*, but ultimately the point is the same.

leadership don't seem to take the instructions on head coverings literally for today. Those instructions are considered circumstantial and cultural. Nevertheless, this passage is highlighted as one that suggests Paul was not pro-women in church leadership because of the restrictions he seemingly puts on women (albeit it's actually speaking to wives). It seems to have a patriarchal slant. Unfortunately, the references of women/wives being made for men/husbands, and women/wives being the *glory* of men/husbands, is typically read hierarchically when it's actually a discussion of roles in the home⁴⁹ and how they play out in public. Women, as a whole gender, are not just made for men. Not all men are the head of all women. Due to roles in the home, husbands have headship.

- **1 Corinthians 14:26–40** — In verses 33b–35, the English Standard Version (ESV) says that *“women should keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission, as the Law also says. If there is anything they desire to learn, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church.”*⁵⁰ Immediately, we have two problems with the obvious reading as well as the translation of women vs. wives. Notice the *“solution”* for these ‘women’ are to ask their husbands at home, but what if they are single like Mary and Martha with no husbands? Shall they never learn? Clearly, it's about certain wives. Secondly, there is no way that women are to be silent in the church when Paul gives explicit instructions in 1 Corinthians 11 about how a woman should wear a head covering WHEN talking in church! We are missing something in context. A better reading is that Paul is not allowing (non-ministering) wives to argue and dominate their husbands or distract while in church. According to the context of orderliness in church, we should read Paul's admonition as training in orderliness, not silencing. Paul says the same thing about *tongues* speakers being silent in the church in verse 28, but it does not mean all the time and in every way. It means do it right. Even the blanket statement in verse 35, *‘it is shameful for a woman to speak in church,’* cannot mean that because Paul has women speaking in church in his ministry consistently and instructs about it.
- **1 Timothy 2:8–15** — Paul's most intensely debated teaching on this subject is found here in 1st Timothy. The hotspot starts in verse 11, but the context is found much earlier. Verses 11–15 say, *“Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. ¹²I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority*

⁴⁹ between husbands and wives

⁵⁰ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (1 Ti 2:11–15). (2016). Crossway Bibles.

over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet.⁵¹ ¹³ For Adam was formed first, then Eve; ¹⁴ and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. ¹⁵ Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.”⁵² Although a quick read would lead one to assume it’s a total ban on women teaching or exercising authority in the church, it simply cannot mean that.⁵³ It is better translated as wives/husbands, rather than women/men due to roles in the home and how those roles continue between the couple, even in public or in church.⁵⁴ Since Jesus Christ has already been named as *head* of the church, no man can have headship there. The word that Paul chose for *authority* is *authentain*⁵⁵ in Greek, which strongly indicates abusive authority.⁵⁶ In what way would they be acting abusively? In their *teaching/instruction*⁵⁷ toward their husbands.

- **The Bottom Line on Paul’s Instruction** — The most vehement argument against women serving at senior executive levels and preaching from the pulpit in church services comes from these passages. Good, honest students of Scripture struggle with reconciling the encouragement of women in these roles when they’ve been taught to read these three passages through one lens. Bridgeway argues that these passages don’t speak to women in general. Sound scholarship and hermeneutics reveal that Paul was pro-women in ministry, and he was never going to support abusive roles within the marriage context. He would not support women taking their newfound freedom and lording it over their husbands in the name of Christ. He would not allow a home to be torn down in the name of Christian liberty. So, he put in injunctions of order to quash it. Nothing more. Again, a glance at his actual ministry reveals that Paul was pro-women in all levels of ministry and his actions allow his words to be interpreted more accurately. Why Paul would give one type of instruction to Ephesus and Corinth while using

⁵¹ 1 Cor 14:26 says that “Brothers and sisters...when you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation...” That means that they were going to be vocal. The Greek word for lesson is *didachen*, which means ‘teaching’. Verse 31 of that same passage says, “you can ALL PROPHESY one by one”. It’s expected from men and women. 1 Cor 14:39 clearly says not to forbid prophecy and tongues, which would have been done by men and women.

⁵² *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (1 Ti 2:11–15). (2016). Crossway Bibles.

⁵³ Some translators, like those of the English Standard Version (ESV) have chosen to use the words woman/man instead of wife/husband. This translation has caused unnecessary struggle (note: the solution Paul provides is childbearing, which is appropriate for wives, not single or widowed women. Additionally, it’s important to note that the parallel passage to this is found in 1 Peter 3:1-6 which talks to wives specifically).

⁵⁴ Paul’s creation foundation argument becomes problematic when Adam and Eve were also husband and wife, so which role is he arguing with?

⁵⁵ *Authentein* – Greek root is *authenteo*. It comes from the Greek concept of, ‘a man’s armor’ and means *domineer or exercise full authority*. On one side, the term can merely mean ‘authority.’ On the other extreme, the word *authentēs* can mean ‘murderer.’ The context can help determine, and this context is a negative connotation. There were other words for normal authority that Paul could have used.

⁵⁶ Note that Paul’s opposing solution to ‘teaching and exercising authority’ is ‘submissiveness’. Why would he use submissiveness as a solution to helpful teaching and authority? Submissiveness would only make sense as a solution if the problem is abusive commands.

⁵⁷ The word for teaching is a normal word for communicating in an instructive way. However, when partnered with abusive authority it changes into a word describing the vehicle for the abuse and not just regular teaching.

another tone with other cities is in line with his cultural ministry paradigm of adjusting his methods and foci depending on culture.⁵⁸ Paul was the one that advanced the idea of the priesthood of all believers.⁵⁹ The rule in the church should be mutual submission under Christ's headship, just like the example of the Trinity.⁶⁰

- **Early Church Qualifications for Elders** — The passages in the New Testament that outline the qualifications for eldership (Titus 1:5-9 and 1 Timothy 3:1-7⁶¹) appear to teach that only men can serve as elders. Most notably, they each contain the phrase, "the husband of one wife." This has been assumed, by many Christian denominations, to render women restricted from serving as elders⁶². However, when you compare the lists of qualifications of both elders and deacons,⁶³ you see a pattern of not only that phrase, but many similar qualifications. The revelatory concept is that history has ample evidence of women serving as deacons.⁶⁴ As noted earlier, Paul himself endorsed a female deacon,⁶⁵ regardless of this phrase.⁶⁶ Clearly, Paul was not restraining women from serving as deacons by the phrase, *husband of one wife* as a gender-based restriction, but using the qualification as an expected character trait (*one spouse type person*). Due to the pairing of the qualifications for both lists for elders and deacons, we can conclude that females were not blocked from being elders either. In addition, it's important to note that if we consider the qualifications too restrictively, neither Jesus nor Paul would qualify to be an elder since they were unmarried.⁶⁷

⁵⁸ 1 Cor 9:19-23; Acts 17:22-23; 1 Cor 10:32-33. Paul had Timothy circumcised but not Titus (Acts 16:1-5; 1 Cor 7:17). Why? Context and culture.

⁵⁹ 1 Peter 2:5-9; Rom 12:1-2; Heb 4:14-16; Rev 22:3-4; Heb 13:15-16; 1 Cor 6:19-20; Rev 1:5-6; 20:6

⁶⁰ the Trinity, God's fullest nature revealed, is completely equal. There is no subordinationism within it (which was heretical and denied by church history), although they have different roles. They are all fully God and eternal in that being. Equality doesn't mean sameness.

⁶¹ The 1st Timothy passage uses the term 'overseer' instead of elder, but they are used synonymously. Cf. Phil 1:1

⁶² Some faith streams restrict women from being deacons as well.

⁶³ The 1 Timothy 3 passage goes on in verse 11 to say about deacons, '*let their wives likewise...*', but upon closer inspection you find that it says, women likewise with no possessive. This view was shared by Clement of Alexandria c.200AD who said this passage presented evidence for the existence of women deacons. In the 4th and 5th centuries John Chrysostom and Theodoret agreed.

⁶⁴ Not only does Paul refer to Phoebe as a deacon personally, as we've cited prior, but historical Roman documents as well as early church documents recount female deacons, along with other references. For example, in AD 112, Pliny the Younger, governor of Bithynia wrote a letter to the Roman Emperor Trajan talking about dealing with Christians. He cites interrogation of two women who were Christian deacons (he uses the word *ministrae* which is the Latin translation of *diakonos*/deacon). Most records indicate female deacons primarily doing ministry to women (ex. Didascalia Apostolorum, 3rd century), although not exclusively so (e.g. Priscilla to Apollos). A tomb from the 4th century says, "*here lies the slave and bride of Christ, Sophia, the deacon, the second Phoebe.*" A 6th century inscription from Cappadocia says, "*Here lies the deacon Maria of pious and blessed memory, who according to the words of the apostle raised children, sheltered guests, washed the feet of the saints, and shared her bread with the needy. Remember her Lord, when she comes into your kingdom.*" An ordination prayer instruction for deaconesses exists in the *Apostolic Confessions* from the late fourth century. And there are many other historical references.

⁶⁵ Phoebe. Same word, *diakonos*, in Romans 16:1 of Phoebe, a female, whom Paul endorses.

⁶⁶ Whatever the actual phrasing was intended to be in Greek (i.e. women versus wives).

⁶⁷ The qualification states that they must be a '*husband*'.