

**Brief Position Paper:
Neighborhood Church supports women in all levels of church leadership.**

The context of Scripture is vital to understanding why in two instances in scripture Paul is clear to entrust eldership to men. Written to a strongly patriarchal church context the social scandal of women in leadership, along with the reality that women were uneducated, and coupled with the reality that people would not receive women's leadership without freaking out, Paul chooses to entrust men to leadership. Paul understood that the women of these two churches could not have led without becoming a serious disruption to these two already unstable churches.

These are not the only instances in scripture, however, where Paul teaches that women should have leadership roles in the church. But wait, what about 1 Timothy 2 ("I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man; she must be quiet") or 1 Timothy 3 ("an Elder shall be the husband of one wife")? We counter, what about 1 Corinthians 11 which assumes that women will be praying and prophesying? Or about Priscilla, who with her husband Aquila taught Apollos? Or Junia, who is mentioned among "the apostles" in Romans 16? In fact in Romans 16:1, Paul praises 29 people by name who were building and leading the church in Rome together. Ten of those leaders were women, including Tryphena, Tryphosa, and Persis "who work hard in the Lord", Phoebe "who ministers at the church in Cenchrea and is worthy of high honor", Priscilla "who has ministered with her husband Aquila and they risked their lives for me", and Mary "who works very hard for the church. It is clear that scripture teaches that women have spiritual gifting (i.e. the distribution of the spiritual gifts in the Pentecost to both genders) and calling for leadership roles in the church (i.e. Paul's affirmations of women's leadership in multiple churches).

Because of the biblical conviction that God has given women all the spiritual gifts, everybody must be mobilized for ministry. The words "minister" and "servant" are the same word in the Bible, and we see that scripture teaches and shows that both men and women are called to minister in the name of Christ for the body of Christ.