

Men and Women

I'm sure you noticed... men and women are different.

And not just on the outside.

It's well documented that men are unable to see socks. Even if those socks are in the sock drawer right in front of them. But women can see them even from another room.

But seriously, we are different. Somehow we are wired differently. There is a famous book about our different ways of thinking called "Women are from Venus and Men are from Mars". It's interesting reading. Why can't men see socks? Why do women have so much stuff in bags that they carry around? Why do men tell stories that are just the very basic facts, while women will tell the same story in every blow by blow detail? Why are men so driven to be successful in their careers? Why do women care so much about having networks of friends and family? Why won't men ask for directions?

Because God designed us differently. Equal, but different.

And, because we are different, God has assigned different roles for us. In the family, in church, in life in general. The Bible says that in the beginning God made Eve to be a helper for Adam. About here many women stop reading, but please read on. Remember, equal, but different.

In John 14, Yeshua also describes the Holy Spirit as our helper. It's only our modern worldly thinking that thinks that if one person is another person's helper then the one being helped is somehow superior or more important than the one doing the helping.

In God's thinking this is not the case. Men and women are equal. But different. And in a family, the wife's role is to be a helper.

In Ephesians 5 where Paulus is instructing husbands and wives. His instructions for each are different. Husbands, love your wife the way Yeshua loves the church. Sacrifice yourself for her. Put her interests above your own. What woman wouldn't want a husband who lived that out? A husband who always puts his wife's best interests and needs first. Not one who selfishly runs the family like he is king, but one who sacrifices himself for her.

Wives, submit to your husbands. Not obey. Not submit in a servant/slave type way, but submit in the way that when it comes to decisions, leave the final decision to him, and then support and help him in that decision even if you disagree with it. If he is loving you the way he should, he will certainly be asking your opinion so he can take it into account in his decision making, and you will be able to trust him to choose what is best for you anyway. What man wouldn't want a wife who lived that out?

And who wouldn't want a marriage where both husband and wife were living this 100% of the time. It would be wonderful.

Btw: if you think you are living out your role, but your partner isn't. It's not up to you to change that, and that doesn't give you license to stop doing your role. Hand them over to God, but keep doing your role as best you can.

Men don't seem to have a problem being boss. But they do seem to struggle with self sacrifice and putting the wife first. Men need to hear this message. Sacrifice yourself for her.

Women don't seem to have a problem loving their husband. But they do seem to struggle with submitting and leaving the decisions to him. Women need to hear this message. Submit to him, let him make the decisions, and support him in them when he does. Of course it's not wrong to have an opinion. It's important that you do, and that you share it with him so he can make the best possible decision for you both.

This is God's design for the family. The husband is the head, (not the king). He makes the decisions. The wife is the helper, (not the slave). She supports those decisions and looks after the family's needs. If you understand it, this is a little like the difference in roles between Elders and Deacons in the church. Both are godly men, but the Elders are responsible for spiritual leadership, and the Deacons are responsible for overseeing the practical support.

But what about men and women's roles in church? The Bible is pretty black and white that only men should be Elders and Deacons. (Or presbyters, overseers, etc... whatever you call them in your church).

This doesn't mean that women are not capable of doing these roles, it just means that God has decided that this is a role for men.

There have been a couple of exceptions, like Deborah in the Old Testament who was judge over all Israel. But even then, she was reluctant to lead them in battle and only took on the role because no men could be found to do it properly.

Some people point to Phoebe who is described as a deacon in Romans 16. But "deaconos" is the ordinary Greek word for "servant". So maybe she was a servant and not a Deacon. But either way, this would be a huge exception for Bible times.

Elders and Deacons are supposed to be men. Married to one wife. With well behaved Christian children.

And I don't think this is just cultural. Paulus says that man is head of the woman because Adam was formed first and then Eve. That's not cultural. That's directly from God's creation before the fall when everything was perfect.

This is not to say women can't be prophets, or teachers, or anything else. Those things are about Spiritual gift and women can and do have these roles. This is just about leadership and the Bible says that women should not be leaders making decisions for the church.

So, basically God's model for both family and church is the same:

Men must take responsibility for all the decisions, but must do so in a way that is not just considerate of the women and their needs and opinions, but lovingly sacrificial towards them.

Women should accept the role of helper and fully support the men's decisions even if they don't agree with them.

And the most important thing in this whole issue:

If you're a man, it's not your concern what the woman's role is. You are responsible for the man's role. Do that as well as you can, and let God worry about the woman's role.

If you're a woman, it's not your concern what the man's role is. You are responsible for the woman's role. Do that as well as you can, and let God worry about the man's role.