

## Consistent or Inconsistent

Should we ordain women or not? I believe in consistency, so I believe I should apply a given text consistently, does that sound fair to you?

In 1 Tim 2:12 we have; "I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man; she must be quiet." (I'm assuming that this means in 'Church' but the context isn't all that clear). 1 Cor. 14:34 "Women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission..."

If I take this text to mean women should be silent in the church and then apply it to ordination it would be reasonable to expect me to be consistent with my application.

Personally I'm happy with the present situation and have no burning desire to change, but I want to be consistent.

So if women are to be quiet in the church why do I allow them to speak so often in the church? I often have women reading the authoritative word of God in the church. I don't bat an eyelid at an AGM when a woman expresses their opinion; which is obviously a church gathering and one that carries authority. Many places have women elders, and the church has no problem with women lay readers. We have women distributing the very body and blood of Christ.

At General Convention I've hear many women speak and no one has complained. We have many women on church boards, and no one tells them to be quiet. Surely these are all expressions of church.

I certainly don't think it is good to be inconsistent, so if I'm going to hold to these texts preventing women from being ordained I should also insist on women not speaking at General Convention, or my local church AGM. I shouldn't stand for women elders. How far should I go; women not reading the scriptures, or is that some insignificant role!!! Declaring God's authoritative word in public ministry could hardly be said to be insignificant. So to be consistent I'd have to stop that as well.

This has made me realise that my preference for a male pastorate is socially and emotionally driven. I feel comfortable with a male pastorate because that's what I grew up with; it feels right.

If I'm consistent in my application then I need to change. But I don't believe for one minute that Jesus would want women to stop reading his word in public worship. I believe Jesus is pleased to have women leading the general prayer in public worship.

In my mind every church community that allows women to read the word in public worship, to lead the general prayer in public worship, to speak at an AGM or to hold positions of authority has already by their practice agreed with women's ordination, or they don't believe in being consistent!

If I believe women should be silent in the church then there is simply no way I can have woman be a Parish Chairperson or Elder, but I know many places which do.

If I'm not consistent, then why not?

If I balk at not letting women perform such roles, what is that telling me?

Whichever way we go, let's at least be consistent. And if we can't be consistent, why not?