

Order In The Church

"Let all things be done decently and in order." (1 Corinthians 14:40)

God Loves And Ordains Order

"God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints." (1 Corinthians 14:33)

Order in the church is a very important thing. God both creates order and loves order. Our text above shows us that God does not cause chaos and uproar, but rather desires order and peace in the churches.

Note that the Genesis Creation Account shows us the earth as being a watery chaos into which God quickly brought order by dividing the water from dry land, creating light, establishing seasons, etc. Order in our lives has its roots in the nature of God and in His creative design.

God, having created order, commands us to submit to it. God is the ultimate authority, and all other authority comes from Him. We cannot live as though we are free from restraint. God is the King, and we are His subjects. Anarchy, disorder, self-will, and chaos are rebellion against God. When we submit to godly order we are submitting to God and honoring God.

The Natural Order

"But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God." (1 Corinthians 11:3)

From the very beginning there was order established in society by God's establishing marriage, giving man a family, and then ordaining civil government.

From the beginning the husband was the head of his wife and family (1 Corinthians 11:1-10; 1 Timothy 2:11-15; Malachi 2:13-16; Ephesians 5:21-6:4). We find many ways in which God placed much responsibility upon the man to care for his family as he leads them. Headship not only involves authority, but also places great responsibility upon the one who is in authority.

As the families upon Earth grew, there was the need for order among the people. Thus God established a bit of order when He gave command regarding Cain after his murdering of Abel, his brother (Genesis 4:11-16). After the flood we see that God instituted the death penalty as the punishment for murder (Genesis 9:6), which shows us that God does indeed command order in society. We later see this principle reinforced in the New Testament (Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-17).

Church Order

"And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence." (Colossians 1:18)

The church belongs to Jesus, as He has died for her (Acts 20:28; 1 Corinthians 6:18-20; Ephesians 5:25-28). Christ is the head of the church. God has designed that our marriages serve to portray that (Ephesians 5:21-33). Having risen from the dead, and having been exalted to the right hand of God, Jesus' name is exalted above all others, and He is given to the church as her head (Ephesians 1:19-23; Colossians 1:15-19) God has done this so that we would value Christ above all, and that God

would get His glory in Christ. If we truly long to honor God we must submit to godly order and follow Christ.

“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.” (Hebrews 13:17)

Note that God has placed rulers within the church. There is an order that is to be observed among God’s people. Christ is God’s gift to the church as our head, and then He has gifted the church with leaders (Ephesians 4:11-16). These leaders are under the authority of Christ and bear the authority of Christ as they preach and teach His Word, and tend to the flock (1 Peter 5:1-4). We are taught to show great honor to those who rule well, to provide for their material needs (1 Timothy 5:17-18), to love them (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13), and to follow them and obey them (Hebrews 13:7-8,17).

“Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.” (1 Timothy 2:11–15)

The natural order, established by God, is also to be followed in the church. God’s Word teaches us that the men should take the leadership in the church, as this is God’s order from the beginning. The law also established this (1 Corinthians 14:34-45). While there is definitely room for godly ladies to teach and be a blessing (1 Timothy 2:11-15; Titus 2:1-5), it is godly order that the responsibility of leading the church rests upon the men, just as it does in the home. Please note that this is something to which we are all called to submit. Godly order requires submission to the order, both by those who must submit to the burden of leadership as well as those who must submit to the leaders. The ultimate authority in the church is Christ, who has established this order, and we must submit to Him by following His order.