

Intro:

We are talking about the subject of 'evangelistic prayer' as we have called it. From 1 Tim 2.1ff. we see the first pastoral exhortation given to the church at large in this epistle, and that is that prayers be made for all men, especially for those in authority.

In the context we are given three reasons for these prayers which cause us to think of these prayers as *evangelistic* in their focus.

It is certainly true that the leaders of our nation need to have a close personal walk with God – they need to be born again.

There are benefits to the church at large if their civic leaders are Christians – it tends to promote peace and stability so that Christians are able to conduct their lives in all godliness and dignity.

And of course there is the great benefit those individuals would have personally if they were to become born again Christians.

In our look at the 2nd chapter of 1 Timothy, the apostle is now returning to the subject of prayer, but he is going to tell us something about how these prayers should be made.

In doing so, he is going to give us some directions which are controversial in our modern culture.

You might find them controversial also.

Here is the title for our message:

Holiness Applied Distinctly

holy men and women serving according to God's direction

Notice the word 'distinctly' and 'holy men and women' mentioned separately.

Read 1 Tim 2.8-10

Proposition: God calls men to holiness of life and distinction of roles *even in their praying*.

I. The salvation centric motive of public praying

A. The word 'therefore' connects these verses with what went before

1. Because God desires all men to save
2. Because God provided the One Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus

3. Because God's interest in men's salvation is proved by the appointment of the apostle
 4. Therefore, Paul ordains the men to pray
- B. The description of men and women suggests public gatherings
1. They are referred to in the plural – not just a home setting
 2. The regulation of the manner of dress suggests a public place
 3. The regulation of prayers seems to point towards worship services
 4. The 'in every place' seems to suggest the places where the people of the church gather (including Bible studies)
- C. These prayers are 'ordained'
1. The word here is one that can sometimes mean a settled, determined will rather than a wish
 2. Different word in v. 4 where he says "God wills (desires) all to be saved" – traditionally more of an inclination or a wish
 3. **However**, this is not a strong point – the lexicographers are divided

So, mildly, this is God's purpose... God's will for his church. It is more than a wish, it is a policy.

II. The gender-specific roles in public praying

- A. The order, or policy, is put to the men (8)
1. This is the word for men as men, not the generic word for mankind
 2. The implication is that men are to lead in these prayers
 3. The implication is jarring to modern minds

"Presumably the singling out of *men* as subjects for prayer in this verse must be taken in conjunction with what is afterwards said about women (verse 9)."¹

"The direction here given that *men* should pray, in contradistinction from the duties of *women*, specified in the next verse, may be intended to imply that men should conduct exercises of public worship. The duties of women pertain to a different sphere."²

¹ Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles*, p. 74.

² Albert Barnes, "1 Timothy" in *Notes on the New Testament*, p. 133.

An older commentator – more blunt...

“The [men], in express distinction from the women, are alone to direct public prayers. It thus appears that, in the assembly of believers, this duty was not given exclusively to the presiding officer, but was performed without limitation by the members of the church. The Apostle does not object to this, he only orders that the women shall abstain entirely from it, which, perhaps, in more recent times, they have not always done.”³

B. The woman's role in public prayer (9-10)

1. Their role is supportive, not 'aggressive'
2. Their demeanor is quiet modesty
3. Their ornamentation should be 'good works'

I want to come back to these verses in more detail next time, so I am just summarizing this time.

These verses are often taken out of the context of prayer to speak to how women should dress. There is some legitimacy to that, I suppose, but let's make these observations concerning men and women and public prayer:

- The biblical roles define duties, not value or ability — it is not that women *could not* pray!
- The fact is, women *should not* lead in public prayer since these are duties ordained by God.
- The role of godly women supporting the men of the church in their praying is vital (because God said something about it).
- The role of women in prayer is connected to the role of women in teaching and exercising authority (see vv. 11-12)
- 1 Cor 11 makes a provision for women praying in the assembly (the head covering passage), but whatever that praying is, it does not contradict this passage in 1 Tim 2.

³ John Peter Lange, “1 Timothy” in *Commentary on the Holy Scriptures*, p. 32.

III. The everyday holiness required for public praying

- A. The men aren't being directed in their posture but in their character
"holy hands"
 - 1. Some ancient paintings of men in the church have their hands raised
 - 2. The adjective, 'holy', means "undefiled by sin, free from wickedness, religiously observing every moral obligation, pure, holy, pious"⁴
 - 3. In other words, it isn't every man in the church who is called to pray, but the men in leadership by virtue of their spiritual character
- B. The men are disqualified by the presence of wrath and disputation in the church
 - 1. The Lord calls the people of the church to peace
 - 2. Dissension and strife not only troubles the church, but it appears to harm the prayers of the church – especially these prayers we have been discussing
- C. The requirements for the women in their supportive roles also call for 'everyday holiness'
 - 1. It isn't enough to be a Sunday Christian
 - 2. God calls us to serious business, the winning of souls
 - 3. Somehow, your testimony of godliness is connected to this ministry

Conclusion:

We aren't attempting to be simply counter-cultural and obnoxious about these differences with society at large.

We want to simply follow the Lord's directions as he laid them out for us.

Do we need a reason? Christ died for us – what more reason could we need?

⁴ Thayer's *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*.