

Paul and Women

Jack Risk

Patriarchy

- A system of society or government in which men hold the power and women are largely excluded from it.
- Aristotle's view of women:
 - Women are morally, intellectually, and physically inferior to men
 - Women are the property of men
 - Women's role in society is to reproduce and to serve men in the household
 - Male domination of women is natural and virtuous
 - Women are not fully evolved – men are perfect

Was Paul a Male Chauvinist? Exhibit A

Wives, be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Saviour. As the church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands.

Ephesians 5:22-24

Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

Colossians 3:18

Was Paul a Male Chauvinist? Exhibit B

Let a woman learn in silence with all submissiveness. I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men; she is to keep silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. Yet woman will be saved through bearing children, if she continues in faith and love and holiness, with modesty.

1 Timothy 2:11-15

Was Paul a Male Chauvinist? Exhibit C

Bid the older women likewise to be reverent in behavior, not to be slanderers or slaves to drink; they are to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be sensible, chaste, domestic, kind, and submissive to their husbands, that the word of God may not be discredited.

Titus 2:3-5

Was Paul a Male Chauvinist? Exhibit D

As in all the churches of the saints, the women should keep silence in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as even the law says. If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church.

I Cor. 11:34-35

Some early manuscripts place verses 34-35 after verse 33. Some place it after verse 40.

Defense Exhibit A – Egalitarian Marriage

The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. For the wife does not rule over her own body, but the husband does; likewise the husband does not rule over his own body, but the wife does.

I Cor. 7:3-4

To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is well for them to remain unmarried as I am.

1 Cor. 7:8

Defense Exhibit B – Women Leaders, Peers

*I commend to you our **sister Phoebe**, a **deacon** of the church at Cenchreae, so that you may welcome her in the Lord as is fitting for the **saints**, and help her in whatever she may require from you, for she has been a benefactor of many and of myself as well.*

(Rom. 16:1-2)

*Greet Prisca and Aquila, who **work with me** in Christ Jesus, and who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. Greet also the church in their **house**.*

(Rom. 16:3-4)

*To Philemon our dear friend and **co-worker**, to **Apphia** our **sister**, to Archippus our fellow-soldier, and to the church in your house...*

(Philemon 2)

I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord.

(Phil. 4:2)

*Greet those **workers** in the Lord, Tryphaena and Tryphosa.*

(Rom. 16:2)

Defense Exhibit C – Women Prophets

When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up.

(1 Cor. 14:26)

Any man who prays or prophesies with something on his head disgraces his head, but any woman who prays or prophesies with her head unveiled disgraces her head...

(1 Cor. 11:4)

Defense Exhibit C – Editorial Bias

Greet Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners; they are men of note among the apostles, and they were in Christ before me.

Romans 16:7 (RSV)

The earliest manuscript of Romans (p46 c. 200) reads not *Junias* but *Junia*.

Editors made an eminent woman apostle disappear.