

The logo for CPAS, consisting of the letters 'c', 'p', 'a', and 's' in a stylized, lowercase font. The 'c' and 'p' are connected, and the 'a' and 's' are also connected. The logo is white and set against a dark blue background that forms a vertical bar on the left side of the page.

cpas

A photograph of a single, large, leafy green tree standing in the middle of a vast, flat field. The field is covered in dry, reddish-brown grass, suggesting a dry or autumnal season. The sky is bright blue with scattered white clouds. The horizon is visible in the distance.

women in mind

Three sessions on
women and leadership

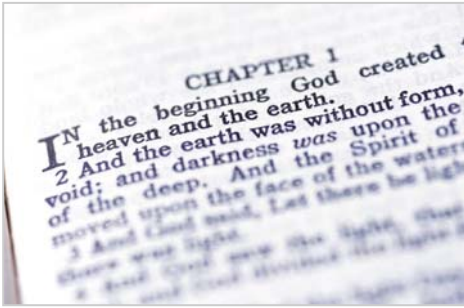
Rosie Ward

- Bible background and history
- Leadership and style
- Issues and action - what next?

Participants' notes for mixed groups

women in mind

Session 1: Bible background and history



Aim

To explore the context of women and leadership and to consider some linked ideas and assumptions

To look at the scriptural case for women leaders in the Church

To highlight biblical and historical role models for women leaders

Preparation

Read Chapter 1 of *Growing Women Leaders*, 'Interpreting Scripture'.

Way in (30 mins)

Look at the photos, pictures and stories about women leaders today.

What do these say about women leaders? In a small group, discuss these images and stories in the light of your own experiences and understanding of women leaders.

How do our assumptions and experiences colour our views on this issue – and on others?

Or

You will have up to five minutes (depending on group size) to share something of your experience and understanding of women as leaders in the Church.

Bible (30 mins)

In pairs or small groups discuss some or all of the following questions:

- How do you interpret the creation order? Do you think that the subordination of women is a result of the Fall, or a divinely ordained mark of difference in roles between men and women? (p 44-8)
- What evidence is there to suggest that Jesus affirmed women as equals in discipleship? (p 56-7)
- Look at Acts 2:17-18. What significance do you think this passage has in the debate about women's public ministry? (p 58)
- Did Paul have female co-workers? If so, what sort of roles did they fulfil? (p 26, 58-62)
- Do you think it matters whether Junia was a man or a woman? Why? (p 59-60)

Explore (15 mins)

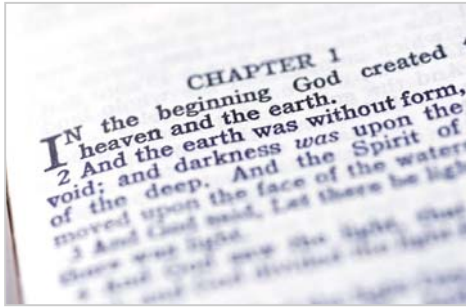
A recent in-depth study of women in the early Church comes to the following modest conclusion: 'What can be said with certainty is that the claim that women have never functioned as presbyters in the "orthodox" church is simply untrue.'

Do you agree? If so, what implications might this have?

What do the names Paula, Hilda, Margaret Fell, Selina Countess of Huntingdon, Catherine Booth, Ellen Ranyard, mean to you? For those you have heard of, how did you learn about them?

women in mind

Session 1: Bible background and history



How do you think knowing more about women leaders in the past might help us today as we explore women's leadership in the Church?

So what? (15 mins)

- What implications can we draw out from our look at Scripture which might affect our attitude to women leaders in our church?
- Is our church's policy on women as leaders consistent with its theology? In what ways is it inconsistent?

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women in mind

Session 2: Leadership and style



Aim

To explore whether men and women lead differently and to consider the implications such differences may have for women leaders in the Church

Preparation

Read Chapter 5, 'Do Women Lead Differently?'

Way in (15 mins)

Who or what comes to mind when you think about the word 'leader'?

Why do we often have particular kinds of people in mind when we think about leadership, particularly leadership in the Church?

Bible (20 mins)

Who comes to mind when you think about leaders in the Bible?

Does the Bible give us any guidance when we are considering whether men and women are differently gifted for leadership?

You may want to look at some of the following passages:

- Acts 2:17-18 – sons and daughters, men and women
- Ephesians 4:7-11 – are these gifts gender-biased?
- 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 – and these?
- Galatians 5:22-25 – and could you ask the same question about the fruit of the Spirit?

Explore (40 mins)

'Men are from Mars, women are from Venus.' Do you think this is true?

List some stereotyped views about male and female ways of behaving.

- How true are these in reality?
- What exceptions do you know of?

Then think of some stereotyped views of men and women as leaders.

- Again, look at each and ask how true it is.

Think about a woman, known to you, in a secular leadership role – either personally or in public life. To what extent does she exhibit leadership 'typical' of women? And to what extent does she confound the stereotypes?

Is there anything about women which might make them less suited to leadership in church?

In what ways might women be *more* suited to leadership than men are?

In conclusion

Share any new insights with the rest of the group.

women in mind

Session 3: Issues and action - what next?



Aim

To explore what the church can or should be doing to develop women as leaders

Preparation

Read Chapter 8: 'Stepping up to lead'

Way in (15 mins)

You'll be invited to explore some or all of the following questions:

- In what ways does our church provide a good context for women to develop as leaders?
- What difficulties might (or do) emerging women leaders find in our context?
- What should change for these difficulties to be overcome?
- Who else in our context wants to see women develop as leaders?

Explore (50 mins)

Page 177 suggests that modelling and mentoring are two key ways of creating an atmosphere where women's leadership will be more fully accepted. This session offers an opportunity to explore how modelling and mentoring might be used in your own church, and how to take forward other issues which have emerged in Sessions 1 and 2.

Modelling (p 177)

- Would it help us to encourage the use of inclusive-language Bibles? If so, how?
- How helpful are our sermons and Bible studies at providing models and examples for current and emerging women leaders?
- Do women and girls in our church see women in leadership roles – for example as clergy, other staff members, churchwardens, PCC, house group leaders, etc? Are there any changes we would like to see?

Mentoring (p 177, 195f and 212-13)

- What is mentoring? What mentoring already happens in our situation?
- How might mentoring help women and girls who have leadership gifts?
- Who might mentor them? Note that you might find suitable mentors outside the church as well as within it.

In conclusion (15 mins)

- What changes are we going to make in our church so that girls and women receive the message that women can be leaders? (It may be that you'd like to see leadership development in general become more of a priority in your context, or it may be that you'd like to see a more intentional focus on the needs of women.)
- Whom can we identify as a current or emerging leader?

Prayer (10 mins)

An opportunity to pray together about the issues you have been discussing.