

# Why Women Cannot Serve in Oversight

by David A. Huston

*This paper is presented to provide a brief summary of the biblical reasons why women cannot serve as pastoral elder-overseers in a local assembly.*

1. The Bible does not specifically authorize women to serve in oversight.
2. The twelve apostles, who served as the original overseers of the Jerusalem church, were all men.
3. The Bible makes no references to any women serving in oversight.
4. The Greek words translated elder, "overseer, and pastor are found only in the masculine gender.
5. Paul wrote, "And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence" (1 Timothy 2:12). This is a reference to the oversight function, which involves authoritative teaching.
6. 1 Timothy 3:1 says, "If a **man** desires the position of a bishop [overseer], he desires a good work."
7. 1 Timothy 3:2 says, "A bishop [overseer] then **must be...the husband** of one wife...."
8. 1 Timothy 3:4-5 says that a bishop [overseer] must be "one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence (for if a **man** does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?)."
9. The intimate relationship between elder/overseers and the open sharing of personal struggles that can take place in elder meeting would make the presence of women awkward and would tend to inhibit openness.
10. 1 Corinthians 11:3 says, "The head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man. In God's order, women are not to exercise headship over men."

Note to the reader:

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Rosh Pinnah means Chief Cornerstone in Hebrew.