

Date : 19 Jan 2025

Theme : Building a strong foundation for the family

Topic : The role of a wife

Passage : Ephesians 5:22-24

Key Verse : Ephesians 5:22-24 – Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

The biblical definition of the roles of husband and wife is often dismissed today as outdated and irrelevant. In the pursuit of equality, we have blurred the God-given distinctions between man and woman, redefining their roles in the home and workplace. It has shifted the focus away from the home as a vital foundation of life. Tragically, this mindset has seeped into the church, leading many to embrace a selfish, individualistic approach to life and marriage. Such thinking inevitably brings strain and dissatisfaction, both personally and within the family. We need to return to God's blueprint for the family. It is time that we start thinking and acting biblically, even if it means going against today's popular thinking.

Being a wife and mother can be challenging yet rewarding. The Bible has designed specific roles for the wife and mother, which brings fulfilment and harmony when embraced. The question we must answer is this: Will we allow worldview to shape our view of marriage, or will we submit to God's design for the roles of husbands and wives in marriage?

1. Wife is a partner to her husband

- *'So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth." – Genesis 1:27-28*
 - *Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. – Genesis 2:24*
- a) To fulfil God's design:
- Marriage reflects God's original purpose for humanity—to work together as stewards of creation (*Genesis 1:27-28*). The partnership between husband and wife demonstrates unity, complementing each other to achieve God's plan for their lives and family.
 - Ecclesiastes 4:9 explains the value of partnership, "Two are better than one." This is not only because two people are more productive as a team but also because someone is there to help during troubles: "For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow" (*Ecclesiastes 4:10*).
 - Husbands and wives complement each other, differences between spouses—such as personality, strengths, and spiritual gifts—are divinely designed to work together for a greater purpose.

- b) To grow spiritually:
 - Becoming "one flesh" signifies a deeper connection beyond the physical, including spiritual unity and shared purpose in serving God and building their family. When a husband and wife partner in their faith, they grow closer to God and each other, enhancing their ability to lead and serve as a team.
- c) Biblical example: Priscilla (Acts 18, Romans 16:3-4)
 - Priscilla, along with her husband Aquila, not only in their business but also in ministry, showing the partnership in both personal and spiritual aspects. Priscilla and Aquila were tentmakers, and they worked together to support their ministry (Acts 18:2-3). They were also instrumental in teaching Apollos, an eloquent speaker who had incomplete knowledge of the gospel. They took him aside and explained the way of God more accurately (Acts 18:26). Priscilla's role here demonstrates her partnership with Aquila in advancing the gospel and mentoring others.
- d) How does it look like in today's marriage?
 - Work together to raise children in the fear of the Lord (Proverbs 22:6).
 - Encourage spiritual multiplication through discipleship and mentorship.
 - Identify strengths and callings as a couple to serve the church and community.

2. Wife is a helper to her husband

- *The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." – Genesis 2:18*

- a) To be a suitable helper:
 - The Bible teaches that the role of a wife is that she is to be her husband's helper. The helper here is one that is comparable, suitable, and designed to suit the person.
 - The word also means she was a perfect fit. Just like wearing clothes, it must fit you. Eve would bring about the completeness of Adam.
 - The Hebrew word ezer means "help" or "aid". It refers to someone who provides essential support, often in a way that complements and strengthens the recipient.
 - From the beginning, God knew that man alone was incomplete in his abilities to parent and raise a family. While husbands have their strengths, wives contribute uniquely, providing qualities like nurturing, empathy, and relational insight that often balance and enrich the marriage.
- b) To be a reflection of God:
 - Ezer is also used to describe God as our helper, emphasizing that this role is not inferior but noble and powerful. The Scripture reveals that God is our "Helper" and has sent "another Helper" in the person of the Holy Spirit to abide with us forever (And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever – John 14:16).
 - A wife's role mirrors God's help—essential and empowering. It is a partnership, not a hierarchy, with both working together to fulfill God's purpose.

c) Submission as Part of the Helper Role:

- Ephesians 5:21-33 teaches about mutual submission and love within marriage. Husbands are called to love their wives as Christ loved the church, and wives are called to respect their husbands.
- This mutual submission is rooted in love and respect, making the marriage a partnership of equals, where both husband and wife are called to support and uplift each other.
- Just as Christ submitted to the Father's will (John 6:38), a wife's submission reflects her trust in God's design and her willingness to align with her husband's God-given leadership.
- Submission is first an attitude of love, respect, and gentleness in the way you speak and act toward your husband.
- Submission also produces powerful action. It is when a wife allows the husband to take leadership in the relationship.
- A wife submits not based on her husband's merit but as an act of faith and obedience to God.
- God holds every husband accountable, ensuring justice in cases of wickedness or failure.

d) Biblical example: Abigail

- Abigail was married to Nabal, a foolish and reckless man. When David and his men sought kindness from Nabal, he rudely refused, provoking David to anger. Abigail, however, stepped in with discernment, recognizing the potential danger and taking swift action. She prepared a generous offering and personally went to meet David, humbling herself and offering wise counsel that turned away his wrath.
- Her actions illustrate wisdom, discernment, and strength in fulfilling the role of a helper.

e) How does it look like in today's marriage?

- Using her unique talents and gifts to contribute to the family and household goals.
- Praying for and encouraging her husband in his role as a leader and provider.
- Balancing wisdom and discernment to offer guidance while trusting God's design for leadership.

3. Wife is a maker of the home

- *Then they can urge the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God. – Titus 2:4-5*
- The term 'busy at home' is better rendered "keeper at home" – one who keeps or makes the home.

a) Loving Her Husband:

- Paul instructs older women, seasoned in life and faith, to teach and encourage younger women in how to honour God through their roles in marriage and the home. They are to teach younger women how to love their husbands. The love mentioned here is not merely a feeling but an intentional, selfless, and sacrificial act.

b) Managing the Home:

- While husbands and fathers have been given primary responsibility for the leadership of their families including their children, wives and mothers are urged to be "workers at home", meaning managers of households. Their home and their children are to be their priority.
- Career should be restricted to certain seasons in life and not become the primary life goal. Such as when children have grown up.

c) Biblical example: Proverbs 31 Woman

- Proverbs 31:10-31 provides a beautiful example of a wife and mother who embodies the role of a home maker. She is described as diligent, resourceful, and dedicated to her family.
- Her actions reflect intentional, sacrificial love that prioritizes her husband's well-being.
 - Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value. – Proverbs 31:11
 - She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life. – Proverbs 31:12
- She oversees the affairs of her household with wisdom and diligence.
 - She watches over the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness. – Proverbs 31:27

d) How does it look like in today's marriage?

- Organize and manage the household well, being a good steward of time, resources, and relationships.
- Prioritize family relationships over other tasks, investing in quality time with your husband and children.
- Focus on the home during seasons where children need care and consider other pursuits when family demands decrease.

Application

For husband and wife:

1. One area of help is to set aside time to pray with or for your husband in leading your family.
2. Am I prioritising my role as the builder of our home, ensuring it is a place of peace, love, and spiritual growth?
3. How would you shape a nurturing environment in your home, whether by having a regular family altar, planning a family activity, or supporting your husband and children?

For singles:

1. What kind of disciplines and spiritual growth in your daily life to prepare for your future role in marriage such as a builder of the home.