

Four Views on Women in the Home, Church, and Society

Slaves, Women, and Homosexuals: Exploring the Hermeneutics of Cultural Analysis by William J. Webb (pp. 26-28)

	Hard/Strong Patriarchy (Complementarian)	Soft Patriarchy (Complementarian)	Evangelical Egalitarianism	Secular Egalitarianism
Overview:	Unilateral submission of women with an extensive power difference between men and women.	Unilateral submission of women with a moderated power difference between men and women.	Mutual submission with equality of power between male and female. Some argue for no role distinction; others hold to minimal role distinctions based on biological differences.	Equal rights and no gender-defined roles.
Home:	Women focus most of their energies in the home; they are to "submit to" and "obey" their husbands in all things; the husband's word is the final authority.	Women are free to work outside of the home; within the marriage they function in a cooperative manner with their husbands; ultimately the husband has the <i>theoretical</i> right to exercise authority in decision making over his wife, yet this should be used on rare occasions, if at all. Words with a strong power-differential connotation, such as <i>obey</i> and <i>submission</i> , are still used but they often fade into the background.	Women are free to work outside of the home; husbands and wives related to each other in a model of mutual (not unilateral) submission; decisions are made based upon mutual consent and consensus. Wives generally play a greater role in nurturing infants and young children, otherwise roles are determined by mutual agreement through an evaluation of individual strengths. Mutual Submission: See Ephesians 5:18-33.	Women are often encouraged to work outside the home as a greater priority than the family and as a necessity for personal fulfillment. The husband-wife relationship is based upon the equal rights of the individual, rather than mutual deference; the relationship frequently evidences an extreme in personal autonomy, rather than interdependence.
Church:	A woman should not function in any capacity that places her in a position of greater power than a man; women are not permitted to teach in any setting where men are present. Depending upon the ecclesiastical structure, women may or may not be permitted to vote on selecting male leaders and on congregational issues: women should not be ordained to ministry in any capacity.	Women may teach men in any setting other than from the pulpit, as the senior pastor would on a weekly basis; they can work on a pastoral staff in a paid position; they can be deacons, but generally are not permitted to function in any official capacity as elders. Often women function in an extended leadership role through participation on boards or councils with names other than the biblical categories; they are encouraged to vote on leadership selection and on church issues. Women may be ordained to serve in ministry roles other than the senior/preaching pastor.	Women function within the church based upon character qualifications, gifts and theological education, not on the basis of gender restrictions; a woman may function as an elder or in pulpit ministry. Women can be ordained to any sphere of church ministry; in a large church the ideal would be to have a shared pulpit ministry utilizing qualified men and women.	Secular egalitarianism generally does not have much of a place for religion.
Society:	If a woman works outside of the home, she should not hold positions of authority in any sphere of society (e.g. politics, education, business); men, not women should provide for the home financially. Women should not be in leadership roles where they can exercise authority over a man; however, women are generally permitted to vote.	Women may function in an unrestricted way in society; they may hold positions of power over men; they may teach men; they may pursue any leadership position and are encouraged to vote in political elections.	Women may function in an unrestricted way in society; they may hold positions of power over men; they may teach men; they may pursue any leadership position and are encouraged to vote in political elections.	Women may function in an unrestricted way in society; they may hold positions of power over men; they may teach men; they may pursue any leadership position and are encouraged to vote in political elections.