**What are women permitted to do in church?**

Look at passages that explicitly speak about women’s roles in ministry:

* 1 Timothy 2:12
  + Context of this verse: Paul’s apostolic instructions to the church for the ordering of church practice when the church is assembled together.
    - 1 – Women are not permitted to publicly teach Scripture and/our Christian doctrine to men in church
    - 2 – Women are not permitted to exercise authority over men in church.
  + When Paul calls for women to be quiet, he means “quiet” with respect to the teaching responsibility that is limited in the assembled church. Paul elsewhere indicates that women do speak in other ways in the church assembly. (1 Corinthians 11:5)
  + What grounds this passage of teaching is verse 13 in the creation order. So this pattern of male headship, leadership, and teaching; it was already the standard that was ordained at creation. This isn’t a new idea, not just something that was spoken specifically to Timothy.
  + This is a creation mandate which is universal and binding upon all people without distinction.
* 1 Timothy 3:1-7
  + Here we see the qualifications of an overseer. We see the character of one who should hold this office. One of the first ones being a “husband to one wife”. Although this trait is referring to an overseer’s faithfulness, Paul assumes that the overseer is a man. It is sin that a woman would be married to a woman, so we know that he would not be talking about a woman here. This is backed up throughout the rest of Paul’s theology.
* 1 Corinthians 11:2-16
  + The principle is man is distinct from woman which finds its origin in creation. The manifestation is found in culture which enables subjectivity to display of the principle. Still, the principle is applied in the context of the culture that there is a distinction between man and woman.
* 1 Corinthians 14:33-35
  + Since Paul seems to permit wives to pray and prophesy (1 Cor. 11:5), as long as they do not dishonor their husbands by the way they dress, it is difficult to see this as an absolute prohibition. Paul is likely forbidding women to speak up and judge prophecies (this is the activity in the immediate context, vs. 29), since such an activity would subvert male headship.
  + “Law also says” in verse 34 is speaking of the woman’s creation “from” and “for” the man (Gen. 2:20-24), as well as a general pattern of male leadership among the people of Israel in the OT.
* Titus 1:5-9
  + Again, we see qualifications, but of an elder. Again, we also see Paul’s reference to the elder as a man.
* Matthew 10:2-4
  + List of the 12 Apostles, which are all men. We see other followers of Jesus who were women, and would be considered disciples, but they were not his apostles (whom he gave authority to teach).

Definitions:

* Egalitarianism: Equality of men and women *with out* distinction in roles.
* Complementarianism: Equality of men and women *with* distinction in roles.

\*\*These definitions may vary in extent in practice.

Look at passages that the opposing argument will use:

* Genesis 3:16-17
  + The opposing view will use this text to argue that role subordination is a consequence to the fall; therefore, gender roles or hierarchy within the relationships between man and women were not the intended design.
  + We would refute this by going to Genesis 2:20-24 which teaches that gender roles and a hierarchy were already instituted before the fall; therefore, it is not a consequence of sin, but God’s original intention.
* Judges 4-5
  + The opposing view will use this text to argue that Deborah is seen as a prophetess and a judge of Israel operating as a speaker and a leader for the people of Israel. Therefore, it is appropriate for women to speak and lead in the church.
  + We would refute this by recognizing that in the context of Judges, this was an unfaithful time of Israel to the Lord. Therefore, many things that the judges were doing are not necessarily ideal for a leader or speaker of Israel (descriptive revelation – 4-5 is describing a time, it is not prescribing what to do. The time right now is in affect of Israel’s disobedience. It’s not because they’re obeying and doing the right things.)
  + We would also say that Deborah refuses to individually lead Israel and requests/summons the assistance of Barak indicating she should not be solely leading Israel. Then, Barak shamefully refuses to lead Israel into battle. Deborah acknowledging his cowardness & unfaithfulness, tells him that he will not be honored when they achieve victory because the Lord has given the enemy into the hands of a woman. Therefore, indicating that the model leader should be a man.
* Proverbs 31
  + The opposing view will use this text to argue that we have a woman that is working, providing, and caring for her home. Therefore, she has authority in her home.
  + We would refute this by the error of the opposing side is assuming to much about working, providing, and caring for a home. Complementarianism has nothing against a woman working and obtaining money to care for the home.
* Women at the Tomb (at the end of the gospels)
  + The opposing view will use these texts to argue that women are seen as communicating and proclaiming the gospel to others. Therefore, they can be seen as teachers of the word.
  + We would refute this by saying the context of the women proclaiming the gospel is not within the context of the local church and it is not necessarily teaching. At best, they appear to be sharing a gospel message. The only thing this text promotes is that God will use women to share the gospel.
* Acts 18
  + The opposing view will use this text to argue that Priscilla (Aquilla’s wife) is involved in teaching the Scriptures.
  + We would refute this by saying that once again, this is assuming too much. One, she is not in the context of a local church. Two, at best, she is evangelizing, not teaching, or preaching. And three, she is doing it with her husband.
* Acts 16:
  + Context: Lydia, a seller of purple goods (inferring she is wealthy), is converted (vs. 14) and then they gather in Lydia’s house (vs. 40). Then when we reach the book of Philippians, Paul writes his final greetings to the church, mentioning the gifts they have given him – that he has received everything he needs, in abundance more. This infers that Lydia, by her prophets, is facilitating a local church and supporting Paul’s ministry.
  + The opposing view will use this text to argue that Lydia, being a supporter and provider for Paul’s ministry and a facilitator of a local church, is in authoritative figure within the local church.
  + We would refute this by saying yes, Lydia is a provider and facilitator for the local church and Paul’s ministry, but all that this concludes is that she is serving and using her economic welfare to support the ministry of the church. Also, there are men in the church, as we know from Acts 16, therefore, it is likely considering 1 Tim. 2 and 1 Cor. 14, that they are leading and teaching while Lydia is serving in the church.
* Galatians 3:28
  + The opposing view will take this verse to mean that Paul is eliminating roles and a hierarchy within the church and marriage since, in this verse, there is no distinction between man and woman, but all is one within Christ Jesus.
  + We would refute this affirming that there is no distinction between man and woman in this verse; however, the topic is not gender roles or hierarchy in marriage of the church. The topic is an inheritance as a son or daughter of Christ. This text is in reference to salvation and who receives it, not how men and women relate to each other once again in church or in marriage. Paul is breaking down all gender, racial and vocational barriers for believing the gosepel.

There is nothing in the verses that the opposing arguments will use that is explicit about women in ministry or women roles. There are, however, verses that explicitly instruct how women should be involved in ministry (which we looked at first).

In the case that you find yourself debating about this in evangelism, this is not necessarily helpful or a hill worth dying on in evangelism. With our culture, this will be a wall we have to overcome in evangelism because it’ll be an opposition to what we believe, but the only hill worth dying on is the gospel, not these second tier issues.