

Women in the Divine Administration¹

There is much in the Word of God and in the ministry in the Lord's recovery concerning the crucial and positive role and function of sisters in the church life and in service to the Lord.² However, from time to time a few sisters have overstepped their proper status and have caused damage in certain places by attempting to assert authority in a church or in the work. The purpose of this document is to remind the saints of the need to recognize, respect, and adhere to God's governmental arrangement concerning sisters in the church and in the Lord's service in order that a proper order may be maintained for the sake of the building up.

The Bible reveals that in His divine administration God has a governmental arrangement. This arrangement leaves no room for the human concept, regardless of how popular that concept may be in this age (Rom. 12:2). In fact, the natural human concept, a byproduct of the fall of man, is something from which we must be delivered to be headed up in Christ (Eph. 1:10). According to God's governmental arrangement women should be under the authority of men. If we examine the entire record of the Bible, we will find this to be true in creation, in the church, and in the Lord's service in the ministry and the work.

In Creation

In 1 Corinthians 11, a chapter on the divine administration, the apostle Paul wrote, "But I want you to know that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of the woman, and God is the head of Christ" (v. 3). In footnote 33 in the Holy Bible Recovery Version Brother Witness Lee says:

"In the divine governmental ordination, woman is under the headship of man. God created the female in this way (Gen. 2:18-24; 1 Tim. 2:13). According to the nature (v. 14) created by God, woman is subordinate to man."

In God's creation, man was formed first, and woman came out of man to be man's helper (Gen. 2:18-24). Thus, in presenting the truth concerning man's headship over woman Paul says, "For man is not out of woman, but woman out of man; for also man was not created for the sake of the woman, but woman for the sake of the man" (1 Cor. 11:8-9). Concerning these verses Brother Lee says in footnote 1 of verse 9:

"Here the apostle took God's purpose in the creation of man and woman as further strong ground for his teaching concerning head covering. That teaching is not based on any manmade custom but on the divine purpose in creation."

In a similar manner, in 1 Timothy 2:9-15, as he was describing the proper place of women in the normal, orderly church life, Paul told Timothy, "For Adam was formed first, then Eve" (v. 13).

It is important to see that the fall of man was initiated by woman not taking man as her head (Gen. 3:1-6; 1 Tim. 2:14). In other words, the fall came about because God's governmental arrangement was not maintained. In 1 Timothy 2:14 Paul says, "And Adam was not deceived; but the woman, having been quite deceived, has fallen into transgression." In footnote 2 of verse 14 Brother Lee comments:

"Eve was deceived by the serpent (Gen. 3:1-6) because she did not remain in subjection under the headship of Adam but overstepped her position to contact the evil tempter directly without her head being covered. This is the strong ground for the apostle not to permit the sisters in a local church to teach with authority and to assert authority over men. Rather, the apostle directed them to learn in silence and to remain in all subjection. Man's headship is woman's protection."

In *Life-study of Genesis* Brother Lee said:

"Now we must see the inward cause of man's first fall. I am strong on this point. The inward cause of man's fall was the woman's assuming the headship (vv. 2-3, 6). Eve was ensnared by the serpent because she forgot her husband. The Devil was crafty, knowing that the woman was weaker than the man (1 Pet. 3:7), and he chose her as his target. Regardless of what the woman said to the serpent, as long as she stood there and spoke to him, she was wrong, for it indicated that she had assumed the headship. The safest way for her would have been not to talk to the evil one, but to turn to her husband and hide behind him. If Eve had done this, the subtle one would have been frustrated. Therefore, the basic cause of man's first fall was the assuming of the headship by the wife. Although she had a husband, she nonetheless stood on her own." (*W. Lee, Life-study of Genesis, pp. 232-233, LSM*)

As a result of the fall that occurred when the woman assumed the headship contrary to God's ordination, God further ordained that the man would rule over the woman (Gen. 3:16b):

"The Lord also told Eve that her husband shall rule over her. According to this word, every sister should be under the rule of her husband. Why did Eve fall? Because she did not care for her husband and assumed his headship. Therefore, God seemed to say to her, "Eve, from now on I appoint Adam to rule over you." Although this is a difficult word to accept, the Bible tells us that a woman must be ruled by her husband. We all must take this word as a security and protection. The ruling of the husband is a genuine safeguard to the wife. Hence, in 1 Timothy 2:11-12 Paul says, "Let a woman learn in quietness in all subjection; but I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man." Paul's teaching on this matter is based upon God's ordination in Genesis 3:16. I hope that the sisters will take heed to this divine word of the Bible." (*W. Lee, Life-study of Genesis, p. 274, LSM*)

In the Church

Although God intended in His creation of man that man would represent His authority and that woman would submit to man as God's representative, this arrangement has been damaged through the fall of man. However, it is God's intention that the church as the kingdom of God (Rom. 14:17) would bear a testimony of the restoration of God's governmental arrangement.³ The sisters have a particular role in establishing God's authority through their submission to the brothers' leadership. Thus, Brother Watchman Nee said:

“In the church, the woman also has to submit to the man. First Corinthians 11:3 says, “But I want you to know that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of the woman, and God is the head of Christ.” God appointed man to be the authority as a type of Christ and the woman to submit as a type of the church. For this reason the woman ought to have authority on her head for the sake of the angels.” (*W. Nee, The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, vol. 47, pp. 160-161, LSM*)

The record of the New Testament is clear on this matter. There is no case in which women are put into a position of leadership in the church. Concerning the appointing of elders, who manage the affairs of the church and oversee and shepherd the saints, Paul wrote: “The overseer then must be without reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, of a sober mind, orderly, hospitable, apt to teach” (1 Tim. 3:2). In a book on the proper order in the church, Paul instructed Titus concerning the appointment of elders, saying, “If anyone is unreprouvable, the husband of one wife, having believing children not accused of dissoluteness or unruly” (1:6). Thus, the elders appointed by the apostles to oversee the churches were all married brothers.

“The elders manage the matters and meetings related to the sisters. In the Bible, we see only brothers as elders; we do not see sisters as elders. The place God has assigned for the sisters is to be under someone's ruling; they do not have a place in ruling over others. God does not allow women to manage the church. In the Bible, there are deacons and deaconesses, but there are no female elders. This shows that in managing the affairs of the church, God wants the man to be the head of the woman. Therefore, the sisters should learn to submit by the grace of God. If there are some among the sisters who can serve others, they can do the work of this service. But if anything needs to be decided, the decisions should be made by those who are responsible as the elders.” (*W. Nee, The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, vol. 22, pp. 26-27, LSM*)

Furthermore, the apostle Paul clearly taught that women should not be allowed to teach with authority. In 1 Timothy 2:11-12 Paul says, “Let a woman learn in quietness in all subjection; but I do not permit a woman to teach or to assert authority over a man, but to be in quietness.” In footnote 2 of verse 12 Brother Lee wrote:

“To teach here means to teach with authority, to define and decide the meaning of doctrines concerning divine truth. For a woman to teach in this way or to exercise authority over a man is to leave her position. In God's creation man was ordained to be the head, and woman to be in subjection to man (1 Cor. 11:3). In the church this ordination should be kept.”

Similarly, in 1 Corinthians 14:33b-35 Paul wrote, “As in all the churches of the saints, the women should be silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they should be subject, even as the law also says. But if they desire to learn anything, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is a shame for a woman to speak in the church.” In footnote 2 of verse 34 Brother Lee commented:

“According to 11:5, women may prophesy (of course, in public) with their head covered, and Acts 2:17-18 and 21:9 confirm that women did prophesy. But 1 Tim. 2:12 says that women are not permitted to teach, that is, teach as authorities (there, teaching is related to the exercising of authority), so as to define doctrine. Hence, according to the New Testament principle, for women not to be permitted to speak in the church meetings means that women are not permitted to teach with authority in relation to the defining of doctrine. In this sense they should be silent in the church meetings. They are not permitted to speak, because they should be subject to men. This is related to the matter of authority ordained by God in His government. In God's governmental ordination, women are not permitted to speak with authority over men. They may pray and prophesy, that is, (mainly) speak for the Lord and speak forth the Lord. However, they must do this under the covering of the brothers, because they are charged here to be subject.”

In the Ministry and the Work

What is true according to God's ordination in His creation and in the church is also true in the Lord's work and ministry. There is simply no basis or precedent in the Word of God for women to assume roles of leadership in the ministry or in the work. Not one book of the New Testament was written by a woman. All of the examples in the New Testament show men taking the lead in the ministry and the work. The twelve appointed and sent out by the Lord were all men (Matt. 10:1-5). It was twelve men who stood forth to cooperate with the outpoured Spirit to initiate the church age on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14, 33). It was these twelve men who gave themselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word (Acts 6:4). It was through a group of five brothers praying together at Antioch that God initiated a fresh stage of His move to spread the gospel and the church life throughout the earth (Acts 13:1-4). While it is true that sisters can participate in the Lord's work, their service is not in the way of leadership in the work. They must serve under the covering of a few brothers' leading.⁴

“Concerning the place and scope of the sisters' service, I would say this: In Romans 16:7 we find women apostles. First Timothy 3:11 speaks of deaconesses. First Corinthians 14:1 and 11:5 speak of prophetesses. Therefore, women can work. But 1 Timothy says that a woman should not teach with regards to biblical teachings and should remain silent when the whole church is meeting together. Paul forbade woman from doing the work of a teacher in 1 Timothy. The ascertaining of truth is a work that belongs to the teacher, and sisters should not do this.” (*W. Nee, The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, vol. 58, p. 69, LSM*)

“The sisters can do many good and precious things. But they have to take a few brothers as their covering so that both glory and shame will fall on these

brothers. Therefore, it is improper for sisters to go to a place to do some pioneering work alone....

“All genuine women honor what God has done, and they honor the place and order that God has placed them in.... Sisters should always stand in a covered position. This does not mean that sisters should not work. It merely means that God has appointed the brothers to be the protector of the sisters. The ones who assume the headship should be the brothers; all the glory and shame should go to the brothers. This does not mean that the brothers covet the sisters' glory. Rather it means that the brothers protect the sisters and maintain the order God has established....” (*W. Nee, The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, vol. 22, pp. 39-40, LSM*)

God's established order is vital for the practice of the normal church life.

“Let us see clearly that in the church there is the need of a spiritual order, and this order comes only from the headship of Christ being realized by us in a practical way. Without this, there is no possibility for us to practice the real church life. We look to the Lord for this matter. This is very basic and very vital. If we have this, we have the church life. If we do not have this, the church life is gone.” (*W. Lee, Basic Principles for the Practice of the Church Life, p. 41, LSM*)

Brother Nee himself had at least two very capable female co-workers, one of whom was carrying out an independent gospel ministry before she took the way of the Lord's recovery. However, once they entered the Lord's recovery, these sisters took the way of serving under the leadership of the brothers.

Serving in a Proper Coordination with the God-ordained Authority

The Bible contains marvelous examples of females serving God in a proper coordination with God's representative authority. In the time of the judges in the Old Testament, God raised up a female judge named Deborah. According to the record of the book of Judges, she was a remarkable person. Yet she took Barak as her covering in her service.

“According to God's creation, Deborah was a very capable person. By reading her song in chapter five, we can see that she was full of ability, capacity, insight, and foresight. But such an excellent person was very submissive. God made her the leader, yet she kept the proper order and took Barak as her covering (Judges 4:6-9; cf 1 Cor. 11:3, 5-6, 10). She realized that she needed a man to be her covering.... [W]hen this excellent, extraordinary woman took the lead to practice the female submission to the man, the entire country came into the proper order. Everyone returned to his or her proper position.” (*W. Lee, Life-Study of Judges, Message 4, pp. 15-16, LSM*)

The New Testament begins with the wonderful example of Mary's submission, not only to God and His word but also to Joseph. It is significant that, while Mary was chosen to be the vessel to bring forth and nurture Jesus, it was not Mary but Joseph who received the divine reassurance to take Mary as his wife, was given the child's name, “Jesus,” and was divinely instructed to protect the child by traveling to Egypt, then to Israel, and then to

Nazareth. Because Mary followed Joseph's leading in all these matters, both the Scriptures and God's economy in the stage of incarnation could be fulfilled (Matt. 1:19-24; 2:13-15, 19-23).

In Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians there is an excellent example of a female properly taking the covering of a male when there was a serious problem in the church. When there was a need for correction because of divisions in the church in Corinth, those of the household of Chloe, a sister in the church, informed the apostle Paul (1 Cor. 1:11), who had the standing to deal with the problem. Had the household of Chloe attempted to address the problem directly, it would have been improper and would have added to the confusion, but she and her household knew their proper measure in the Body.⁵

God's authority can be established only by those who are willing to submit to His governmental arrangement. It is a real test when the sisters are more capable or spiritually mature than the brothers (as, for example, with Deborah and Barak) or when they are troubled by some situation in the church (as, for example, with the appeal from the household of Chloe to Paul). Will the sisters take the way of staying within their God-ordained limit under the brothers' covering, or will they overstep God's government and attempt to usurp the leadership? How sisters deal with such issues will be a major factor in the health of the churches in which they serve and their long term usefulness to the Lord. God's kingdom is brought in not by what we can do in our zeal to work for Him but by our submission to His throne.⁶

Corrections to Error

Some have contended against the teaching of man's headship over woman.⁷ For example, some have misapplied the phrase "there cannot be male and female" in Galatians 3:28 to justify ignoring the verses which plainly tell us that woman was meant to take man as her head. To say this is to receive the Word of God selectively. The context of Galatians is our status as sons of God "in Christ Jesus" to enjoy the blessings of the gospel. In this sense, there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, slave and free man, male and female. We have all been made one in Christ Jesus.

"In Christ, the racial problem, the social problem, and the gender problem are all gone. But in the church, while the racial problem and social problem are gone, the problem of male and female still remains. Therefore, when sisters or brothers come to ask why there is a difference between the brothers and sisters, or whether we feel the sisters should submit to the brothers, the only reply is to ask, "Do you take the headship of Christ? Do you submit yourself to the headship of Christ?" This will solve the problem. If all the brothers and sisters with such a problem would go to the Lord to submit themselves to the Lord and take the headship of Christ, the problem is solved." (W. Lee, *Basic Principles of the Practice of the Church Life*, p. 39, LSM)

As 1 Corinthians 11:3 shows, the headship of Christ is something according to God's governmental arrangement. The headship of Christ is based upon His submission to God. If we think that we can somehow remain under the headship of Christ and yet not honor God's governmental arrangement regarding male and female, we are self-deceived.

Similarly, we should not take a word such as Revelation 1:16 and 20 concerning shining stars to subvert God's administration in the church. It is significant that Paul's word in Philippians 2:15 concerning shining as luminaries in the world follows his recounting of the pattern of submission which the Lord established for us in verses 5-8. Working out our salvation in verse 12 requires our obedience to the inner operating God in verse 13. Murmurings and reasonings in verse 14 are a sign of our disobedience. Being blameless and guileless and shining as luminaries are an issue of our obedience. This means that we can shine only if we take the way of submission to the authorities God has placed over us. Thus, the shining stars in Revelation 1 are not those who try to overthrow the proper order in the church, but those who live within the restrictions of God's governmental administration by the supply of the inner operating God to shine forth Christ.

Conclusion

The present age is one characterized by rebellion against God's authority and His divine administration. The church is called to bear an anti-testimony of submission to God's throne and to His administrative arrangements. It is an honor and a glory that we have been called by God to be the corporate means through which He establishes His kingdom on the earth (Matt. 16:18-19; Rom. 14:17; Rev. 11:15) and will ultimately head up all things in Christ in the new heaven and new earth (Eph. 1:10; Rev. 22:1). May all of the saints in the Lord's recovery be delivered from the principle of rebellion to enjoy His abounding grace to uphold God's divine administration for the building up of His Body.⁸

-- Bill Buntain and Dan Sady

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APPENDIX

General Principles Concerning Our Submission to God's Administration⁹

In God's divine plan of salvation, we as believers are regenerated with His divine life to be His kingdom. After receiving His salvation, we immediately enter into the kingdom of God, which is the realm of God's divine government and administration (John 3:3, 5).

*“After our salvation the second step of God's administration begins in us—He brings a heavenly authority, a heavenly kingdom, upon us and into us to which we must submit.... After we are saved, He desires that we continually submit to the authority of the kingdom, that is, that we be ruled by the kingdom. This is a matter of His governmental administration. This is not merely a matter of teaching, instructing, nurturing, or exhorting but a matter of carrying out His governmental administration.” (W. Lee, *What the Kingdom Is to the Believers*, pp. 118-119, LSM)*

As believers, we are all charged to submit to the authorities God has established (Rom. 13:1; Titus 3:1; 1 Pet. 2:13). Submission to authority is a basic characteristic of a believer in Christ (Eph. 5:21; 1 Pet. 5:5).

“The most precious thing is to be submissive to authority. The relationship between a servant and his master, a child and his parents, a wife and her husband, a citizen and his country, and a woman and a man should be one of submission to authority.” (*W. Nee, The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, vol. 22, pp. 39-40, LSM*)

Submission to God’s government includes submission to the authorities God has established in the church (1 Thes. 5:12-13; 1 Tim. 5:17; Heb. 13:7, 17).

God’s Government Is Established through Submission

God’s authority is established through our submission. Both the fall of Satan and the fall of man were due to rebellion against God’s authority (Isa. 14:12-15; Gen. 3:1-6). Christ defeated Satan and accomplished redemption for us by living a human life of absolute submission and obedience to the Father’s authority and will (Matt. 26:39; John 6:38; Phil. 2:6-8).

“How did the Lord establish God's kingdom? He did it through submission. Whatever the Lord did on earth was entirely based on submission. He did nothing that opposed God's authority. Everything was in submission, in perfect cooperation with the authority of God. In this realm the Lord set up the kingdom of God and executed His authority. The church today must also allow God's authority to have a free way and manifest His kingdom through submission.” (*W. Nee, The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, vol. 47, p. 148, LSM*)

God can obtain the kingdom on the earth through the church as the church submits to His authority in its oneness with Christ.

“The church is the only place where one can learn submission. In the church, it is a matter not of good or bad, right or wrong, but of submission. The church is the place where one learns submission. No testimony is more important than the testimony of submission. The whole universe has rebelled, fallen, and taken a different stand. In the whole universe, God cannot find any other place where His authority is acknowledged. This is why God's children must all learn submission in the church.” (*W. Nee, The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, vol. 50, p. 892, LSM*)

Knowing Authority Is Not to Submit Only to Those of One’s Choosing

Submission to God’s government does not mean submission to a particular person but rather to the headship of Christ manifested in His Body.

“The fundamental problem in our service is that we obey men rather than authority. In Foochow there were two brothers who would obey only me but no one else. These brothers had not touched authority. It was equally wrong for them to obey me and for them to not obey others....” (*W. Nee, The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, vol. 59, p. 104, LSM*)

“You cannot choose the ones you like and submit only to them. If you only listen to one brother's word and refuse another's word, this is not real submission. It is not difficult to only listen to one brother. For a person to learn submission, he must learn to submit to all the ones who are before him, not only to those who are immediately above him. He must learn to submit to those leading him, not only to the elderly who are particularly gifted and used by the Lord. You must always seek out those who are before you.” (*W. Nee, The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, vol. 50, p. 903, LSM*)

Not Going Beyond Our Measure

In order to function properly in the church life, we must know the order in the Body and in the church and not go beyond our measure.

“The Head of the church is Christ the Lord, and the authority in the church is the headship of Christ. It is clear that in the church there should be an order, but this order comes from the headship of Christ. We must realize, honor, and respect the headship of the Lord. If we are not under the headship of the Lord, we can never be right in the order of the church.” (*W. Lee, Basic Principles for the Practice of the Church Life, p. 34, LSM*)

In 2 Corinthians 10:13 the apostle Paul says, “But we will not boast beyond our measure but according to the measure of the rule which the God of measure has apportioned to us, to reach even as far as you.” In our service in the Body of Christ, we function according to and are limited by what the God of measure has apportioned to us. Romans 12:3 says, “God has apportioned to each a measure.” Ephesians 4:16 tells us that the Body is built up “through every joint of the rich supply,” that is the gifted members, and “the operation in the measure of each one part.” Ephesians 4:7 says that grace is given to each member of the Body “according to the measure of the gift of Christ.” On the one hand, every member of the Body should function; not one is without a measure. On the other hand, according to God’s ordination, the function of every member is limited by a measure.

“The coordination of the Body depends on our relationship with the Head, our fulfilling our function as the members, and our operation within our measure, not stepping over or falling short of our limit. We should function according to the portion measured out to us by God. This will result in the solid coordination of the Body and cause the Body to grow and be built up. May the Lord have mercy on us that we may experience these truths in everything. May we hold to the Head in the smallest matter, supply the Body in the smallest matter without stepping over our boundary, and function according to the portion measured out to us by God. If we do this, the church in our locality will be living, beautiful, and strong and will experience daily increase and growth.

This increase and growth is the building up of the Body of Christ.” (W. Lee, *The Church as the Body of Christ*, p. 181, LSM)

Submission Being More Important than Work

It is important to realize that our submission is more important to God than our work. When Saul disobeyed God’s command first by not destroying all of the flocks of the Amalekites and second by offering the best of the sheep and the oxen of the Amalekites as sacrifices to Jehovah, God repented of making him king over Israel and rebuked him through Samuel. In 1 Samuel 15:22 Samuel said, “Does Jehovah delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of Jehovah? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed, than the fat of rams.” This shows us that our obedience means more to God than what we do for Him.

“Real building depends on submission. To submit is to be in subjection to others. When we are willing to submit, there will be the building. Submission is not an issue if only one person is working. But if we are working together, we must not simply care for our own work.” (W. Lee, *The Administration of the Church and the Ministry of the Word*, pp. 38-39, LSM)

“The characteristic of a Christian is submission, not work. The characteristic of a Christian is the acknowledgment of all the leading ones. (W. Nee, *The Collected Works of Watchman Nee*, vol. 50, p. 903, LSM)

“With us there should never be right or wrong, good or evil. Wherever we go, we should first know who is the authority.... Submission is the first lesson for those who work. It is actually the major part of their work. (W. Nee, *The Collected Works of Watchman Nee*, vol. 47, pp. 120-121, LSM)

The Apostles and the Churches Not Tolerating Contention

At the end of the section of 1 Corinthians 11 dealing with the matter of headship in the divine government, Paul says, “But if anyone seems to be contentious, we do not have such a custom of being so, neither the churches of God” (v. 16). We must realize that contention, particularly as it relates to God’s divine administration, is versus submission. Moreover, we should recognize that our inward resistance to submission to God’s arrangement has its source in the rebellion of Satan and is according to the principle of Satan. For the accomplishment of God’s purpose, the church must reject this principle.

“It is useless to have a thousand arguments that are right. Only through submission can one have life. Only through submission can one live. Only through submission can there be blessing, and only through submission is there a way to go on. (W. Lee, *The Elders’ Management of the Church*, pp. 77-78, LSM)

“We can never harbor any satanic principle of rebellion against authority within us while outwardly serving God. If a man has never been delivered from this satanic principle and if there is still a vestige within him of the principle which led to Satan’s enmity against God, the principle which led to Satan’s very

rebellion, we can never serve God. We can never preach the word of Christ in the principle of Satan. Principle is more important than words. In this universe Satan is not afraid of those who preach Christ's word; he is afraid of those who submit to Christ's authority.... Unless God's authority and our submission are fully manifested, we can make many claims about doing God's work, but we are doing Satan's work in actuality. (*W. Nee, The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, vol. 59, pp. 98-99, LSM*)

God's Grace Enabling Us to Live under His Government

In *Lessons for New Believers*, Brother Nee talks about the system of grace and the system of government. As he points out, we should not think that God's grace annuls our accountability to God's government; rather, it enables us to live a life of submission under God's governmental arrangement.

“God's intention is that man would respect His government; He has no intention for man to annul His government. If you are oblivious to God's government, you are lawless in the eyes of God; you are totally ignorant of the fact that, in addition to the church, there is also the kingdom. You must see the system of government. The system of grace perfects the system of government. The system of government is not for the system of grace; rather, the system of grace is here to perfect the system of government.

“Grace always goes along with government. Because man fought and rebelled against the system of government, the system of grace was brought in. The system of grace brings us to salvation and restoration so that we will obey God's system of government. Grace is given to supplement God's system of government.

“Grace never annuls government. In fact, grace makes a person yield to government. I say this solemnly: Grace gives us the ability to subject ourselves to government.” (*W. Nee, The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, vol. 50, pp. 749-750, 752, LSM*)

“We should not have an inaccurate concept, thinking that God grants us His grace in a light and casual way. God's granting us His grace and salvation is for the carrying out of His administration. All God's work in us is based upon and according to His administration. God has a plan in the entire universe and in the church. Everything in God's plan must be executed through His governmental administration. God's salvation is not only a matter of grace but also a matter of His administration.” (*W. Lee, What the Kingdom Is to the Believers, p. 117, LSM*)

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¹ This document includes an appendix that addresses more general matters related to God's administration and the need for all of the saints in the church to submit to God's governmental arrangement.

² Verses that show the function of sisters in the Lord's service include Luke 1:35; 8:1-3; Acts 1:14; 12:12; 18:26; Rom. 16:1-7, 12-13; Phil. 4:2-3; and 2 Tim. 1:5. A series of small booklets by Brother Lee entitled *The Six Marys, Serving Sisters in the Church Life, and Loving Mothers in the Church Life* shows many aspects of the sisters' service. The first chapters of *The New Testament Service* present principles of Christian service based on Mary and Joseph. In chapter 4 of *All Ages for the Lord's Testimony*, Brother Lee urged the sisters to pick up the burden to shepherd others. In Message 34 of *Life-study of Acts*, he said, "In 12:12 we see that in the house of Mary a considerable number were assembled together praying. This indicates that the prayer concerning Peter was offered mainly in the home of a sister. From this we see that in the church life the sisters should take the lead in the matter of prayer. According to the basic principle in the Word, the activities should be carried out by the brothers, and for the most part the sisters should do the supporting work behind the scene. The main supporting work is to pray." Message 4 of *Life-study of 1 Timothy* is entitled "The Normal Life of the Brothers and Sisters in the Church." The second half of this message, starting at the top of page 36, concerns the virtues that should characterize the proper living of the sisters in the church life. There are two chapters in *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1967: Volume 1* that address the sisters' service—"The Sisters' Service" on pages 303-309 and "The Learning Needed for the Sisters in Their Service" on pages 341-348.

³ See the section "God's Government Is Established through Submission" in the Appendix.

⁴ See the section "Not Just Submitting to Those of One's Choosing" in the Appendix.

⁵ See the section "Not Going beyond Our Measure" in the Appendix.

⁶ See the section "Submission Being More Important Than Work" in the Appendix.

⁷ See the section "The Apostles and the Churches Not Tolerating Contention" in the Appendix.

⁸ See the section "God's Grace Enabling Us to Live Under His Government" in the Appendix.

⁹ This appendix is by no means exhaustive, but seeks to address some common mistakes. Brother Nee's ministry in volumes 47 and 59 of *The Collected Works* cover the subject more thoroughly.