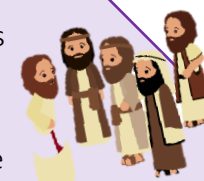


Gender Prejudice & Discrimination



Arguments Against

- In the early Christian Church, the original disciples were all men
- Women are different to men and should not have authority over men: *"A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man; she must be quiet."*

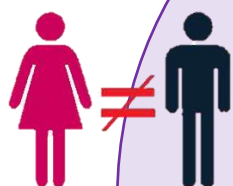


Changing Times

Gender equality and the changing relationships between men and women is one of the most significant changes in society in recent times and across the world.

In UK law, men and women have equal rights in employment. Discrimination on the basis of gender is illegal. The 2010 Equality Act simplified previous laws to protect people from discrimination.

However, traditionally woman and men had different roles in religions, particularly in relation to their role in authority (leadership) and worship. These traditional roles have been debated in recent years as the role of women has changed in society to become more equal to that of men.



The Equality Act 2010

Church of England

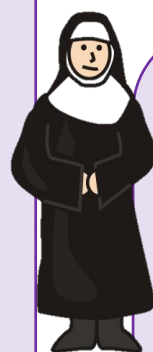
- Men and women can take up equal roles within leadership and worship
- 32 female ministers were ordained in 1994 and the first female bishop was ordained in 2014. Therefore women can become ministers and lead Christian congregations in worship
- The Archbishop of Canterbury said that the Church was **"entering a completely new phase of our existence"** when the first female bishop was ordained
- However, there is still a huge imbalance between male and female bishops



- Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus, is one of the most iconic figures in the Catholic Church. She, above all others, was chosen by God: **"Blessed are you amongst women."**
- Mary did her duty for her faith and bore God's son, Jesus. She is portrayed as a caring mother: a role model for women everywhere.
- Mary is believed to be chosen, holy and pure (without sin). She is one of the only other Bible characters who was also assumed (bodily raised) into heaven.

Arguments For

- In Jesus' time it was normal for men to take up positions of authority. Society is different now and women are more equal
- Jesus' actions showed that he respected women and he had women amongst his closest followers, which would have been very unusual at the time
- In the Parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus taught that you should not discriminate
- Humans are all **"Created in the image of God"**, so each human life is sacred and equal
- Gender is irrelevant, as long as you have faith in Jesus:
 - **"There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."** (Galatians 3:27-29)



- Women in the Roman Catholic Church can take up active roles in worship. They can become a nun or a 'sister', taking vows to dedicate their lives to God
- Women are equal members of the Church congregation, supporting the church in a number of ways, e.g. serving on church committees or helping ministers to lead worship
- However, women cannot be ordained (process of being given religious authority). Therefore, women cannot become priests in the RC Church
- Men and women are equal but they have different strengths and contributions to make to society. Men take more religious leadership roles, whilst women have an equally important role to play in their families and communities

Roman Catholic

