

## Gender, Theology and Society:

### Ephesians 5:21-33

<sup>21</sup> Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

<sup>22</sup> Wives, **submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord.**<sup>23</sup> For the **husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church**, his body, of which he is the Saviour. <sup>24</sup> **Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands** in everything.

<sup>25</sup> **Husbands, love your wives**, just as **Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her** <sup>26</sup> to make her holy, cleansing<sup>[b]</sup> her by the washing with water through the word, <sup>27</sup> and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. <sup>28</sup> In this same way, **husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies**. He who loves his wife loves himself. <sup>29</sup> After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church— <sup>30</sup> for we are members of his body.<sup>31</sup> **“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.”**<sup>[c]</sup> <sup>32</sup> This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. <sup>33</sup> However, **each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself**, and the **wife must respect her husband**.

#### Notes

- The relationship between the husband and wife is compared to that of Christ and the church. Paul (who wasn't married!) suggests that for the wife this involves submission and respect.
- For Husbands the analogy requires that they love their wives. Although this seems they have got the easy job, Paul reminds the church in Ephesus that this love led Christ to give his life for the church. Verse 28 and 33 reminds readers of the words of Jesus 'love your neighbour as you love yourself.'
- The text is about husbands and wives. Nothing is said about gender roles with regard to single men and women