

Role of Women in the Church

Jesus desires to see every member of His Church become His fully devoted follower, regardless of gender, age, or ethnicity (John 10:27). As a part of Jesus' Church, we encourage all people to employ their gifts to bring glory to God and to advance His Kingdom here on earth. Consequently, we allow Scripture to inform us about which roles and positions are appropriate for each member within this church.

We fully recognize the capabilities and gifts of the women and men in our congregation. In the same way Christ is equal in essence to God the Father but distinct in role, we recognize women are equal in essence to men but distinct in role. This distinction was created in the Garden of Eden when God created woman as a complement to man (Genesis 1:27, 2:18-23). Woman completed God's creation and bears His image with uniquely feminine traits. Furthermore, in Scripture when Paul makes a distinction between the roles of men and women, he often references Genesis 1-3 for his reasoning (1 Corinthians 11:8-12; Ephesians 5:22-33; 1 Timothy 2:9-15).

We believe that when our church functions in the way God intended—with godly men leading gifted women—we reflect the relationship of the Son to the Father. Philippians 2:5-11 provides an example of Christ choosing to follow the leading of the Father and the Spirit, though He is equal to them in essence. This helps us understand that the difference between the Father, Son, and the Spirit is one of role and not of rank. God the Father is not superior to Christ, but Christ has humbled Himself to fulfill the Father's plan for salvation for the world. Likewise, within the Church, women are not inferior to men but are encouraged to follow godly male leadership to emulate the relationship within the Trinity.

Scripture teaches that the spiritual gifts may be expressed through any believer and should be used for the good of the body of Christ. (See Romans 12:1-8, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4:1-16, and 1 Peter 4:7-11 for a list of the gifts.) However, we see a biblical distinction between gift and role. For example, women can and do possess the gift of teaching, and they are encouraged to use that gift in this body (Titus 2:3-4). But, in accordance with 1 Timothy 2:11-12, we regard the specific role of teaching pastor as one designated for men. Furthermore, women are endowed with leadership gifts, yet the specific role of elder in 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:5-9 belongs to men. Consequently, we reserve the office of elder and teaching pastor for males. We believe these role distinctions between men and women are necessary to follow the biblical pattern and for the Church to grow and function as God intends. Therefore, it is our goal to thrive within these principles while not imposing them on other areas that Scripture does not address.

On a practical level, women are encouraged to serve and lead throughout our church. Women teach at our Women's Bible Studies, Training Days, Community Group functions, and many other events. They also play vital roles in the strategic planning and execution of weekend worship services and other weekly ministries. Women serve as directors on our staff and help lead many of our ministries.

In short, we want men and women to flourish in our church as co-laborers in the gospel and as fellow heirs with Christ, running hard for the glory of the Lord and good of His Kingdom.

