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Peachland Baptist Church Position Statement on Men and Women in Ministry*

Foundation

Our belief on the roles of men and women in the home and church is based on three key Biblical truths:

1. Men and women are equal before God.
2. Men and women are are and have distinctive roles to assume in the home and in the church.
3. Men and women are gifted of God to participate in many forms of ministry in the local church.

Further, these truths from the Bible about men and women, their roles and ministry, were not based on cultural perceptions and practices at the time they were written, but are God's inspired, unchanging truth.

Biblical Position

Three New Testament passages explicitly set forth the role relationship that should exist between men and women in the Church. They are

1 Timothy 2:11-15; 1 Corinthians 11:1-16 and 1 Corinthians 14:33b-38.

The teaching on role relationships presented in these passages is consistent with the predominant pattern of all Scripture, both Old and New Testaments, and is not based on the personal opinions of the human author, local traditions or customs. Neither is it founded upon Jewish rabbinical thought or cultural considerations of that era. Rather, in each case, it is based on a God-ordained role relationship established even before the fall of man into sin (1 Timothy 2:13; 1 Corinthians 11:8 & 9). This teaching on role relationships is presented as being the "Lord's command" (1 Corinthians 14:37), and as such it must be considered as an authoritative revelation from God. It applies to all local churches in all cultures and eras (1 Corinthians 11:16; 14:33b).

The only distinction concerning the ministry of men and women in the church is the clear instruction that a woman is not "to teach or to have authority over a man" (1 Timothy 2:12; 1 Corinthians 14:33b & 34). We believe that this refers to the leadership role assigned to elders in the local church (sometimes referred to as the ruling-teaching office). The

responsibilities set forth for the office of elders indicate that they are called upon to direct (Acts 20:28; 1 Timothy 5:17; 1 Peter 5:2), shepherd (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2) and teach (1 Timothy 3:2 & 5:17) the local congregation.

However, according to Ephesians 4:11, teaching and shepherding (“pastor” means “shepherd”) are inherent in the pastoral function. Because these same responsibilities are also assigned to the elder role (see Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2; 1 Timothy 3:2; 5:17), this indicates that the pastor is one of the elders whose primary responsibility is teaching. All elders (including pastors) are to be men according to the qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.

We conclude, therefore, that God has assigned to men alone the responsibilities of the eldership and pastoral roles.

We believe that “to have authority over a man” refers to participation in the leadership body (i.e. Board of Elders) of the local church which exercises spiritual oversight and the overall leadership of the life of the church as a whole. That is clearly the role of elders.

In a similar way “to teach ... a man” refers to the teaching role of elders when they are called upon to ensure that correct doctrine is accurately defined and taught; that error is clearly exposed and refuted (cf. Acts 15:1-29, especially vv. 2 & 6). It does not refer to sharing the Word with one another, general exhortations, or leading a Bible discussion group.

However, Scripture never implies that men are in any way superior to women. Both are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). They are spiritually equal before God, have equal access to God for salvation by faith in Jesus Christ and are equally justified, sanctified and empowered for ministry. Just as Christ’s submission to God the Father did not in any way diminish the reality of His full deity (1 Corinthians 11:3), even so, submission to male leadership in no way diminishes the reality of a woman’s worth, equality to man or giftedness for service (see also 1 Peter 3:7).

Furthermore, the Bible teaches, demonstrates and implies that both men and women were involved in many of the ministries of the church:

- teaching situations (Titus 2:3-5)
- deacon type ministries (Romans 16:1 & 1 Timothy 3:11)
- private teaching ministry (Acts 18:26)
- public prayer (1 Corinthians 11:5)
- prophesying in public (1 Corinthians 11:5; Acts 2:17 & 21:7-10)
- missionary activities (Acts 18:18,19; Romans 16:7, 12; 1 Corinthians 9:5; Philippians 4:2,3).

Thus Scripture allows for and promotes the full use of gifts by women in the church but in contexts other than the ruling-teaching office.

* This position statement is adapted from the statement of The Fellowship of Evangelical Bible Churches position statement.

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