

Some Biblical Principles Related to Gender Roles

1. When God created human beings male and female, He made them equally in His own image, He gave them equal access to Himself, and He called them equally to be stewards of creation. (Gen. 1:1; 1:26-31)
2. Scripture always affirms only two genders, male and female. These are not a social construct but part of God's created design which He declared very good. (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:18-24; Matt. 19:4-5; Eph. 5:31)
3. Men and women are to labor side by side as coworkers in the gospel, fellow disciple-makers, and coheirs of grace. (Acts 18:26; Rom. 16:1-16; Gal. 3:28; Phil. 4:2-3; 1 Peter 3:7)
4. Men and women are designed to complement each other in mutually enriching ways. As men and women submit to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and share in the blessings of the gospel, God gives some unique roles in home and church. These role distinctions reflect neither superiority nor inferiority and they come to us timeless gifts from our Triune God.
5. In the home, the distinction calls a husband to exercise headship in a way that seeks the good of his wife by expressing the caring, sacrificial love of Christ to her. Likewise, a wife is to seek the good of her husband by submitting to him in a way that models the respectful, wise, love of the Church for her Lord. How this works out will vary in each marriage, and we encourage wives and husbands to work this out under the influence of the Word and the Spirit. (Eph. 5:22-33; 1Pet. 3:1-7; Col. 3:18-19)
6. In the church:
 - a. Ultimate authority in the church always rests with Christ who reigns in the church through the Word and by the Spirit. (Matt. 16:18; Col. 1:18)
 - b. We encourage all believers, women and men, to flourish by using their Spirit-given gifts, including leadership and teaching. (1Cor. 12; Eph. 4:15-16; Col. 3:16; Titus 2:3)
 - c. The role of elder/pastor/overseer is given uniquely to qualified men who are affirmed by the church and who know, feed, lead, and protect the church. (1Tim. 3:1-7; 5:17-20; Titus 1:5-9; 1Pet. 5:1-5)
 - d. Expressions of governing authority and authoritative teaching in the church are to be carried out by qualified men affirmed by the elders. (1Tim. 2:11-12; 1Cor. 11:2-16; 14:33-35)

- e. Leadership and teaching roles that do not involve governing authority or authoritative teaching are open to women and men. (1Cor. 12:4-7; Col. 3:16; 1Pet. 4:10-11; Col. 3:16; Acts 18:24-26; Gal. 3:28)

- 7. The position expressed in these principles – *men and women together in God's image, in gospel partnership, and in complementary roles in marriage and ministry* – is to be distinguished from any form of patriarchy that demeans or mistreats women.

- 8. *What if a member disagrees with our position?* This is not a primary doctrine. We unite around primary doctrines such as the gospel and the inerrancy and sufficiency of Scripture. Disagreement about any topic should always be carried out with charity and humility. Those who disagree will need to do so in a way that supports the ministry of our church and promotes the unity of the Spirit. And disagreement will close the door to some leadership positions.