

# WHO CAN BE AN ELDER?

PATHWAY COMMUNITY CHURCH TEACHING NIGHT OCTOBER 18<sup>TH</sup>, 2023

One of the most attractive truths found in Scripture is the good news that Jesus is a liberator. He liberates us all who call on His name from the bondage of sin and establishes a new community, called the church, that has purpose and a mission.

As it relates to gender equality, one would be hard pressed to find many that would disagree with the equality of men and women. But Christians are divided over the question of woman's place in the church's ministry. The specific question is "can women serve as elders". The divide appears in two opposing extremes:

1. Some believe that Christ's liberating work includes liberation from bondage to traditional male/female roles and define this tradition as patriarchy. This view is referred to as "egalitarianism" and sees patriarchy as intrinsically evil.
2. Others believe that there is a divine design for creation and that liberation is found in honoring the design rather than seeking to eliminate it. This view is referred to as "complementarianism" and sees gender role differences as intrinsically right.

The responsibility we have as followers of Jesus Christ, is to search the Bible and submit to its teachings. So, what does the Bible have to say about the role of women in leadership of the church?

## THE PROBLEM OF PRESUPPOSITIONS

Presuppositions are something that everyone has, whether they realize it or not. A presupposition is a belief already held to be true before new information is received. In other words, one processes new information based on information already possessed. This can project different meanings on information received depending on what presupposition is held.

## HISTORICAL ABUSES

It is said that if we do not learn from history, we will be doomed to repeat it. I believe this to be true. It must be stated if not naturally obvious, all forms of abuse are sin. There is no room in the kingdom of God for abuse. When

we attach abuse as a basis for understanding Scripture, we inevitably frontend load conclusions on the text that are not intrinsically present. Where historical abuses need our attention to correct the corrupted culture that espouses the abuse, the abuse cannot be read into the text in a way that assumes the Biblical text is abusive.

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#### SUBJUGATION OF WOMEN

There is no true student of history that would be able to conclude that women were not treated as second class citizens. It took a long time for women to gain the right to vote, be considered persons and own property. The understanding was that women were to obey their husbands regardless of the ask.

Leading complementarians are united in the belief that there is no legitimate authoritarian pattern of a master-slave or general-soldier hierarchical-type relationship for men and women advocated in the Bible.

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#### HYPOCRISY IN BIBLICAL ROLES

There is an emphasis of Ephesians 5:22-24 in isolation from the context of the passage. Efforts to hold men to their roles in Ephesians 5:25-29, are acknowledges but largely minimized. Often there is a complete disregard for Ephesians 5:21 which calls for a mutual submission out of reverence for Jesus. These passages are not about a power dynamic; they are about how men and women in the context of a marriage relationship fulfill their purposes of serving each other out of their respect for Jesus.

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#### PHYSICAL AND SEXUAL ABUSE

The affirmation of male headship has been implicated with condoning domestic violence and spousal abuse. While those who desire evil will always corrupt clear biblical teaching to their own ungodly ends, and humanity's sin nature inevitably causes corruption of the intended design, implicating complementarianism with domestic violence is based on a misconception of what it in fact teaches regarding the true nature of male headship. The truth is that abusers look for any opportunities to be placed in systems where they can manipulate those systems to their ends.

#### MODERN CULTURE

North American evangelicals read the Bible—and the world—through Western eyes. In truth, all human beings come to the Bible with cultural

habits, deeply ingrained patterns of interpreting the world that inevitably shape—and sometimes warp—our interpretation and understanding of Scripture. When considering the topic of women as elders, there are several modern societal challenges that influence how we understand the passages that are important to our study of the topic.

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#### RADICAL FEMINISM.

Radical feminism is a branch of feminism that seeks to dismantle the traditional patriarchal power and gender roles that keep women oppressed.

Radical feminists believe that the cause of gender inequality is based on men's need or desire to control women.

Radical feminists thus see patriarchy as the root cause of inequality between men and women and they seek to up-root this. They aim to address the root causes of oppression through systemic change and activism, rather than through legislative or economic change.

Radical feminism sees women as a collective group that has been and is still being oppressed by men. (Rowland & Klein, 1996).

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#### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Radical feminists believe that men are the enemy, and that marriage and family are the key institutions that allow patriarchy to exist.
- For radical feminists for equality to be achieved patriarchy needs to be overturned. They argue that the family needs to be abolished and a system of gender separatism needs to be instituted for this to happen.
- Radical feminism is hostile to other women who do not share to conclusion of men being the enemy.

<https://simplysociology.com/radical-feminism.html>

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#### TOXIC MASCULINITY.

Toxic masculinity refers to a specific set of antisocial and destructive characteristics embraced by a subset of men as gender identity features.

Toxic masculinity isn't just about behaving like a man. Instead, it involves the extreme pressure some men may feel to act in a way that is harmful.

There are many definitions of “toxic masculinity” that appear in research as well as pop culture. Some researchers have come to agree that toxic masculinity has three core components:

1. Toughness: This is the notion that men should be physically strong, emotionally callous, and behaviorally aggressive.
2. Antifemininity: This involves the idea that men should reject anything that is considered feminine, such as showing emotion or accepting help.
3. Power: This is the assumption that men must work toward obtaining power and status (social and financial) so they can gain the respect of others.

#### KEY TAKEAWAYS

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- Toxic masculinity is a hostile frame of reference that wounds and subjugates women and has no place in the Biblical worldview.
- Toxic masculinity isolates men from real community and leaves them vulnerable to devices that damage the soul.
- Accusations of toxic masculinity leave little room for competitive assertive men in the workforce or in the home.
- Any structure that has the appearance of being male run are subject to significant scrutiny and experience the accusation of misogyny.

#### COMPASSION DRIVEN HERMENEUTIC.

It is a truth that society functions best when there is a general compassion that pervades it. The notion of desiring good for others and the lifting of those that struggle is a great ethic to function from. It is the Christian notion of “love your neighbor”. However, when out of balance or simply informed by how we feel rather than something that is stable and unchanging, it can lead to unintended misfortunes. When leading solely with the heart, objectivity is limited because the subjective is venerated. It becomes about how we feel verses what is real.

#### COMPASSION:

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Compassion and empathy both refer to a caring response to someone else’s distress. While empathy refers to an active sharing in the emotional experience of the other person, compassion adds to that emotional experience a desire to alleviate the person’s distress.

#### HERMENEUTICS DEFINITION:

Hermeneutics goes somewhat hand in hand with exegesis. Hermeneutics is more concerned about how you interpret a passage and the rules of interpretation being employed.

#### EXEGESIS DEFINITION:

Exegesis essentially means using the words of the text in Scripture, through the lens of their original context, to determine their intent. In other words, if one analyzes Scripture exegetically, they won't come to the text with any conclusions.

They let the text itself reveal what the writer is revealing to the reader. By doing this, we don't read anything into Scripture that wasn't there before, and we study the meaning of the passage that was intended for a specific audience. Usually, theologians pair hermeneutics with exegesis because you cannot have one without the other.

#### EISEGESIS DEFINITION:

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Eisegesis means reading into the text with a preconceived notion we may have. This can often mean coming to the Scripture with a biased cultural lens that didn't exist during the time the Bible was written.

At its worst, it can be used to twist Scripture to assert a certain belief. Politicians or other leaders may take a Bible verse out of context and interpret it using their own biased perspective to justify implementing a policy.

#### EXEGESIS VS. EISEGESIS.

Say you're trying to solve a theft. Someone stole your credit card, and you want to find out who did it.

Exegesis would examine all the clues available before drawing a conclusion about who took the credit card.

Eisegesis would draw a conclusion about who took that gift card based on bias or feelings. It could be that you just simply don't like the tone in which your teenager talks with you, so perhaps she took it. Or you're just mad at your spouse that day, so they obviously stole the credit card from you.

You blame them, only to find out later that they probably weren't the ones to take it. Even if they had, you didn't use the right or most correct approach to discovering the truth.

Eisegesis often leads to wrong conclusions and can lead many astray.

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#### BIBLICAL EXAMPLE: EXEGESIS VS. EISEGESIS.

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##### PHILIPPIANS 4:13

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

We may try to read into the text that God will give us the strength to win that hockey game we have on the weekend or "make that difficult sale." This and other verses are often quoted, using this misinterpretation.

In the original context of Philippians 4:13, as mentioned in the article, Paul was on house arrest, ready to go on a trial that may end his life. But despite all those difficult circumstances, Paul showed how Christ gave him strength during a dire season.

The right method matters because we cannot take God-breathed Scriptures lightly (2 Timothy 3:16). Not only do we run the risk of harboring false beliefs if we apply an eisegetical method to Bible study, but we can lead others astray by teaching others in this way.

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#### COMPASSION DRIVEN HERMENEUTICS.

Compassion driven hermeneutics seeks to handle the Biblical text in such a way as to alleviate distress. It is an empathetic form of eisegesis that ultimately manipulates the text in the favor of those in distress.

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#### FROM DIFFERENT TO IDENTICAL.

To talk about men as women as different is to acknowledge a relationship between the sexes that improves or emphasizes each other's qualities. There is a fit, a mutual improvement and a beautiful difference from creation. This view seeks to venerate the differences as powerful partners in the fulfilling Biblical purposes.

Sameness seeks to remove all perceived and actual limitations specifically on women. The well-intentioned result is to classify equality as meaning we are identical. This view diminishes both men and women.

Understanding of one's presuppositions is vital to proper hermeneutics and exegesis when considering handling the Biblical text, but it is most notably helpful when dealing with contentious topics.

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#### ESSENTIAL CONCLUSION

Interpreters of the Bible cannot divest themselves from their own past, their experiences, held ideas, and preconceived notions and opinions. It is an accepted truth that total neutrality, or absolute objectivity, cannot be achieved in the act of interpretation. Exegesis and theological reflection always take place against the background of fundamental presuppositions about the nature of the world and the nature of God. Inevitably there is a pre-understanding toward which the interpreter will slant their investigation of the text. Presuppositions can, however, be challenged and intentionally placed semi on hold with appropriate humility so the text can be more correctly handled.

## ROLE OF WOMEN AT PCC

### INTRODUCTION

The Bible teaches that God created two complementary sexes of humans, male and female, to bear His image together.

In the first chapter of Genesis, God creates humans after having created everything else. To accomplish that, we read:

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#### GENESIS 1:27-28

<sup>27</sup>So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. <sup>28</sup>God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

The text seems explicitly clear that men and women equally share an identity as image-bearers of the creator and an equal responsibility in administering creation. Whatever we read in the rest of the Bible about the relationship between men, women and God must be informed by this foundational context.

In Genesis 2 when the Bible describes in detail the way God created humans on the sixth day. To this point, God has evaluated each aspect of creation as 'good.' But in Genesis 2:18,

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GENESIS 2:18

<sup>18</sup> The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

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GENESIS 2:20

<sup>20</sup> So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals. But for Adam no suitable helper was found.

#### SUITABLE HELPER

That 'suitable helper' was Eve, the first woman.

The first thing in all of creation that God calls 'not good' is the dire need for women. This is the first hint that the 'suitable helper' God creates is not subordinate, but necessary. Before sin corrupted the relationship between the sexes, God seems to regard women as necessary as men.

The Hebrew phrase for 'suitable helper' is 'ezer knegdow.'

Ezer has originally two meanings in Hebrew, depending on the pronunciation: to rescue/to save and to be strong. In the Old Testament the word Ezer is used 21 times. We can roughly divide the different Scriptures in three ways the word "Ezer" is used:

1. Ezer used for the woman.

- [Genesis 2:18](#)
- [Genesis 2:20](#)

2. Ezer used for nations to whom Israel appealed for military aid.

- [Isaiah 30:5](#)
- [Ezekiel 12:14](#)
- [Daniel 11:34](#)

3. Ezer used for God as Israel's helper.

<a href="#">Exodus 18:4</a>	<a href="#">Psalm 89:19</a>
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<a href="#"><u>Deuteronomy 33:7</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Psalm 115:11</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Exodus 18:4</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Psalm 115:9</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Deuteronomy 33:7</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Psalm 115:10</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Deuteronomy 33:26</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Psalm 121:1</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Deuteronomy 33:29</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Psalm 121:2</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Psalm 20:2</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Psalm 124:8</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Psalm 33:20</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Psalm 146:5</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Psalm 70:5</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Hosea 13:9</u></a>

What most of these Bible verses have in common is that Ezer is used consistently in military context where aid was given to help the one being aided accomplish what cannot be accomplished on their own.

When western eyes see the word 'helper,' we often think of an inferior who might make a task easier but is not necessary to accomplishment. But everywhere else in the Bible outside of the second chapter of Genesis, it exclusively describes the way God himself helps his people. It is not incidental help. It's the kind of help the tow truck driver gives to the stranded motorist. Without the tow truck driver's 'help,' he is stuck on the side of the road going nowhere. The Ezer is not a subordinate, the ezer is the ultimate companion who strengthens.

The Hebrew word Kenegdo means opposite as to him or corresponding as to him. Literally, it refers to 'standing opposite to.' Here it seems to imply that both genders are incomplete without the other. Each has qualities and inherent general characteristics the other lacks and depends on the other to contribute. A woman is no better or less than the man. Man and woman are equally and uniquely created, a perfect fit.

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MATTHEW 19:4

<sup>4</sup> “Haven’t you read,” he replied, “that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’

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MARK 10:6

<sup>6</sup> “But at the beginning of creation God ‘made them male and female.’

This distinction in gender represents an essential characteristic of personhood and reflects an essential part of being created in God’s image.

As outlined in Scripture and in accordance with our Statement of Faith, we believe that men and women are equal in essence, dignity and value and are

complementary by divine design. Gender represents a reality present in every human from birth and does not merely represent a social construct. Men and women are not interchangeable.

When one opens the pages of Scripture, we find that in the beginning of all things, God created two complementary sexes for our good and His glory.

In view of His good, created order, and the fact that men and women both share in divine image bearing, God intends for men and women to live out their different yet complementary roles and responsibilities in the church and home.

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1 PETER 4:10

<sup>10</sup> Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.

These role distinctions do not arise from cultural definitions of masculinity and femininity but are an integral part of God's plan for humanity, as revealed in Scripture. We should recognize them as God's grace to men and women, protecting, preserving, and practicing them for His glory, our joy and for the sake of human flourishing.

<a href="#"><u>Gen. 2:18-25</u></a> <a href="#"><u>1 Cor. 11:2-16</u></a> <a href="#"><u>1 Cor. 14:33-35</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Eph. 5:22-33</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>1 Pet. 3:1-7</u></a> <a href="#"><u>1 Tim. 2:8-15</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Col. 3:18-19</u></a>
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To reflect God's beautiful design as Pathway Community Church, we desire to articulate and embody a theological vision of complementarianism. Specifically, when it comes to the consideration of women in ministry, we want to be obedient to Scripture, honor the Lord and give opportunities for women to flourish in their role(s) at Pathway Community Church.

This paper seeks to describe that vision by explaining what we believe Scripture teaches about complementarity genders as it relates to women in ministry at Pathway Community Church.

**GENDER AND THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN SCRIPTURE**

Our foundation for life and ministry starts with the understanding that the Bible is God's inspired and authoritative Word. As affirmed in our Statement

of Basic Beliefs, “We believe the Scriptures are true, authoritative and sufficient” ([Ps. 19:7-11; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20-21](#)).

**Any attempt to understand personhood and gender must begin with divine revelation and God’s created order.**

FIRST, WE BELIEVE THAT ALL CHRISTIANS ARE CHARGED WITH THE GREAT COMMISSION.

All Christians, both men and women, participate in the ministry of the church. We believe the Bible explicitly encourages and assumes that women will be involved in the ministry of the church.

- Jesus welcomed women among His disciples, teaching them and involving them in His ministry.

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LUKE 10:39

<sup>39</sup>She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet listening to what he said.

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LUKE 8:1-3

After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him, <sup>2</sup>and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out; <sup>3</sup>Joanna the wife of Chuza, the manager of Herod’s household; Susanna; and many others. These women were helping to support them out of their own means.

- Paul’s words to Titus say that older women teaching biblical wisdom to younger women is a noble, beautiful, and necessary task.

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TITUS 2:3-5

<sup>3</sup>Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. <sup>4</sup>Then they can urge the younger women to love their husbands and children, <sup>5</sup>to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.

- Phoebe, a patron, and deacon of the church of Cenchreae, is commended by Paul and was likely the courier for Paul’s epistle to the Romans, indicating her participation in gospel ministry.

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ROM. 16:1-2

I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church in Cenchreae. <sup>2</sup>I ask you to receive her in the Lord in a way worthy of his people and to give her any help she may need from you, for she has been the benefactor of many people, including me.

- Euodia and Syntyche labored with Paul “side-by-side” in the gospel.

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PHIL. 4:3

<sup>3</sup>Yes, and I ask you, my true companion, help these women since they have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.

- Priscilla is described as “explaining the way of God more accurately” to Apollos.

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ACTS 18:26

<sup>26</sup>He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately.

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JOEL 2:28

<sup>28</sup>“And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions.

We celebrate the biblical picture of men and women serving the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ together. We rejoice in biblical examples of men and women using their gifts in the Church for the glory of God.

The Bible depicts a vision of men and women laboring alongside one another in the world and the Church for the sake of the kingdom of God.

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1 COR. 12:4-6

<sup>4</sup>There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. <sup>5</sup>There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. <sup>6</sup>There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

When we don't empower both sexes to engage and use their gifts, in complementarian partnership, both genders suffer, and the mission of the Church—to help those far from God come to know life in Christ—suffers.

SECOND, MALE AND FEMALE IMAGE BEARERS FLOURISH IN PARTNERSHIP, WE EXPECT THAT THE PRIMARY RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHRISTIAN MEN AND WOMEN IS THAT OF BROTHERLY AND SISTERLY LOVE.

We note that the Bible upholds the metaphor of family as the primary descriptor for male-female partnering in the Church. The concept that is taught in the New Testament is that the Church ought to have the kind of love for one another that is reserved for blood brothers and sisters.

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1 JOHN 4:21

<sup>21</sup> And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.

This uniquely Christian distinctive reminds us that we ought to see each other as a family in a special sense. Therefore, the primary relationship in the local church between men and women is the relationship of equal brothers and sisters, united in Christ.

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GALATIANS 3:28

<sup>28</sup> There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

We affirm that cultivating an environment of brotherly and sisterly love is at the heart of complementarianism. These relationships should be marked by honor, care, and sacrifice for one another.

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PHILIPPIANS 2:3-4

<sup>3</sup> Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, <sup>4</sup> not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

THIRD, WE AFFIRM THAT EQUAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE CHURCH BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN DOES NOT ENTAIL INTERCHANGEABLE INVOLVEMENT.

Although men and women are equal in value and gifting throughout God has used women greatly throughout the centuries. Across the wholeness of the Bible, and today, women are used by God to declare truth, teach, and be a witness for the gospel around the world. However, this is not to be done as an authority over the church as an elder. Here is a list of women used powerfully by God throughout the Old and New Testaments, but never as elders (or priest in the OT):

- Miriam was a prophetess for God (Exodus 15:20)
- Esther saved God's people (Esther 4)
- Huldah was a prophetess (2 Kings 22:18-20)
- Ruth's loyalty changed history; she is in the lineage of Christ (Ruth 4)
- Hannah's faith and courage made history (1 Samuel 1)
- Abigail influenced a king (1 Samuel 25:30-33)
- Deborah was a judge [not a priest] (Judges 4)
- The Wife of the Prophet Isaiah, while her name is not known, Isaiah calls her a prophetess, and the mother of his child, (Isaiah 8:3).
- Mary told everyone about the resurrection (John 20:14)
- Priscilla & Aquilla helped guide Apollos (Acts 18:18-28)
- Junia and her partner Andronicus were not part of the Twelve, but they were respected Christian missionaries. (Romans 16:7)
- Anna the prophetess is led by the Holy Spirit to speak about Jesus "to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem" (Luke 2:38)
- Priscilla & Aquilla are called coworkers (Romans 16:3)
- Chloe helped Paul (1 Cor. 1:11)
- Phoebe was highly commended by Paul as a servant (Romans 16:1-2)
- Philip's daughters prophesied (Acts 21:9)
- Women prayed and prophesied in the assembly (1 Cor. 11:4)

That is an amazing group of women that God used for His purposes. If we believe that God does not change, then we can assert that God continues to use women in powerful ways for His glory.

Specifically looking at the work of women during worship gatherings; Women clearly spoke (prayer and prophecy) during worship gatherings in the New Testament church.

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I COR. 11:5

<sup>5</sup> Every woman who prays or speaks what God has revealed and has her head uncovered while she speaks dishonors the one who has authority over her. She is like the woman who has her head shaved.

Whatever keeping silent means in I Cor. 14 and teaching with authority means in I Timothy 2, it apparently doesn't mean a woman can't pray or prophesy publicly in church.

Women were clearly used by God in leadership roles throughout the Bible, but none of this means that women can be elders. Like a man who can hold

his wife's hand in the delivery room can still never be the one to have a baby, women can be useful to God in countless ways as equals, but their role cannot be, elder.

Paul tells us this role in the church structure is not the place for a woman because Adam was made first and accountable for more responsibility. This is not a cultural issue. Remember, Eve sinned first; but sin entered the world through Adam and not Eve.

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ROMANS 5:12

<sup>12</sup> Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned—

Adam was in the position of responsibility. This is why husbands are the head of the wife even as Christ is head of the church.

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EPHESIANS 5:23

<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 savior.

The place of responsibility in the church and family is sacrificially loving men who serve their homes and the church. Women are responsible for their roles in the home and church, to use their gifts to the glory of God and the edification of His people.

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1 CORINTHIANS 14:12

<sup>12</sup> so it is with you. Since you are eager for gifts of the spirit, try to excel in those that build up the church.

These are not issues of inequality. They are divine designs for functionality. We know who is supposed to do what and how it's all supposed to look.

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GAL. 3:28

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

This verse is not about women pastors and elders. It is about salvation – in Christ, not church eldership, so it doesn't apply.

We believe the Bible reserves the office of elder/pastor specifically for qualified men.

#### SCRIPTURE CALLS ELDERS TO:

##### LEAD THE CHURCH

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###### 1 TIMOTHY 5:17

<sup>17</sup>The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching.

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###### TITUS 1:7

<sup>7</sup>Since an overseer manages God's household, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain.

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###### 1 PETER 5:1-2

To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ's sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: <sup>2</sup>Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve;

##### PREACH THE WORD

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###### 1 TIMOTHY 3:2

<sup>2</sup>Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,

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###### 2 TIMOTHY 4:2

<sup>2</sup>Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction.

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###### TITUS 1:9

<sup>9</sup>He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.

##### PROTECT THE CHURCH FROM FALSE TEACHING

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###### ACTS 20:28-31



<sup>28</sup> Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. <sup>29</sup> I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. <sup>30</sup> Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. <sup>31</sup> So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.

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TITUS 1:9

<sup>9</sup> He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.

PRAY FOR AND VISIT THE SICK

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JAMES 5:14

<sup>14</sup> Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord.

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ACTS 20:35

<sup>35</sup> In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

EQUIP THE SAINTS FOR MINISTRY

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EPHESIANS 4:11-12

<sup>11</sup> So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup> to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up

USE PROPER JUDGMENT IN THEOLOGICAL AND DOCTRINAL MATTERS

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ACTS 15:24-29

<sup>24</sup> We have heard that some went out from us without our authorization and disturbed you, troubling your minds by what they said. <sup>25</sup> So we all agreed to choose some men and send them to you with our dear friends Barnabas and Paul— <sup>26</sup> men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>27</sup> Therefore we are sending Judas and Silas to confirm by word of mouth what we are writing. <sup>28</sup> It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: <sup>29</sup> You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things.

In shepherding, overseeing, leading, caring for and praying for the local church, elders practice sacrificial male headship.

Therefore, although we encourage all men and women to actively participate in the life of the church, we reserve the office of elder, and the responsibilities unique to it, for qualified men within the church.

**Apart from the role of pastor/elder, we believe the Bible explicitly encourages and assumes that women will be involved in the ministry of the church.**

#### AFFIRMATIONS AND DENIALS

Based on the conclusions drawn from Scripture, we have created a list of affirmations and denials that encompass our beliefs on gender and the role of women in ministry.

**We affirm** that both men and women have been created in the image of God and are entitled to the privileges and held accountable to the responsibilities that come with reflecting our Creator.

**We deny** that either gender has been given or is entitled to greater dignity in society, the home, the church, or the kingdom of God.

**We affirm** that both men and women are needed and necessary for the health and ministry of the church. Godly men and women should be visible partners in the corporate life of the church, deploying their diverse gifts for the good of the body. Simply put, all Christians contribute to the ministry of the church.

**We deny** that the church can flourish without brotherly/ sisterly partnership. We deny that a church can exist in which the men flourish, and the women do not, or vice versa.

**We affirm** that the role/function of elder is reserved for qualified men. Elders are distinctly responsible for overseeing the church (1 Tim. 5:17; Titus 1:7; 1 Pet. 5:1-2) and preaching the Word (1 Tim. 3:2; 2 Tim. 4:2; Titus 1:9).

**We deny** that the role of elder being withheld from women diminishes their importance or their influence in the church.

The indispensable help women were created to give can and should be exercised in all manner of roles/offices in the church, excepting those reserved for qualified men.

**We affirm** that all members of the church should be in willing submission to the elder body, and that all should be in sacrificial submission to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church.

**We deny** that all women are subject to the leadership and authority of all men. Further, biblical submission is not indicative of subordination or inequality, as seen in the Son's submission to the Father (Phil. 2:1-11).

**We affirm** that complementarianism, rightly practiced, will lead to the recognizable flourishing of both sexes.

**We deny** any version of complementarianism or theological position that leads to the subjugation, abuse or neglect of any man or woman. We strongly denounce any distorted view of Scripture that contributes to the belief that biblical manhood or womanhood includes or permits practices such as marginalization, subjugation, intimidation, neglect, or any form of abuse.

**We affirm** that all men and women have been created in the image of God, whether single or married.

**We deny** that single men and women must be married to be meaningful participants in the corporate life of the church. We deny that single men possess any authority over single women. The way that they love and serve their sisters should not patronize, victimize, or show force, but rather should be the fruit of brotherly love, and vice versa.

#### MINISTRY AT PATHWAY COMMUNITY CHURCH

In coming to these conclusions and how to implement them, we recognize that some will find our position and practice on women in ministry far too conservative. We also recognize that others will find our position and practice on women in ministry far too progressive. We ask for charity from both as we focus on the primary task of making disciples of Jesus Christ.

Additionally, we believe it is important to note that a theological confession of complementarianism does not necessarily result in uniform practice.

#### PROFESSIONAL/ORGANIZATIONAL

The Lead Team, which includes male and female leaders, and pastors, have designated the roles of pastors for elders/pastors/qualified men. The Lead Team will vet men for these roles and positions using a formal process. We seek to hire both men and women for every other role, for the health of the church within the framework outlined below. This gives both men and women opportunities to advance and grow in leadership and includes women participating in every level of the organization (except for the role of elder/pastor/qualified men).

#### SUNDAY MORNING GATHERING

Every role is open to both men and women, except the roles of primary preaching the Word of God and officiating the ordinances (baptism/the Lord's Supper). Every member is invited to baptize and distribute the elements of communion, but the roles of preaching and officiating the ordinances are reserved for elders/pastors/qualified men.

#### TEACHING ENVIRONMENTS

Mixed-gender teaching environments are overseen by elders. These men should seek out, equip, and utilize gifted men and women to help lead, teach, and shape these ministries.

Gender-specific teaching environments are taught by a leader of the same gender. Men teach men's environments, and women teach women's environments.