



CITY CHURCH  
MARIETTA

## **Doctrines of City Church Ministries, Inc.**

From the beginning, the Church has always found it helpful to summarize its core beliefs and convictions into brief, compact statements. This is done to explain truth, clarify and prevent confusion, protect from false teaching, and hold fast to the landmarks of Church history. The Christian confession is a response to God's revelation, therefore, the confessions of a church should be in agreement with the boundaries of biblical truth that God has revealed to us. All Christians say they believe the Bible, but the following statements help to clarify what we believe about the Bible.

City Church Marietta establishes five statements summarizing our beliefs, convictions, and doctrine. These are summarized below.

### *1. Statement of Basic Beliefs*

This statement represents the foundational beliefs of orthodox Christianity from a biblical and historical perspective. It captures the basics of Christian theology.

### *2. Statement of Personal Convictions*

This statement captures our convictions on areas that are often debated among Bible-believing churches. Though agreement with this statement isn't necessary for participation in our church, we will preach, teach and counsel on the basis of these convictions.

### *3. Statement of Biblical Doctrine*

This statement represents a more comprehensive explanation of the beliefs and convictions articulated in the other statements.

### *4. Statement Regarding Marriage*

This statement provides a formal description of our beliefs and policies surrounding marriage as God's covenant shared between one man and one woman as biologically defined by their natural birth.

### *5. Statement Regarding Men and Women in the Church*

This final statement provides a theological vision of the roles of men and women within the Church.

As a whole, these statements communicate what we believe as a church and are foundational for our teaching, preaching, praying, instructing, leading, and counseling.

## **BASIC BELIEFS**

The love of Jesus is the hope of the world. As we read the Bible, we see many overarching themes, including God's providence, power, and provision to reconcile mankind and the created world to Himself through the person and work of Jesus Christ. Because of this, we believe the following:

### *One God, Three Persons*

There is only one true God, Creator of heaven and earth, who eternally exists in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit ([Deuteronomy 6:4](#); [Isaiah 45:5-6](#); [Isaiah 46:9-10](#); [John 17:3](#); [1 Corinthians 8:4-6](#); [1 Timothy 2:5](#); [Genesis 1:26](#); [Psalm 45:6-7](#); [Psalm 110:1](#); [Matthew 3:13-17](#); [Matthew 28:17-20](#); [1 Corinthians 12:4-6](#)).

### *God's Glory*

All things exist for the glory and praise of God ([Psalm 148](#); [Proverbs 16:4](#); [Isaiah 61:3](#); [Romans 11:33-36](#); [1 Corinthians 10:31](#); [2 Corinthians 5:15](#); [Ephesians 1:3-14](#)).

### *The Bible*

The Bible is true, authoritative, inerrant, inspired, and sufficient ([Psalm 19:7-11](#); [2 Timothy 3:16](#); [2 Peter 1:20-21](#)).

### *Man's Sin*

Apart from Christ, all people are sinful by both birth and action, and the penalty for their sin is physical and spiritual death ([Genesis 6:5](#); [Psalm 51:5](#); [Jeremiah 17:9](#); [Romans 3:23](#); [5:8, 12-21](#); [7:18](#); [Ephesians 2:1-3](#)).

### *Jesus Christ*

Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, born of a virgin, and is both fully God and fully man, who died as the sacrificial substitute to pay our penalty for sin, physically rose from the dead, ascended into heaven and will one day physically return. ([Matthew 1:20, 28:1-20](#); [Mark 16:1-8](#); [Luke 2:52, 24:1-53](#); [John 1:1-4, 14, 29, 10:1-18, 14:3](#); [Acts 1:11](#); [Romans 5:8](#); [1 Corinthians 15:1-4, 12-34](#); [2 Corinthians 5:21](#); [Galatians 1:4](#); [Colossians 1:15-20](#); [1 Thessalonians 4:16](#); [Hebrews 1:1-3, 9:28](#); [1 Peter 3:18](#); [1 John 3:2](#); [Revelation 1:7](#)).

### *His Return*

When Christ returns, there will be a physical resurrection of the dead. Only those who have turned from sin to Jesus in faith and repentance will be raised to eternal life with Him and those who have not turned from sin to Jesus will be raised to eternal punishment and separation from Him ([Matthew 25:31-46](#); [John 3:18, 5:28-29, 14:6](#); [Acts 4:12, 24:15](#); [Romans 3:21-26](#); [1 Timothy 2:5-6](#)).

## PERSONAL CONVICTIONS

While the beliefs expressed above are recognized to be universal within the Church, there are a number of other beliefs that we are passionate about as well. All Christians do not hold these beliefs, but we find them to be important and true as we understand the Bible. Complete agreement is not required for connection in the church, but we will preach, teach and counsel according to these personal convictions that are summarized below.

### *Divine Sovereignty*

God is sovereign over all things in such a way that there is no aspect of reality outside of His control. Though God's rule extends to all things, it is particularly His sovereignty over the work of salvation that is a personal conviction. We believe that it is good and glorious news that salvation is not dependent on the desires or deeds of man. Though man is responsible for his sin, God is ultimately and entirely responsible for drawing those He would save to Himself and overcoming their natural resistance to the gospel ([Psalm 115:3](#), [135:6](#); [Isaiah 64:6](#); [John 6:60-64](#), [10:14-18](#); [Acts 4:24-31](#); [Ephesians 1:3-14](#); [Romans 8:26-9:23](#); [Philippians 1:6](#); [1 Thessalonians 2:13](#)).

### *The Gifts of the Spirit*

The gifts of the Holy Spirit that we see exercised in the Bible have not ceased with the death of the last Apostle or the closing of the New Testament canon. They are available today and are to be desired and practiced in submission to the Spirit speaking through Scripture ([Romans 12:3-8](#); [1 Corinthians 12-14](#); [Ephesians 4:1-16](#)).

### *God's Unique Design of Men and Women*

Men and women are absolutely equal in essence, dignity, and value before God. They are, however, different and unique by God's design. As part of God's good created order, men and women are to have roles and responsibilities that complement each other in the home and church. These distinctions are God's grace to men and women and are to be protected, preserved and practiced for His glory and our joy. ([1 Corinthians 11:2-16](#); [Ephesians 5:22-33](#); [Colossians 3:18-19](#); [1 Peter 3:1-7](#)).

### *God's Glory and Our Joy*

We believe that our greatest joy is found in faithful obedience to God and that our enjoyment of Him is the primary way that He is glorified ([Psalm 16:11](#); [37:4](#); [Matthew 13:44](#); [John 15:11](#); [Philippians 3:8](#); [Hebrews 11:6](#)).

## **BIBLICAL DOCTRINE**

### **Scripture**

We believe the Bible, made up of the 39 books of the Old Testament and 27 books of the New Testament, is the written Word of God. The Bible is an essential and infallible record of God revealing Himself to mankind. It leads us to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Given by God, the Bible is both fully and verbally inspired by God and is therefore free of error. Each book is to be interpreted according to its context and purpose in reverent obedience to the Lord who speaks through it in living power. All believers are encouraged to study the Scriptures and diligently apply them to their lives. The Scriptures are the authoritative and normative rule and guide of all Christian life, practice and doctrine. They are totally sufficient and must not be added to, superseded or changed by later tradition, extra-biblical revelation or worldly wisdom. Every doctrinal formulation whether a creed, confession or theology, must be tested by the full counsel of God in Holy Scripture.

### **Trinity**

There is one God: infinite, eternal, almighty and perfect in holiness, truth and love. In the unity of the Godhead, there are three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, co-existent, co-equal and co-eternal. The Father is not the Son. The Son is not the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not the Father. Yet each is truly Deity. One God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—is the foundation of Christian faith and life.

### **Father**

God the Father is the Creator of heaven and earth. By His word and for His glory, He freely and supernaturally created the world out of nothing. Through the same word, He daily sustains all creation. He rules over all and, together with the Son and the Spirit, is the only Sovereign. His plans and purposes cannot be thwarted. He is faithful to every promise, works all things together for good to those who love Him and, in His unfathomable grace, gave His Son, Jesus Christ, for mankind's redemption. He made all things for the praise of His glory and intends for man, in particular, to live in fellowship with Him.

### **Son**

Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, is the eternal Word made Flesh, supernaturally conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary. He is fully God and fully man. Through Him, all things came into being and were created. He was before all things, and in Him, all things hold together by the word of His power. He is perfect in nature, teaching and obedience and is the only Savior for the sins of the world, having shed His blood and died a vicarious death on the cross. By His death in our place, He revealed divine love and upheld divine justice, removing our guilt and reconciling us to God. Redeeming us from sin, He rose bodily from the grave on the third day, victorious over death and the powers of darkness and performing many convincing proofs of His resurrection. He ascended into heaven where, at God's right hand, He intercedes for His

people and rules as Lord over all, awaiting His return. He is the Head of His body, the Church, and should be adored, loved, served and obeyed by all.

### Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. Through the proclamation of the gospel, He persuades men to repent of their sins and confess Jesus as Lord. By the same Spirit, a person is led to trust in divine mercy. The Holy Spirit unites believers to Jesus Christ in faith, brings about the new birth and dwells within the regenerate. The Holy Spirit has come to glorify the Son who, in turn, came to glorify the Father. He will lead the Church into a right understanding and rich application of the truth of God's Word. He is to be respected, honored and worshiped as God, the Third Person of the Trinity.

### Man

God made man—male and female—in His own image, as the crown of creation so that man might glorify Him through enjoying fellowship with Him. Tempted by Satan, man rebelled against God. Being estranged from his Maker yet responsible to Him, man became subject to divine wrath, inwardly depraved and, apart from a special work of grace, utterly incapable of returning to God. This depravity is radical and pervasive. It extends to his mind, will and affections. Unregenerate man lives under the dominion of sin and Satan. He is at enmity with God, hostile toward God and hateful of God. Fallen, sinful people, whatever their character or attainments, are lost and without hope apart from salvation in Christ alone.

### Gospel

The gospel is the good news of God's grace invading the darkness of this world. It is the grand narrative of creation, fall, redemption and consummation ordained by God and orchestrated through the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. Christ's crucifixion is the heart of the gospel. His resurrection is the power of the gospel. His ascension is the glory of the gospel. Christ's death is a substitutionary and propitiatory sacrifice to God for our sins. It satisfies the demands of God's holy justice and appeases His holy wrath. It also demonstrates His mysterious love and reveals His amazing grace. Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and man. There is no other name by which men can be saved. At the heart of all sound doctrine is the cross of Jesus Christ and the infinite privilege that redeemed sinners have in glorifying God because of what He has accomplished. Therefore, we want all that takes place in our hearts, church and ministry to proceed from and be related to the gospel.

### Man's Response to the Gospel

The proper response to the gospel is faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ, a faith that is naturally accompanied by repentance from sin. Biblical repentance is characterized by a changed life, and saving faith is evidenced by kingdom service and works. While neither repentance nor works save, unless a person is willing to deny himself, pick up his cross and follow Christ, he cannot become His disciple. This response to the gospel is

rooted and grounded in the free and unconditional election of God for His own pleasure and glory. This gospel of grace is to be sincerely preached to all men in all nations.

#### Man's Inheritance Through the Gospel

Salvation, the free gift of God, is provided by grace alone, through faith alone, because of Christ alone, for the glory of God alone. Anyone repenting of sin by the miracle of regeneration and looking to Christ and His substitutionary death receives the gift of eternal life and is declared righteous by God as a free gift. The righteousness of Christ is imputed to him. He is justified and fully accepted by God. Through Christ's atonement for sin, an individual is reconciled to God as Father and becomes His child. The believer is forgiven the debt of his sin and liberated from the law of sin and death into the freedom of God's Spirit.

#### Sanctification

The Holy Spirit is the active agent in our sanctification, seeking to produce His fruit in us. Our minds are renewed and we are conformed to the image of Christ. Though indwelling sin remains a reality, the Spirit leads us to grow in the knowledge of the Lord, freely keeping His commandments and endeavoring to live in the world so that all people may see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven. All believers are exhorted to persevere in the faith, knowing they will have to give an account to God for their every thought, word and deed. The spiritual disciplines, especially Bible study, prayer and fasting, worship and confession are a vital means of grace in this regard. The believer's ultimate confidence to persevere is based in the sure promise of God to preserve His people until the end.

#### Empowered by the Spirit

The Holy Spirit empowers believers for Christian witness and service. The promise of the Father is freely available to all who believe in Jesus Christ, enabling them to exercise the gifts He sovereignly bestows for ministry and mission. The Holy Spirit desires to continually fill each believer with power to bear witness to the gospel and imparts His gifts for the edification of the body and the work of ministry in the world. All the gifts of the Holy Spirit at work in the first-century church are available today and are to be earnestly desired and practiced in an orderly manner. This includes those gifts that are considered miraculous, as well as those which might be seen as more mundane, as both are works of the Spirit. The healthy exercising of diverse gifts within a unified body is essential to the mission of the Church in the world today.

#### The Church

God, by His Word and Spirit, creates the Church, calling sinful people out of the whole human race into the fellowship of Christ's body. By the same Word and Spirit, He guides and preserves newly redeemed humanity. The Church is not a religious institution or denomination. Rather, the Church is made up of those who have become genuine followers of Christ. The Church exists to worship and glorify God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It also exists to serve Him by faithfully doing His will on earth. This service involves

a commitment to see the gospel preached and churches planted in the entire world. The ultimate mission of the Church is to bring glory to God by making disciples. Upon conversion, newly redeemed men and women are added to a local church in which they devote themselves to teaching, fellowship, the Lord's Supper and prayer.

All members of the Church are to be a vital and committed part of a local church. In this context, they are called to live out the implications of the gospel as the people of God and demonstrate the reality of the kingdom of God. The ascended Christ has given gift ministries to the Church, including prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, for the equipping of Christ's body so that it might mature and grow. In the context of the local church, God's people receive pastoral care and oversight and the opportunity to steward their gifts for His glory and the good of the others.

### The Sanctity of Human Life

We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life.

### Baby Dedication

A baby dedication is a public commitment parents make before God, their family and the church. The service provides parents the opportunity to express publicly their desire to lead and teach their child to love God and others. We dedicate children for their blessing and our encouragement, following the example of godly parents in the Bible. They publicly dedicated their children to God, because they understood that God had entrusted their children to their care. As a church, we believe it is a joyful opportunity to publicly recognize a child as a gift from God and to stand with parents to raise their to know and love God.

### Baptism

Water baptism is only intended for the individual who has received the saving benefits of Christ's atoning work and become His disciple. In obedience to Christ's command and as a testimony to God, the Church, oneself and the world, a believer should be immersed in water in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Water baptism is a visual and symbolic demonstration of a person's union with Christ in the likeness of His death and resurrection. It signifies that a former way of life has been put to death and vividly depicts a person's release from the mastery of sin.

### Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is to be observed only by those who have become genuine followers of Christ. This ordinance symbolizes the breaking of Christ's body and the shedding of His blood on our behalf and is to be observed repeatedly throughout the Christian life as a sign of continued participation in the atoning benefits of Christ's death. As we come to



the table with an attitude of faith and self-examination, there are past, present, and future implications. *Past*: We remember and proclaim the death of Christ. *Present*: We receive spiritual nourishment for our souls and signify our unity with other members of Christ's body. *Future*: We look forward to the great banquet table with Christ in which His presence will no longer require an earthly symbol, but will be fully and finally realized.

#### All Things New

God's making all things new includes the future, physical, visible, personal and glorious return of Jesus Christ, the resurrection of the dead and the translation of those alive in Christ, the judgment of the just and the unjust, and the fulfillment of Christ's kingdom in the new heavens and the new earth. In this, Satan, with his hosts and all those outside Christ, is finally separated from the presence of God, enduring eternal punishment. The righteous, in glorious bodies, will live and reign with Him forever, serving Him and giving Him unending praise and glory. Then the expectation of creation will be fulfilled, and the whole earth shall proclaim the glory of God, who makes all things new.

## **REGARDING MARRIAGE**

City Church Marietta seeks to love all people from all walks of life who hold a variety of beliefs that may differ from those highlighted in these statements of faith. We care very much that those who do not hold to these exact beliefs do not feel alienated in any way when they attend our church and want them to know that they are absolutely welcome and there is a place for them at our church.

Though we welcome all people, this doesn't mean that we affirm all lifestyles or lifestyle choices. As noted above, we hold to several convictions that God commands His people to live by in Scripture. Another one of these enduring truths is our belief that God created marriage as a covenant between Him and one man and one woman. From Genesis to Revelation, the authority of Scripture witnesses to the nature of biblical marriage as uniquely bound to the complementarity of man and woman. This truth is not negotiable or changeable. The Lord Jesus himself said that marriage is from the beginning (Matt. 19:4-6), so no human institution has the authority to redefine marriage any more than a human institution has the authority to redefine the gospel, which marriage reflects (Eph. 5:32).

As a church, we recognize that too often, professing Christians have failed to model the ideals we so dearly cherish and believe are central to marriage and the gospel. We have also failed to show another option to marriage—which is singleness—lived out in the fruitful and full context of God's community, the family of God. This does not mean that singles are “condemned to live in loneliness,” but that singles can have intimate and fulfilling relationships full of love. This is not a consolation prize. It can be just as rewarding and fulfilling as marriage because we believe earthly marriage does not have a monopoly on love. God is love (1 John 4:7-19). The pinnacle of love is God's love for us in Christ. Nothing is greater than that. Truly, the highest ideal of love is Christ's love for his bride, the Church. Marriage runs parallel with Christ's redemption: the marriage consummation between the bride (redeemed sinners) and the Groom (Christ) shows that all redeemed people are married to Christ. Only in Christ can anyone experience the full definition of love and acceptance. As important as earthly marriage and family are, they are both fleeting and temporary, while Christ and the family of God (the Church) are wondrously eternal.

## **REGARDING MEN AND WOMEN IN THE CHURCH**

The purpose of this statement is to articulate a theological vision of the roles of men and women within the Church in the sections presented below, beyond the brief explanation in our *Personal Convictions*. The aim is to articulate, as best as possible, our current position concerning the roles of men and women in various ministries. We acknowledge that this is a discussion that requires nuance, where everything is not as black and white as some might want it to be, and the goal is not to read Scripture in order to get it to fit into a specific system of our human liking. Our end desire is to be obedient to Scripture, honor the Lord and give opportunities for men and women to flourish together in their role(s) at City Church Marietta. This statement seeks to describe what we believe Scripture teaches about gender uniqueness, value, and dignity, as well as how men and women relate and work together in their various roles within the life of the Church.

### **Introduction**

The Bible teaches that God created two sexes of humans, male and female, to bear His image together (Gen. 1:27-28; Matt. 19:4; Mark 10:6). 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 Personal Convictions*, we believe that men and women are absolutely equal in essence, dignity and value. Gender does not merely represent a social construct but, instead, represents a reality present in every human from birth. Men and women, therefore, are not interchangeable.

In light 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 have different roles and responsibilities in the church and home. 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 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 (Gen. 2:18-25; 1 Cor. 11:2-16; Col. 3:18-19; 1 Pet. 3:1-7).

### **Gender and the Roles of Men and 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.

Throughout the Old Testament we encounter men and women who play pivotal roles in the history of God's people. Many are well acquainted with the men God used to lead and serve His people, who governed, led in worship, prophesied, provided for needs, and served at critical moments, including Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, and Joshua, as well as David, Solomon, the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Daniel, and many others. The roles of many women, though, have at times been neglected or overlooked.

They also governed, led in worship, prophesied, provided for needs, and served at critical moments, including Miriam, Rahab, Deborah, Ruth, Hannah, Esther, and Huldah, among many others. As we consider the Old Testament, then, it becomes clear that both men and women serve and lead God's people in various unique and powerful ways. It is important to note the similarity between these roles, considering that this was a cultural moment where women had less legal rights than men.

We believe that all Christians are charged with the Great Commission, and therefore, all Christians, both men and women, participate in the ministry of the church. Jesus welcomed women among His disciples, teaching them (Luke 10:39) and involving them in His ministry (Luke 8:1-3). Paul's words to Titus teach that older women teaching biblical wisdom to younger women is a noble, beautiful and necessary task (Titus 2:3-5). 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 (Rom. 16:1-2). Euodia and Syntyche labored with Paul "side-by-side" in the gospel (Phil. 4:3). Priscilla is described as "explaining the way of God more accurately" to Apollos (Acts 18:26). Timothy's faith and growth in grace was credited by Paul to his mother Eunice and grandmother Lois (2 Timothy 1:5, 3:14-15). The founding of the Philippian church began with Lydia, whom God used to build and establish this church (Acts 16:14-15).

We celebrate, then, the biblical picture of both 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 (1 Cor. 12:4-31). When we don't empower both sexes to engage and use their gifts in partnership, both genders can suffer, and the mission of the Church—to proclaim the gospel and make disciples of all nations also suffers.

### **Ministry at City Church**

In coming to these conclusions and how to implement them, we ask for gentleness and grace 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 does not necessarily result in uniform practice, meaning we are eager to work with brothers and sisters, churches and other ministries who may view these interpretations differently than we do, but affirm the inerrancy, authority, and sufficiency of Scripture.

### **Organizational**

While we affirm equal involvement in the Church between men and women, this does not entail completely interchangeable involvement in every role based on how the Bible differentiates these roles. Although men and women are portrayed as equals throughout Scripture, we believe the Bible reserves the office of Elder specifically for qualified men who have been vetted and meet all of the specific qualifications of an Elder. Scripture calls Elders to lead the church (1 Tim. 5:17; Titus 1:7; 1 Pet. 5:1-2), preach the Word (1 Tim. 3:2; 2 Tim. 4:2; Titus 1:9), protect the church from false teaching (Acts 20:17, 28-31;

Titus 1:9) pray for and visit the sick (Jas. 5:14; Acts 20:35), equip the saints for ministry (Eph. 4:11-12) and use proper judgment in theological and doctrinal matters (Acts 15). In shepherding, overseeing, leading, caring and praying for the local church, Elders practice sacrificial leadership. 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 certain qualified men within the church.

City Church Marietta's governing structure is that of a Plural Elder leadership model. This means that City Church is governed and led by a group of Elders, which also includes the Lead Pastor of the church. Because of the unique dual role of the Lead Pastor, we also reserve the role of Lead Pastor and the responsibilities unique to it, for a certain qualified man who is called by the Elders to lead and serve in this capacity. The terms Elder and Pastor are used interchangeably at City Church. For this reason, all staff roles within City Church will not carry the title of Pastor unless they are also called to serve as Elders within the church.

Apart from the roles of Elder and Lead Pastor, we believe all men and women can serve within the life and structure of the church in every other capacity that they are uniquely equipped and qualified to serve. We will seek to hire both men and women for every other role, for the health of the church. This gives men and women opportunities to advance and grow in leadership and can include women participating in every other level of the organization.

### **Sunday Gathering**

Every member of the church body actively participates in our weekend worship gatherings, not just those who are on the stage. Every role is open to both men and women, except the role of primary preacher of the Word of God in the Sunday gathering, which is reserved for the Lead Pastor and Elders. Every member is invited to baptize and distribute the elements of communion, but the primary preaching of the Word and officiating of those ordinances are reserved for the Lead Pastor and Elders.

On occasion qualified women, who are above reproach, exercise sound judgment, walk in humility, are actively growing and maturing in their faith, and possess a teaching gift, will teach the Word during the Sunday gathering under the guidance and leadership of the Lead Pastor and Elders. An important question that arises here is; what about Paul's instructions in 1 Corinthians 14:33-35 and 1 Timothy 2:8-15? Scholars have studied and written extensively concerning these two passages with varying conclusions.

Some have concluded that it was Paul's intent to exclude women from ever speaking publicly in a context in which men were in attendance. It is our belief that such an interpretation is overly restrictive and is inconsistent with other passages in Scripture in which Paul seems to recognize women's active participation in meetings in which both men and women would almost certainly have been in attendance. He makes these

references without any apparent concern for the women's participation (cf 1 Cor. 11:1-16).

Others have rejected these passages as irrelevant to present day church life. They generally come to this position by way of a view of Scripture that rejects the Bible as the authoritative, inerrant Word of God. We reject this approach to the Bible and so reject conclusions that rely solely on that foundational position.

We are left then with a third category of conclusions related to Paul's instructions in 1 Corinthians 14:33-35 and 1 Timothy 2:8-15. It seems clear to us that Paul in certain circumstances limited women's participation in public gatherings in which men were in attendance and in other similar circumstances did not. Among those who hold the Bible to be God's authoritative and inerrant word, there are numerous explanations for Paul's basis for these varying positions. We welcome conversation around the varying positions amongst our members, as needed.

### **Other Teaching Environments**

Currently, gender-specific teaching environments are taught by a leader of the same gender. Men teach in men's environments, and women teach in women's environments. Any mixed-gender teaching environment (Couples Groups and/or Gatherings) are overseen by the Lead Pastor and Elders and will be led by qualified men and women. The Lead Pastor and Elders will seek out, equip and utilize gifted men and women to help lead, teach and shape these ministries as they are created.