

COMPLEMENTARISM IN BELIEF AND PRACTICE

PENNINGTON PARK CHURCH

Pennington Park Church derives the foundation for its doctrine and practice from the Word of God. It is our belief that the Word of God teaches that men and women are created by God as having equal value and worth, they uniquely reflect complementary truths about the image of God. We believe that the Bible teaches that the roles of men and women, therefore, are not interchangeable (egalitarianism). Both are necessary to correctly embody God's image in the church and to the world.

We further believe that the complementarian view is not limited to the defining of roles for women, but it is meant to illustrate the beauty of believing men and women living in harmony and order as brothers and sisters in Christ. The following statements are meant to provide clarity and guidance to the application of this Biblical view in the life of our church.

IMAGE

We believe God created male and female together in His image, with equal value, dignity, worth, access, and love, and they were created with the intent that together they would reflect His triune image in His creation. While equal in value, women and men are distinct and complementary in how they image their Creator. (Genesis 1:26-27) Complementarian theology emphasizes not only the differences but also the dependence in how both men and women need one another to fully image God. Gender complementarity within equality is God's means for ordering His world so that His image is manifested and glorified most beautifully.

- We affirm that men and women are both precious to God and are on equal footing in their relationship to God as believers in Jesus Christ where "there is neither male nor female." (Galatians 3:28)
- We affirm that all men and women are created in the image of God, whether single or married. (1 Corinthians 7:7,8; 1 Peter 3:7)
- We affirm that complementarian theology rightly practiced leads to the greater good and flourishing for both men and women. (Ephesians 5:28-30)
- We deny that the roles of men and women are always determined by cultural context and are without authoritative Biblical definition. (Genesis 1:26-27; Ephesians 5:21-33)

CHURCH & MARRIAGE

We believe the beauty of the oneness of the Godhead (Deuteronomy 6:4) expressed in its diversity (Father, Son, Spirit) through fully equal members of the Godhead possessing different but complementary functions (Romans 8:26, 31-35) provides a complementarian

design seen in God's image bearers. Men and women have equal but different functions to live out in their roles within the Church and marriage. (Genesis 2:18-25)

- We affirm that the role of Pastor and Elder is to be held by qualified men as in keeping with the Scripture. (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9)
- We affirm that the Eldership which consists of qualified, godly men (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9) is the office ordained by God to lead Christ's Church as shepherds with authority. All members of the church (men and women) are called to follow this authority as the Elders humbly serve God's people through the authoritative preaching of the Word, and the pastoral leadership and the care of the Church and its members. (1 Timothy 2:8-15)
- We affirm that in marriage, husbands are to lovingly and sacrificially lead in their home as Christ loved and sacrificed for the church, and wives are to graciously and respectfully submit to the leadership of their own husband as to the Lord.
(Ephesians 5:22, 25; Titus 2:4-5; 1 Peter 3:1)
- We deny that all women are subject to the leadership and authority of all men, nor that wives are subject to their husbands in cases of abuse, harm, immorality, or when led to disobey Scripture.
(Ephesians 5:22; Colossians 3:18; Titus 2:4,5; 1 Peter 3:1)

CHRIST'S MISSION

We believe both the mandate to fill the earth and subdue it (Genesis 1:27-28) and the mandate given by Christ to evangelize and disciple others (Matthew 28:18-20) was given to women and men equally, and so also the spiritual gifts were given by Christ to His Church for the flourishing of the Church as a whole. (1 Corinthians 12)

- We affirm that the primary relationship between men and women in the church is the Biblical picture of brothers and sisters working alongside one another in the world and within the Church for the sake of the Kingdom of God. (Acts 18:26; 21:8-9; Romans 16; 1 Corinthians 12; Philippians 4:2,3)
- We deny that single men and women must be married to be meaningful participants in the corporate life of the church (1 Corinthians 7:7).
- We deny that complementarianism leads to subjugation, abuse or neglect of any woman or man. We denounce any distorted view of Scripture that contributes to the belief that Biblical manhood or womanhood includes or permits practices such as marginalization, intimidation, neglect or abuse of any man or woman. (Psalm 11:5; 1 Corinthians 13:4-7; Ephesians 4:29-32; Colossians 3:19, 21; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; James 1:19-20, 1 Peter 3:7)

GUIDELINES FOR PRACTICE AT PENNINGTON PARK CHURCH

WORSHIP

Both men and women are encouraged to use their gifts in areas of worship such as Scripture reading, prayer and musical accompaniment and performance.

Examples:

- Men or women may read Scripture or lead in prayer during the worship service.
- Congregational worship may be led by men or women.

TEACHING

The preaching of the Word to the congregation during Sunday worship services (the formal weekly gathering of the church body as the church) is restricted to a Pastor/Elder (or their male designee) and is an example of their teaching authority. In this official gathering for corporate worship, Elders are called to lead and teach the congregation (1 Tim. 2:8-15). We see the preached Word during the ordered, corporate Sunday gathering as having a level of authority distinct from many other ministries and settings.

Gender-specific teaching environments are normally taught by a leader of the same gender. Other mixed gender teaching environments are overseen by Pastors/Elders, who will seek out, equip and utilize gifted men and women to help lead, teach, and shape these ministries.

LEADING & SERVING

All members of the Church body are encouraged to use their gifts as brothers and sisters in Christ within a wide variety of leading and serving opportunities.

Examples:

- Many ministries and opportunities for both leadership and serving exist for men and women within the church, and both are encouraged to participate in leadership training and equipping. Under the leadership of the elders, opportunities include leading serving teams, the serving of communion, ushers, greeters, hospitality, one-on-one discipleship, evangelism, supporting missionaries, counseling, etc.
- At the request and continuing oversight of the Pastors/Elders, both men and women may serve in the office of deacon.
- Small Groups and Adult Classes are extensions of the church's ministry and a means by which the elders shepherd and teach our members. As such, we desire them to be led by qualified, godly men. The Elders will have oversight of all Small Groups and Adult Classes. It is recommended that when possible the wife of the Small Group leader (or if single, a qualified woman) would co-lead in the discipleship and care of the women of the group. While it is desired that godly, qualified men lead Adult Classes, they may be taught by qualified men or women with Elder oversight.

Professional Staff

The body of Pennington Park Church adheres to the complementarian view that the role of Pastor/Elder is to be reserved for qualified men. All ministries of the church have Pastoral/ Elder oversight. Women and men are encouraged to use their leadership skills within this pastoral framework as Directors, Assistant Directors, Coordinators, Assistants, Managers, Producers, Specialists, Residents and Interns.

Examples:

- Both men and women may serve in all non-pastoral hired positions including Director of Guest and Member Services, Director of Children, Director of Youth, Director of Worship, Director of Finance, Director of Information Systems, etc.
- Pastoral Residents are to be men since the role of Pastor/Elder is Biblically reserved for men. Qualified men and women may be considered for one-year or two-year residencies to prepare for non-pastoral roles in the areas of ministry such as Children, Youth, and Worship.