

Beavercreek Christian Church

ELDER STATEMENT

Concerning Gender Roles in Ministry

BCC deeply values the inherent worth and equal dignity of all individuals, recognizing that they are all created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). We appreciate and celebrate the diverse gifts and talents that both men and women bring to the Body of Christ. We are committed to fostering an environment where everyone can fully utilize his or her God-given abilities for the building up of the church and the advancement of God's Kingdom.

This document seeks to articulate our current understanding of biblical teaching regarding the roles of men and women in the church, striving to balance the principles of egalitarianism – affirming the equal value and spiritual giftedness of all believers – with those of complementarianism – recognizing distinct, yet complementary, roles for men and women within the church's leadership structure. Our aim is to create a framework that honors Scripture, maximizes the contributions of all members, and fosters unity and spiritual growth.

After prayerful examination of the biblical text, along with much research, instruction, and conversation, we adopt the following framework:

- **Equal value and spiritual giftedness of all believers:** We unequivocally affirm that men and women are equally created in God's image, are equally loved by God, are equally recipients of the Holy Spirit and His gifts, and are equally saved through God's grace (Genesis 1:27, Galatians 3:28; 1 Corinthians 12:7-11, John 3:16). We believe that God bestows a wide array of spiritual gifts upon both men and women for the common good of the church. These gifts are to be recognized, nurtured, and actively used by all believers in various ministries of the church and are not limited by gender.
- **Recognition of the vital role of women in the church.** We recognize and celebrate the indispensable contributions of women throughout the history of

the Church and in our present-day congregation. Women have always been integral to the spiritual vitality of the Christian church, serving in diverse capacities with profound impact. We recognize and affirm that women possess valuable wisdom and insight. Their perspectives and experiences enrich the understanding and application of God's Word within the community. Their contributions in teaching and discipleship are vital for the spiritual growth of all believers.

- **The nature of roles and responsibilities:** While affirming equal value and giftedness, we also recognize that in some passages, Scripture seems to present distinctions in roles and responsibilities, particularly within church leadership. Understanding and navigating these seemingly paradoxical truths requires humility, careful biblical interpretation, and a commitment to both honoring the gifts of all believers and upholding the teaching of Scripture to the best of our understanding.
- **The role of elder is reserved for qualified men:** We believe the Scriptures designate the office of elder, with its primary responsibilities for spiritual oversight, shepherding, and governance, to qualified men who meet the biblical criteria outlined in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1.
- **Women are encouraged and empowered to teach and disciple:** We believe women are gifted and called to teach and disciple both men and women within the church. This can occur in various settings, such as ministry in our teaching team, classes, small groups, workshops, and mentoring relationships.
- **Formal teaching ultimately operates under the direction and authority of the elders:** While the elders hold ultimate responsibility for the church's teaching, they delegate the practical oversight of this function to the teaching pastor. This teaching pastor works in close partnership with the elders, possessing the necessary giftedness, insight, and planning for this role. All formal adult teaching, regardless of gender, will operate under the guidance and oversight of the teaching pastor and, ultimately, the elders. To maintain alignment with our biblical understanding of elder leadership and due to the teaching pastor's close collaboration with the elders, this role will be held by a qualified male. This ensures both doctrinal consistency and a collaborative approach to the church's overall teaching ministry.

- **Collaboration and mutual respect are essential:** We are committed to fostering a culture of mutual respect, honor, and collaboration between men and women in all areas of ministry. Decisions regarding ministry roles and opportunities will be made prayerfully, considering the gifts and callings of all members of Christ's body.
- **We hold our current perspective with an open hand:** BCC holds to eight unifying beliefs that we cling to "with a closed hand." These are doctrinal positions that the leadership of BCC recognizes to be at the heart of the "faith that was once for all entrusted to God's holy people (Jude 3)." There are other beliefs that we hold "with an open hand." These are not central to the gospel. In humility we hold these more loosely, recognizing that faithful believers might disagree and in hopes of maintaining unity and peace in the body of Christ, despite differences of opinion.

Conclusion:

Our desire is to cultivate a church environment where both the equality of all believers and the distinct roles outlined in Scripture are honored and upheld. We believe that by embracing this balanced perspective, we can fully utilize the diverse gifts within our congregation for the glory of God and the advancement of His Kingdom. This approach allows everyone to flourish in his or her God-given callings, including teaching and discipling, while upholding our understanding of the biblical framework for church leadership. We are committed to ongoing dialogue, prayerful discernment, and a spirit of unity as we seek to faithfully live out God's design for His Church.

Elders of Beaver Creek Christian Church

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