

**The Role of Women in Ministry**  
**Summary of Study Conducted by the Elder Board**  
**Faith Bible Church**  
**March 27, 2012**

## **I. Introduction and Background**

A. The role of women in ministry is an issue over which much of the church today is divided. Godly men and women have argued passionately over the proper interpretation of a handful of seemingly conflicting passages to justify their positions. Although this topic is a hotly debated one in our culture, it should also be noted that this area is not the centerpiece of Christian orthodoxy.<sup>1</sup>

B. The Elder Board of Faith Bible Church has endeavored to seek out the Scriptures<sup>2</sup> and apply consistent biblical interpretative methods to understand this issue and apply these principles to the ministries of Faith Bible Church. The following is a summary of the results of our study.

## **II. Roles and Authority**

A. God designed specific roles for the husband and wife in the family.

1. The husband is to be the servant-leader of the home. His role is to protect and care for his bride (and family) putting his needs aside to serve them the way Christ serves and protects the church.<sup>3</sup>
2. The wife is to be a helpmate to her husband and follow his leading in a quiet and submissive manner.<sup>4</sup>
3. As joint heirs of the grace of God, husbands and wives are to be mutually submissive to one another, each placing the other's interest ahead of his/her own.<sup>5</sup>

B. God has designed the church to function as a body with many different members performing unique roles for the unity and edification of the body.<sup>6</sup>

C. God has designed the church to have an ordered structure with designated roles for leadership.

1. Christ is the head of the church.<sup>7</sup>
2. The office of Elder/Pastor is designated for qualified men.<sup>8</sup> The primary responsibilities of the office of Elder/Pastor are shepherding, teaching and exercising authority, and upholding sound doctrine.<sup>9</sup>
3. Qualifications for women serving in a role similar to the role of deacon are presented in Paul's letter to Timothy.<sup>10</sup>

D. Different roles for men and women (in the home and in the church) do not mean inequality, but have been established by God so that the home and church may function in a holy and healthy manner.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Our review of the largest evangelical protestant seminaries in North America found that none include a position on women in ministry in their doctrinal statement. No churches, that we have found, include a "women in ministry" section in their doctrinal statement - although a few have developed policy papers. Dallas Theological Seminary has developed a white paper that the Elders have carefully studied, along with several church statements and multiple books on the role of women in ministry.

<sup>2</sup> Key passages for the study of this topic include: Acts 18:26; Romans 16:1; 1 Corinthians 11, and 14; Galatians 3:28; 1 Timothy 1:5, 3:15; Titus 1-2.

<sup>3</sup> Ephesians 5:22-33; 1 Peter 3:7; Colossians 3:19

<sup>4</sup> Ephesians 5:22-33; 1 Peter 3:1-6; Colossians 3:18; Titus 2:3-5

<sup>5</sup> Ephesians 5:21

<sup>6</sup> Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Corinthians 12

<sup>7</sup> Ephesians 1:22; 4:15; Colossians 1:18

<sup>8</sup> 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9

<sup>9</sup> 1 Peter 5:1-3; Titus 1:9; 1 Timothy 3:15

<sup>10</sup> 1 Timothy 3:11

<sup>11</sup> Ephesians 5:22-30; Titus 2:2-8

### III. Spiritual Gifts

- A. God determines who receives which gift and to what degree. Neither the individual nor church leadership determines who receives which gift.<sup>12</sup>
- B. God does not appear to segregate spiritual gifts by gender. Women are encouraged to pray, prophesy and teach, as are men. God provides spiritual gifting to ensure effective service.<sup>13</sup> God places limitations on a woman's use of some spiritual gifts in public worship services.<sup>14</sup>
- C. God's purpose in the distribution of the gifts is to unify, encourage and strengthen the church body.<sup>15</sup>

***Based on the principles outlined above, the following is a set of guidelines that the Elders of Faith Bible Church will use in making decisions regarding the participation of women in ministry.***

### IV. Guidelines for Women's Leadership in Ministry at Faith Bible Church

- A. **MINISTRY LEADERSHIP.** Women are encouraged to lead in many Faith Bible Church ministries.
  - 1. Women are encouraged to lead in public worship services through song, musical instrument, serve as greeters or ushers, give announcements, pray, read Scripture, give personal testimony and provide missionary updates.
  - 2. Women may participate in leadership positions on committees at the request of the elders and with the agreement of their husbands (if married).
  - 3. Women are encouraged to teach other women.<sup>16</sup>
  - 4. We acknowledge that women may exercise legitimate spiritual leadership similar to the office and function of deaconess (e.g. Phoebe in Romans 16:1), provided such office does not conflict with other biblical instructions concerning the manner in which women may serve in the church.
- B. **LEADERSHIP POSITIONS RESERVED FOR MEN.** The positions of Elder and Pastor at Faith Bible Church are reserved for qualified men.<sup>17</sup>
- C. **AREAS REQUIRING DISCERNMENT AND REVIEW.** Although scripture permits women to engage in certain leadership responsibilities in the church, a situation might arise at Faith Bible Church where a woman performs a role or function that scripture appears to reserve for a man. In such case, the Elders will review the circumstances prior to their occurrence and determine whether it is biblical and appropriate for a woman to perform ministry leadership in such situation.

---

<sup>12</sup> 1 Corinthians 12: 11, 18

<sup>13</sup> Ephesians 4:11-16

<sup>14</sup> Paul permits a woman to pray and prophesy in a church service but with certain restrictions in 1 Corinthians 11:3-16. In 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, Paul prohibits a woman from speaking in the church worship service in the context of interpreting tongues. Paul also prohibits a woman from teaching a man or exercising authority over a man in the church – 1 Tim. 2:12-14. Since however, the interpretation of this passage is fraught with difficulties and has been debated among theologians and Bible scholars for centuries, the Elder Board at Faith Bible Church has taken the following position: Generally, women will not be given leadership responsibility where they would be teaching or exercising authority over men in the church unless the Board, following a careful review of a given situation, determines that a particular situation does not violate biblical intent.

<sup>15</sup> 1 Cor 14:12

<sup>16</sup> Titus 2:3-5

<sup>17</sup> 1 Timothy 3:2-7 and Titus 1:6-9