



Grace Point By Laws

REVISED 2017 4244 Sunset Blvd Steubenville, Oh

ARTICLE I Membership

Article 1.01 Requirements

Membership within Grace Point Ministries ("the church") is precipitated on one becoming a genuine follower of Jesus Christ through having responded in faith by the drawing of the Spirit to the message of the gospel. In addition, thereto:

- Members shall have completed all the requirements of membership as defined by the elders; and
- Members shall attend the Grace Point Membership Covenant Class and verbally agree to the membership terms, thus committing themselves to the responsibilities therein assigned.

Article 1.02 Responsibilities

Adult members (who are 18 yrs old) have voting responsibilities and may vote on the following matters:

- (a) the annual operating budget;
- (b) indebtedness associated with the purchase or construction of real estate;
- (c) cumulative indebtedness for all other aspects of church business that exceeds thirty percent (30%) of the annual church operating budget;
- (d) acceptance of an amended or restated constitution or bylaws;
- (e) disposition of substantially of all the church's assets;
- (f) merger or dissolution of the Church; and
- (g) other actions deemed major and extraordinary by the elders.

All items above will be communicated to the church not less than twenty-one (21) days prior to the vote and afterwards as well. A passing vote must be equal to or greater than seventy-five percent (75%) of all votes cast. Comments received from the church members will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Article 1.03 Removal

Members of the church will be removed from membership for reasons of:

- (a) death;
- (b) the member's request for removal;
- (c) a transfer request of membership to another church; or
- (d) the elders' decision based upon the process of church discipline guidelines for the cause of unrepentant sin
- (e) the elder's decision based upon length of absence

ARTICLE II Elders, Officers, Deacons and Staff

Article 2.01 Elders

Article 2.01.a Definition

The elders are entrusted with the governance of Grace Point Ministries. Their oversight includes, but is not limited to, teaching, protecting, leading, disciplining, equipping and caring for the corporate church body and her individual members as well as oversight of all ministry, operations and finances of the church. The elders are also responsible for being obedient to the Scripture in the doctrine of the church, establishing the overall vision of the church and appointing new elders or deacons.

Article 2.01.b

The elders reserve the right to call three men from the current membership to serve as an advisory team. This team will serve as needed and for the given length time determined by elders. This advisory team can be called for any reason deemed necessary by the elders. This team will share, collectively, one vote.

Article 2.01.c Qualifications

The minimum qualifications for elders shall not be less than those listed in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1: 6-9. In addition to the minimum qualifications given in the Scriptures, elders must be male members who fully subscribe to the Statement of Faith and are actively involved in ministry of the church. The elders may at any time create, alter, amend, repeal or restate the resolutions establishing additional qualifications outside of those listed in the above scriptures.

Article 2.01.d Powers

The oversight of the church's ministry, operations and finances shall be vested in the elder body. The elders are designated as the directors of this corporation as the term is defined and used in State and Federal laws, any limitations in the Articles of Incorporation, the Constitution or these Bylaws, all corporate powers shall be exercised by or under the direction of the elders.

Article 2.01.e Duties

The duties of the elders shall include, but not be limited to, leading the church to fulfill the purposes of the church. They are empowered to govern the ministries and business of the church subject to the limitations of State and Federal law, the Articles of Incorporation, the constitution or these bylaws. The elders shall supervise all employees of the church and may delegate to them any and all duties and responsibilities they deem reasonable, subject to the rights, if any, of a person under contract of employment. The elders of the church shall vote on the matters of:

- (a) appointment of any elder;
- (b) doctrinal issues;
- (c) removal of an elder; and
- (d) other actions deemed major and extraordinary by the elders.
- (e) amendments, alterations, revocation or adoption of any by-laws.

All items above will be communicated to the church at the discretion of the elders, except the appointment of any elder which shall be communicated not less than twenty-one (21) days before the elder vote. All comments received from the church will be considered prior to any final decision by elders.

Article 2.01.f Selection and Term of Office

The elders shall have the sole authority to appoint new elders. A man shall be appointed as an elder by a unanimous vote of the elder body after he has been tested and proven to meet the qualifications stated herein. The members of the church will be allowed to raise concerns, in accordance with Article 2.01.c herein, before any prospective elder is confirmed. However, confirmation of the elder will be at the final discretion of the elders. The elders may receive recommendations for elder candidates from the congregation. Once a man is appointed to the elder body as an elder, he is expected to serve in this

capacity for a minimum of two years. The first year shall be spent in Eldership Training followed by a probationary year of participation as a voting Elder. If the elder body determines that an elder needs an extended sabbath for a season because of a legitimate need (e.g., illness, tragedy), then that elder can transition to be an inactive and non-voting elder for a set period of time as determined by the elder body.

Article 2.01.g Resignation, Vacancies and Removal

Resignation - to resign from the elder body, an elder must notify, in writing, the officers of the church who are also members of the elder body. These officers will determine the most fruitful and edifying way to notify the remaining elders and the church.

Vacancies - a vacancy on the elder body because of death, resignation, removal or any other cause shall be filled only in the manners prescribed in these bylaws. Such vacancies may be filled as they occur.

Removal - any elder may be removed from the office of elder for valid cause. Discipline of elders must be consistent with the standards set forth in Matthew 18:15-20 and I Timothy 5:17-19. The elder body will determine specific procedures for removal. These procedures may be altered, amended, repealed or restated by an elder resolution. The elders shall have the sole authority to remove another elder. A written notice of proposed removal of any elder shall be given to such elder at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting at which an action to affect such removal is to be taken to ensure that the elder is given a reasonable opportunity to defend himself. The elder shall have the opportunity to answer the charges in the presence of his accusers, but shall not be present during the discussion and vote on his removal. Such removal shall take place only upon and after an unanimous vote of the elders at such meeting. The elder under consideration for removal shall not have voting rights. Pending the investigation, the elder will also be temporarily removed from duties.

Article 2.01.h Elder Meetings

Regular meetings of the elders shall be held in a location that the elders deem on a minimum once a month basis. Special or additional meetings may be held upon request of the elders or by written request of 50% or more members of the congregation. Notice of all special meetings shall be announced to the congregation during the regular Sunday service at least two weeks prior to the date of the meeting except in the case of emergency.

Article 2.01.i Definition of Quorum and Passing Vote

A majority of the voting elders shall constitute a proper quorum. A quorum is required for all voting matters. A passing vote must be equal to or greater than two-thirds (66%) of the elders present.

Article 2.02 Officers

Article 2.02.a Officers

Officers of the church shall be members of the elder body. The officers shall consist of a chairman, vice chairman, secretary, treasurer and such other officers as deemed necessary by the elders. One elder may hold no more than two of these positions simultaneously.

Article 2.02.b Election

The officers of the church shall be elected by a passing vote of the elders, and shall serve one (1) year

Terms. Officers may be re-elected.

Article 2.02.c Removal of Officers

Any officer may be removed from office for valid cause. A written notice of proposed removal of any officer shall be given to such officer by the secretary or by an elder appointed by the chairman at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting at which an action to affect such removal is to be taken to ensure that the officer is given a reasonable opportunity for defense. The officer shall have the opportunity to answer the charges in the presence of his or her accusers, but shall not be present during the discussion and vote on his or her removal. Removal of an officer requires a unanimous vote of the elders. The officer in question will not have voting rights. Vacancies in the officers of the church by reason of death, resignation or otherwise, shall be filled by election of the elders as soon as is reasonably possible. Until such time, an elder may be appointed by the remaining elders to serve in such vacancy.

Article 2.02.e Duties

Article 2.02.e.1 Chairman

The chairman is responsible for leading the elder body under the rule of Jesus and acting as first among equals. He has the responsibility of helping train the elders who train additional leaders. He shall perform such duties as are incumbent on such officer, including making certain that all orders and resolutions of the elders are carried into effect. The chairman shall have oversight of the elder meetings as defined in Article 2.01.g. The chairman's duties shall include, but not be limited to: establishing meetings, setting the agenda, presiding over the meetings, etc. The Chairman shall also serve as one of the two designated Trustees of the church (along with the Treasurer) and will serve as an agent between the congregation and the state for all legal requirements. As a trustee, he will exercise the corporate power of the church under the direction and control of the elders, including but not limited to exercising (on behalf of Grace Point Ministries) all legal documents and discharging any other duties as required by state law.

Article 2.02.e.2 Vice Chairman

The vice chairman shall, in the absence of a duly appointed chairman, or in the event of the chairman's inability or refusal to act, perform the duties and exercise the powers of the chairman and shall perform other duties as the elders shall from time to time prescribe.

Article 2.02.e.3 Secretary

The secretary shall record (written and digitally recorded) or cause to be recorded all minutes of the elders meetings and all votes taken at such meetings. He shall have charge of the official records and seal of the church, and he shall perform such other duties as are incident to the office of secretary and as may be assigned by the elders or the chairman, under whose supervision he shall be. This office can be occupied by a non-elder but must be a covenant member at Grace Point.

Article 2.02.e.4 Treasurer

The treasurer shall serve as the overseer of the financial operations of the church. Church staff members shall be accountable to the treasurer for the management of the financial aspects of the church. He shall perform such other duties and have other responsibilities as may be assigned to him

from time to time by the elders. The Treasurer shall also serve as one of the two designated Trustees of the church (along with the Chairman) and will serve as an agent between the congregation and the state for all legal requirements. As a trustee, he will exercise the corporate power of the church under the direction and control of the elders, including but not limited to exercising (on behalf of Grace Point Ministries) all legal documents and discharging any other duties as required by state law. This office can be occupied by a non-elder but must be a covenant member at Grace Point.

Article 2.03 Deacons

Article 2.03.a Number

The elders shall have the sole authority to appoint the number of deacons to meet the permanent and short-term needs of the church.

Article 2.03.b Qualifications and Definition

Deacons must meet the qualifications as specified in I Timothy 3:8-13. In addition to the minimum qualifications given in the Scriptures they must be, covenant members, men or women, who fully subscribe to the Statement of Faith and are actively involved in ministry of the church.

Article 2.03.c Election Term

Once a man/woman is appointed to the elder body as a deacon, he/she is expected to serve in this capacity for a minimum of three years.

Article 2.03.d Responsibility

The responsibility of the deacons is not explicit within the biblical text. The overall responsibility of the deaconate is to assist the elders in their service and equipping functions.

Article 2.03.e Vacancies

If a deacon is removed from service, either voluntarily or involuntarily, the appointment of a successor deacon is under the sole authority and discretion of the elders.

Article 2.03.f Appointments and Confirmation

The elders shall have the sole authority to appoint deacons. The elders shall communicate prospective deacons to the church no less than twenty-one (21) days prior to an elder vote. All comments received from the church will be considered prior to any final decision by elders.

Article 2.03.6 Removal of Deacons

Any deacon may be removed from office for valid cause. A written notice of proposed removal of any deacon shall be given to the secretary and chairman of the elders at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting at which an action to affect such removal is to be taken to ensure that the deacon is given a reasonable opportunity for defense. The deacon shall have the opportunity to answer the charges in the presence of his or her accusers, but shall not be present during the discussion and vote on his or her removal. Removal of a deacon requires a passing vote of the elders. Pending the investigation, the deacon will be temporarily removed from duties.

Vacancies in the deacons of the church by reason of death, resignation or otherwise, shall be filled by

election of the elders at their discretion in accordance with Article 2.04.e

Article 2.04 Church Staff

The elders may, at their discretion and in accordance with Article 2.01.h, create positions necessary for the day to day operations of the church. These positions will be directly accountable to the Pastor, or, in his absence, the Chairman of the Elders. These positions may be but are not limited to: Associate Pastor, Church Secretary and Church Finance Clerk. Qualifications, job descriptions, compensation and authority associated with the positions shall be determined by the elders.

ARTICLE III Women in Ministry

Elders are male only positions. All other church ministries which are not in direct conflict with I Timothy 2:11-3:5 are open to qualified women.

For more information see attached Complementarianism article in the appendix.

ARTICLE IV Church Discipline

Discipline within the church will be enforced following the general outline of Matthew 18:15-17. View the Church Discipline Guidelines.

ARTICLE V Ordinances

Article 5.01 Baptism

A person who receives Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith, who professes Him publicly at any worship service, and who indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord, shall be received for Baptism. Baptism shall be by immersion in water as an act of worship during any service. Baptism shall be as soon as possible after the public confession of faith.

Article 5.02 Communion

Communion is a holy time of worship when we corporately come together as one body to remember and celebrate what Christ did for us. Members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, commemorate the death of Jesus Christ and anticipate His second coming. In observing Communion we are remembering Christ and all that He has done for us in his life, death and resurrection:

And when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." 1 Corinthians 11:24

ARTICLE VI Annual Independent Financial Audit

The church shall engage an independent certified public accountant to conduct an annual audit, in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America, of the financial records of the church. The auditor will express an opinion on the financial statements presented in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. These financial statements are to include, but not be limited to, a statement of financial condition, a statement of activity, a statement of cash flows and disclosures.

ARTICLE VII Indemnification

Article 7.01 Powers of the Church

Article 7.01.a Power to Indemnify and Hold Harmless

The church may indemnify and hold harmless to the full extent permitted by applicable law each person who was or is made a party to or is threatened to be made a party to or is involved (including, without limitation, as a witness) in any actual or threatened action, suit or other proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative or investigative, and whether formal or informal (hereinafter a “proceeding”), by reason of the fact that he or she is or was an elder, officer, employee or agent of the church or, being or having been such an elder, officer, employee or agent, he or she is or was serving at the request of the church as an elder, officer, employee, agent, trustee or in any other capacity of another corporation or of a partnership, joint venture, trust or other enterprise, including provision of services with respect to any employee benefit plans, whether the basis of such proceeding is alleged action or omission in an official capacity or in any other capacity while serving as an elder, officer, employee, agent, trustee or in any other capacity, against all expenses, liability and loss (including, without limitation, attorneys’ fees, judgments, fines, ERISA excise taxes or penalties and amounts to be paid in settlement) actually but reasonably incurred or suffered by such person in connection therewith. Such indemnification may continue as to a person who has ceased to be an elder, officer, employee or agent of the church and shall inure to the benefit of his or her heirs and personal representatives.

Article 7.01.b Power to Enter into Contracts

The church may enter into contracts with any person who is or was an elder, officer, employee and agent of the church in furtherance of the provision of this article and may create a trust fund, grant a security interest in property of the church, or use other means (including, without limitation, a letter of credit) to ensure the payment of such amounts as may be necessary to effect indemnification as provided in this article.

Article 7.01.c Limitation of Powers

Indemnification shall be limited to reasonable expenses actually incurred by the person in connection with the proceeding under this article if the person is found liable to the church or is found liable on the basis that he or she improperly received personal benefit. Indemnification shall not be made in respect to any proceeding in which the person has been found liable for willful or intentional misconduct in the performance of his or her duty to the church.

Article 7.02 Indemnification of Elders, Officers, Employees and Agents

Article 7.02.a Elder

The church shall indemnify and hold harmless any person who is or was an elder of the church, and pay expenses in advance of final disposition of a proceeding, the full extent to which the church is empowered.

Article 7.02.b Officers, Employees and Agents

The church may indemnify and hold harmless any person who is or was an officer, employee or agent of the church, and provide advancement of expenses to the full extent to which the church is empowered, or to any lesser extent that the elders may determine.

Article 7.02.c Character of Rights

The rights to indemnification and advancement of expenses conferred by or pursuant to this article shall be deemed contract rights, but only to the extent applied to the elders of the church. For all other categories of persons eligible to potentially receive indemnification under this article, the rights to indemnification and advancement of expenses shall be deemed contract right only to the extent approved by the elders of the church in its sole discretion but not otherwise.

Article 7.02.d Rights Not Exclusive

The right to indemnification and advancement of expenses conferred in this article shall not be exclusive of any other right which any person may have or hereafter shall acquire under any statute, provision of the Articles of Incorporation, the constitution or bylaws of the church, agreement of disinterested elders, or otherwise.

Article 7.03 Insurance

The church may purchase and maintain insurance, at its expense, to protect itself and any elder, officer, employee or agent of the church or who, while an elder, officer, employee or agent of the church, is or was an elder, officer, partner, trustee, employee or agent of another corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust, employee benefit plan or other enterprise against any expense, liability or loss.

Article 7.04 Survival of Benefits

Any repeal or modification of this article shall not adversely affect any right of any person existing at the time of such repeal or modification.

Article 7.05 Severability

If any provision of this article or any application thereof is determined by any court, tribunal, administrative agency or other competent supervisory authority, to be invalid, unenforceable or contrary to applicable law or public policy, the remainder of this article, or the application of such provision to persons or circumstances other than those as to which it is held invalid, unenforceable or contrary to applicable law, shall not be affected thereby and shall continue in full force and effect.

Article 7.06 Prohibition Against Private Inurement

In the event and to the extent any part or whole of this article is determined to be in violation of the United States Federal Income Tax laws with regard to prohibition against "private inurement" (as such term is understood in the context of United States exempt organization taxation rules) by a final non-appealable order of a court of competent jurisdiction or by any United States Internal Revenue Service action which the Church in its discretion determines not to challenge in a judicial forum, any such offending provision or if the whole of this article is determined as offending the prohibition against private inurement then the whole of this article shall be deemed ineffective so as to prevent any negative United States Federal Income Tax law consequences to the church or its tax-exempt status.

Appendix

Statement on Biblical Authority

At the center of Christian faith and practice stands the belief that God has spoken to the world in the person and work of Jesus Christ, which is accurately and authoritatively revealed in the Christian Bible (“the Bible,” “Scripture” or “the Scriptures”). The Bible is the inspired, inerrant and sufficient Word of God and is thus the ultimate authority for life, faith and morals. Though the various theological statements of the Church reflect succinct summaries of biblical boundaries, it is the Bible itself to which we are in ultimate submission.

Members have the responsibility and opportunity to engage Elders and Church staff on areas of theological disagreement. However, membership carries with it the implicit understanding that the Central Elders shall function as the interpretive authority on biblical meaning and application for the purpose of Church doctrine, practice, policy and discipline.

Statement on Marriage and Sexuality

It is the biblical position that marriage involves the union of one man and one woman in permanent sacred fidelity. Though various cultures and customs have evolving definitions of marriage, it is God alone who has ultimate authority to prescribe and describe the marital relationship (**Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:1-9, Mark 10:1-12**).

Furthermore, sexual intimacy is only properly exercised and pursued within the confines of this marital relationship. Sexual immorality, defined as any sexual activity outside of the boundaries of the sacred marital relationship between one man and one woman, is clearly and expressly prohibited by the Lord (**Matthew 15:19, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, 1 Thessalonians 4:3, Hebrews 13:4**).

As a consequence, the Church regards any and all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography or even lustful intent toward such, as sinful and ultimately unsatisfying. Moreover, the Church also regards as sinful the intent or desire to surgically alter one’s biological sex to a different sex. Since the body is a creation of God, the Church holds sexual identity to be biologically determined, and associated gender norms are to be observed as appropriate to biblical standards. Disagreement with one’s biological sex only leads to spiritual confusion and emotional chaos (**Genesis 1:27, Romans 1:26-32, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11**).

In order to preserve the function and integrity of the Church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical example to the Church Members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by the Church in any capacity or united to the Church in membership should abide by and agree to this “Statement on Marriage and Sexuality” and conduct themselves accordingly.

Though sinful sexual expression is egregious (as is all sin), the gospel provides redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (**1 Corinthians 6:9-11, Ephesians 2:1-10, Titus 3:3-7**).

Furthermore, there is a difference between temptation and unrepented sin. Jesus was tempted in all ways as we are, yet He never sinned. Members, employees, volunteers and attendees of the Church wrestling with all manner of sexual temptation will find a Church ready to point them to Jesus and join with them to fight for their obedience to Christ. Jesus called the weary and heavy-laden to Himself. As a church desiring to follow Christ fully, the Church will be a safe place for men and women fighting sexual temptations of all kinds. For those fighting temptation and repenting of sin, the Church will provide love, care and direction ([Matthew 11:28-30](#), [1 Corinthians 10:13](#), [Hebrews 2:17-18](#), [Hebrews 4:14-16](#)).

The Church's Statement on Marriage and Sexuality does not provide grounds for bigotry, bullying or hate, as we fully believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect and dignity, regardless of his or her lifestyle. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated as sinful and are not in accordance with the Scriptures nor the doctrines of the Church.

The Church's Statement on Marriage and Sexuality is based upon God's will for human life as conveyed to us through the Scriptures, upon which this Church has been founded and anchored, and this shall not be subject to change through popular vote; referendum; prevailing opinion of Members or the general public; influence of or interpretation by any government authority, agency, or official action; or legal developments on the local, state, or federal level.

Complementarianism

The Bible teaches that God created two complementary 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 Faith, we believe that men and women are absolutely equal in essence, dignity and value and are complementary by divine design. Gender does not merely represent a social construct but, instead, represents a reality present in every human from birth. Men and women are not interchangeable.

From the opening pages of Scripture, we find that God, in His wisdom and providence, created two complementary sexes for our good and His glory. 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 yet complementary 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 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 ([Gen. 2:18-25](#); [1 Cor. 11:2-16](#), [14:33-35](#); [Eph. 5:22-33](#); [Col. 3:18-19](#); [1 Tim. 2:8-15](#); [1 Pet. 3:1-7](#)).

To reflect God's beautiful design 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 Grace Point. This paper seeks to describe that vision by explaining what we believe Scripture teaches about gender complementarity as it relates to women in ministry at Grace Point.

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 (**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**). 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 (**1 Cor. 12:4-31**). 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 proclaim the gospel and make disciples of all nations—suffers.

Second, in light of the belief that 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 siblinghood 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. This uniquely Christian disposition 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 brothers and sisters, united in Christ, not subordinates. 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.

Third, we affirm that equal involvement in the church between men and women does not entail interchangeable involvement. Although men and women are portrayed as equals throughout Scripture, we believe the Bible reserves the office of elder/pastor specifically for qualified men.^[1] 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 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 certain 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 glad submission to the elder body, and that all should be in glad and 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.