

Gender Diversity in the Church

PASTOR MIKE YODER

BETTER

TOGETHER

Core Value #7

We celebrate unity in diversity.

After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb.

They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.

The irony is that human autonomy feels like we have gained significance, when in fact we have lost sanity. Freedom from God feels exhilarating. But it's the exhilaration of skydiving without a parachute.

John Piper

The complementarity and teamwork of men and women in the church are a blessing to all and an adornment of the Gospel.

Men and Women as God's Creation

**God made every human being in His image —
either male or female — with great value.**

*So God created mankind in His own image, in the image of God
He created them; male and female He created them.*

God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

Both genders are needed, especially in marriage, to carry out God's original commission to the human race.

**Men and women are interdependent but not interchangeable.
The one feature that shapes life as much or more than any
other — our biological sex — was God's choice.**

Kevin DeYoung

Our gender (or sexual) design is not purely physiological or incidental to our identity, but central to it.

Both men and women are sinners as a result of the Fall. Its effects extend to our gender particularities.

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

To the woman He said, “I will make your pains in childbearing very severe; with painful labor you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.”

To Adam He said, “Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat from it,’ “Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life.

It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field.

By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.”

**Eve sinned not just as a person, but as a women and a wife;
Adam sinned as a man and a husband.**

The history of fallen humanity includes a history of distorted gender and all manner of dishonoring relationships between the genders.

Discrimination against women is a grievous sin and a dishonor to God in whose image women are created.

Alexander Strauch

Yet in our zeal to right the wrongs committed against women, we must not forget that God designed male-female distinctions in order for the sexes to beautifully complement each other and to exercise different functions in society.

Alexander Strauch

God's salvation is offered equally to men and women, since we are equally valuable and equally needy in God's eyes.

There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Jesus' valuing of women is unmistakable. In a culture in which women were devalued and often exploited, it underscores their equal status before God and His desire for personal relationship with them.

Rebecca McLaughlin

Men and Women in God's Church

The body of Christ inherently involves the inclusion and participation of both men and women, who now regard and relate as brothers and sisters in the same family.

No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

“In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.

Even on My servants, both men and women, I will pour out My Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.”

Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.

1 Corinthians 12:7

**God calls, gifts, and uses both genders
in essential ways to form His people and
empower them for His mission.**

God gives complementary roles to husbands and wives. In Christian marriages, the display of this differentiation highlights the Gospel, including Christ and the Church.

Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord.

Ephesians 5:22

For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, His body, of which He is the Savior.

Ephesians 5:23

Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her

Ephesians 5:25

*to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water
through the Word,*

and to present her to Himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

If we make husbands and wives interchangeable, we lose the Gospel message that marriage is designed to preach, and we do violence to the word of life to which women have been drawn for millennia.

Rebecca McLaughlin

A healthy local church depends on each man and woman to participate, sacrifice, and use their gifts for the good of others. How we treat others is influenced by their gender.

Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance.

Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good.

*Then they can urge the younger women to love their husbands
and children,*

*to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind,
and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign
the Word of God.*

Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled.

In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness

and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.

The biblical pattern of male leadership is never an excuse for ignoring women, belittling women, overlooking the contributions of women, or abusing women in any way.

Kevin DeYoung

The Bible teaches that primary spiritual authority and responsibility in the local church is given to elders who, by God's explicit directive, are biblically-qualified men.

Therefore I want the men everywhere to pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or disputing.

I also want the women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, adorning themselves, not with elaborate hairstyles or gold or pearls or expensive clothes,

but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God.

A woman should learn in quietness and full submission.

1 Timothy 2:11

I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man; she must be quiet.

1 Timothy 2:12

For Adam was formed first, then Eve.

And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner.

But women will be saved through childbearing — if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.

Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,

People tend to read the Scriptures through the lens of the culture in which we live.

When we live out God's design in the home and the church, especially in our gender identity and callings, we make the Gospel most attractive and display God's brilliance.

The **complementarity** and **teamwork** of men and women in the church are a **blessing** to all and an **adornment** of the Gospel.