

## **JICC: POSITION PAPER**

### **Role Of Women In Leadership**

The purpose of this document is to support teachings that have been given publicly and bring clarity to roles and responsibilities within the life of the church family -- specifically how those apply to the roles of women in our church. Our hope is that clarity brings unity, and that unity brings strength to the ministry that takes place in and through the entire body. We want this same clarity to inform the churches that we plant.

The following four sections from our Statement of Faith give specific support.

#### **The Bible**

We believe the Holy Bible to be the inspired, inerrant Word of God and is authoritative and sufficient for faith and practice. We believe it is the standard by which all truth, understanding, knowledge, and counsel is evaluated.

2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21

#### **Mankind**

God made Man – male and female – in His own image as the crown of His creation so that man might have fellowship with Him. But through rebellion and disobedience to God’s command, man entered into sin and suffered the just condemnation of physical and spiritual death. As a result, all people are separated from God by their sin and are lost and without hope apart from salvation in Jesus Christ.

Genesis 3:1-6; 2 Samuel 12:15-23; Psalm 51:5; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:23, 5:12, 6:23; Ephesians 2:1-3; Galatians 3:10

#### **Marriage**

Both man and woman were created in God’s image, equal as persons and distinct in their manhood and womanhood. These distinctions are ordained by God as part of the created order and should be honored and celebrated within the Church. Biblical Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime; such uniting serves to fundamentally and profoundly depict the relationship of Christ and His Bride, the Church. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the Church, laboring sacrificially to provide for, protect, and lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the Church willingly submits to the headship of Christ.

Genesis 1:27; Genesis 2:18; Ephesians 5:23-32

#### **The Church**

We believe the very nature and purpose of God is revealed in His Church. Jesus established the Church as His body in the earth. We believe the universal Church consists of all who submit in faith to Jesus’ lordship, while the local church is a body of believing people, gathering regularly, observing baptism and the Lord’s Supper, and walking in covenant relationship with each other before God. We believe that Jesus Christ, who is the Head of the Church, has granted authority and given gifts to His body, including apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers to equip and mature it to do His work in the earth.

Acts 2:41-42; 2 Corinthians 8:5; Matthew 28:19; Matthew 26:26-29; 1 Corinthians 11:26; 1 Corinthians 12:14; Ephesians 4:11-16.

## Affirmations and Denials

We affirm that both men and women have been created in the image of God and are called to reflect his glory in the earth. We deny that either gender has been given priority or is designated greater honor or dignity.

We affirm the purpose in God's design of men and women as distinct and not interchangeable. Gender does not merely represent a social construct but displays the divine design of a Creator. God intends for these distinctions to be displayed through men and women in complementary ways. Role distinctions that are given in Scripture do not come from cultural definitions of masculinity and femininity but instead reinforce the grace of God over all of creation for the sake of human flourishing.

We affirm that both men and women are necessary for the health of the local church and the spontaneous expansion of the church. We look to Paul and his team of coworkers and the leaders of these churches as examples for this. A healthy church is one where contributions are made by all and where a diversity of gifts are practiced for the building up of the body. This can only be accomplished through healthy brother and sister relationships within a growing church family.

We affirm that the role of elders within the church is reserved for men. This role reflects the call of men to lead within the home and reinforces the call for the local church to operate like a household. We deny that reserving this position for men diminishes the importance of women within the church or limits their ability to use their gifts -- including gifts of teaching, shepherding, administration, and leadership.

We affirm the call for members of the body of Christ to submit to each other out of reverence for Christ. We deny that the teaching of headship within the Scriptures implies that all women are to be subject to all men.

We affirm the special call husbands and wives have to reflect Christ and His church through the husband loving and laying down his life for his wife as Christ does the church and the wife submitting to her husband as the church does to Christ.

Within the church, the call for members of the church family to submit to the elders is given equally to men and women.

Outside of the church, we affirm that both men and women are free to exercise gifts of leadership in positions of authority. The wisdom of Scripture calls disciples of Jesus to do this *with and through* their families and not *at the expense of* or *inconsiderate of* their families. This wisdom is to be considered by both men and women alike when making decisions about roles in which they serve both inside and outside of the church.

We affirm singleness as a gift from God and the call for single members of the body of Christ to reflect the glory of God using the gifts God has given to them. We deny that single men and women must be married in order to participate in a meaningful way to the health and expansion of the local church. We also deny any implication that all single women are to be subject to all men. We believe that singleness provides a distinct environment to

practice gifts within the church -- giving undivided attention to the Lord that is free from concerns of spouse and children. (1 Corinthians 7:32-35) Because of this, single women in positions of leadership in the church - including unmarried, divorced, and widowed -- have a unique freedom to serve within the body.

**Some Application Points: Women in the role of teaching & leading**

[The foundation of this topic is outlined in the sermon series “1 Timothy: Household of God” on October 24 and 31, 2021]

Older women have been given a specific call in Scripture to teach young wives and mothers how to love their families well. (Titus 2:3-5) This ministry happens in formal and non-formal ways across our church, and we affirm how vital it is to the health of both individual families and our church family.

We have women with gifts such as shepherding and administration who serve in team leadership throughout the church (i.e. children’s ministry, church administration, hospitality, worship, and prayer). In these roles, they give instruction in their particular areas for which they are responsible.

Because Sunday gatherings are the main time where the church is assembled, the majority of the teaching should come from the elders of the church. This is a key way that the elders exercise their responsibility of bringing oversight, instruction, and shepherding care to the body. With this in mind, the elders of each local church have the freedom to invite anyone they choose to teach the body. This may include a member of the church body or a guest speaker from outside of the church.

In the corporate gathering, we believe that presiding over the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper is reserved for the elders of the church. Within this elder oversight, both men and women are free to assist with baptisms and in serving communion.

Outside of Sunday mornings, in environments such as classes, workshops, retreats, or conferences, men and women in the church may be called on by the elders to teach.