

Main Street Baptist Church  
"Policy on Women in Ministry"

Greetings Church Family,

After seeking the Lord's wisdom in prayer and a careful search of the Scriptures, the elders at MSBC are unanimous in the following affirmation for a "Policy on Women in Ministry."

Our aim in creating this policy is three-fold: 1) to clarify our stance on women in the ministry of a local church within the formal corporate worship and in informal settings, 2) to assist our church members in their spiritual growth and Scriptural confidence in this area of doctrine, and 3) to decrease the risk of erroneous assumption about our belief and practice in this crucial area of theological distinction.

We in no way demean nor diminish the dignity of women in our church, signified by both genders being created in the image of God (i.e., Genesis 12:26-27, 2:18, and many other Scriptures referenced in addendum at the end of this document). We believe God has made us male and female by His sovereign and wise design, equal in value, and yet uniquely different in certain pre-ordained roles.

When we intentionally live out these differences together, we glorify God and beautify the ministries of His church. Therefore, we want to provide a Biblical framework for all the men and women in our church to pursue Christian ministry without fear or theological compromise.

### **Formal Corporate Worship**

1. It is permissible for women to participate in various elements of our corporate worship, given that all corporate worship services are well-ordered and planned out by our presiding elders. Only the elders or other qualified men shall exercise authority of preaching, teaching, and leading in corporate worship, at the same time women may participate in several other areas of service including, but are not necessarily limited to:

- Music (musical instruments and/or accompaniment)
- Singing
- Testimony
- Prayer
- Scripture Reading

2. All who serve in an official capacity during the various elements of our corporate worship, both male and female, should be active church members, growing in maturity in Christ, living above reproach, and submissive to the elders.

There may be situations where a nonmember may participate in our worship service with the express approval of the elders.

### **Informal Settings**

1. Both men and women, who teach or lead both genders, must meet biblical qualifications, exhibit godly character, and demonstrate giftedness in the specific areas of service. (Note: Teachers must meet the criteria set forth by the Education Team with final approval by the Elders.)
2. It is permissible for a woman to teach within the context of mix-gender participants outside of the formal corporate worship service. A woman teacher will teach under the authority and approval of the Elders and be a part of team-teaching (together each week) with an Elder or under the headship of her husband. (Note: Team-teaching is not co-teaching, nor alternating teaching where the teaching is divided up into separate weeks.)

Examples of acceptable teaching include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- Core Doctrines Classes
- Specific Workshop (i.e. Evangelism)
- Specialized Training (i.e. Discipleship)
- Small Groups
- Inductive Bible Studies
- Panel Discussions

3. The posture, demeanor, and delivery must be done in humility without an authoritative approach to avoid the appearance of usurping of authority over elders and other men.

The Lord has called us “to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:1-3) “And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him” (Colossians 3:17).

Pastor Dale Dubose

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Pastor Jay Poole

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Pastor Jack Green

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January 28, 2024  
(Addendum Included)

## MSBC Policy on Women's Ministry of the Church

### Addendum

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There are two critical aspects the elders took under consideration of women's ministry directly related to the role of male headship: (1) What Scriptural mandates must be considered during the function of the formal worship service with its variety of forms? and (2) Is there a biblical framework that encourages the function of women with freedom or limitation of form in informal settings outside of the formal worship service?

The mandate of "function" (roles by gender) and "form" (limitation or freedom to minister under scriptural parameters) guided our process.

1. There are considerable Scriptural mandates during the function of the formal worship service that identify male headship of overseer/elder in preaching, teaching, and leading of the congregation. (1 Timothy 2:11-12; 3:1-7, 14-15)

There is an original biblical precedent that must be followed as Christ is the Head of the church and the elders of the church must be men in submission to the Head, Christ. With this directive set by Scripture of male headship in corporate worship, we, the elders, believe this pertains to preaching, teaching, and leading the congregation.

Paul's Key Principle: "I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, <sup>15</sup> if I delay, **you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God**, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth." (1 Timothy 3:14-15)

#### **Wives Silent and Submissive (1 Timothy 2:11-12)**

In the context of corporate worship women are not to be teachers, but quiet learners (DeYoung, 2021)

"Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. **I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man**; rather, she is to remain quiet." (1 Timothy 2:11-12)

<sup>13</sup> For Adam was formed first, then Eve; <sup>14</sup> and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. (1 Timothy 2:13-14)

<sup>33</sup> For God is not a God of confusion but of peace. As in all the churches of the saints, <sup>34</sup> **the women should keep silent in the churches**. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission, as the Law also says. <sup>35</sup> If there is anything they desire to learn, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church. (1 Corinthians 14:33-40)

## Women's Freedom to Prophecy (1 Corinthians 11:5)

<sup>3</sup> But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God. <sup>4</sup> Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head, <sup>5</sup> but every wife who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, since it is the same as if her head were shaven. (1 Corinthians 11:3–5)

Paul was writing to Ephesus (1 Tim. 1:3), which was the home church of Priscilla and Aquila (see Acts 18:18–19, 21). It was in this very church at Ephesus that Priscilla knew Scripture well enough to help instruct Apollos in AD 51 (Acts 18:26). Then she had probably learned from Paul himself for another three years while he stayed at Ephesus teaching “the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27; cf. v. 31; also 1 Cor. 16:19). In fact, Paul himself had lived in Priscilla and Aquila’s home during his time at Ephesus (Acts 18:2–3)! No doubt many other women in Ephesus had followed her example and also had learned from Paul. Although they later went to Rome, we find Aquila and Priscilla back in Ephesus at the end of Paul’s life (2 Tim. 4:19), about AD 67. Therefore, it is likely that they were in Ephesus in AD 65, about the time Paul wrote 1 Timothy (about fourteen years after Priscilla had helped instruct Apollos). Yet Paul does not allow even well-educated Priscilla or any other well-educated women at Ephesus to teach men in the public assembly of the church. The reason was not lack of education, but the order of creation which God established between men and women. (Grudem, 1994)

Women are permitted and even encouraged to prophecy and pray in church (1 Cor. 11:5), but they are to do so in a manner and with a demeanor that support the created order. (Schreiner, 2008)

Piper and Grudem (2016) in their comprehensive document on “*50 crucial questions: An overview of central concerns about manhood and womanhood*” assist in clarifying this issue with Question 22:

### Question #22 **Can’t a pastor authorize a woman to teach Scripture to the congregation and then continue to exercise oversight while she teaches?**

It is right for all the teaching ministries of the church to meet with the approval of the guardians and overseers (i.e., elders) of the church. However, it would be wrong for the leadership of the church to use its authority to sanction the de facto functioning of a woman as a teaching elder in the church, only without the name. In other words, to biblically affirm a woman teaching, two kinds of criteria should be met. One is to have the endorsement of the spiritual overseers of the church (i.e., elders). The other is to avoid contexts and kinds of teaching that put a

woman in the position of functioning as the de facto spiritual shepherd of a group of men or to avoid the kind of teaching that by its very nature calls for strong, forceful pressing of men's consciences on the basis of divine authority. These actions would violate what Paul says in 1 Timothy 2:12. A pastor cannot rightfully give permission to do something that Scripture forbids, for pastors do not have higher authority than Scripture itself. (Piper and Grudem, 2016)

Since the worship leader embodies the exercising of authority over the congregation it is a position of male headship. Bob Kauflin further explains,

given the importance of congregational singing, our worship leaders are fulfilling a very important role. They aren't simply leading "music"—we desire them to direct people's hearts, minds, and wills to the truths that they're singing. Their role includes elements that involve a degree of teaching, leading, and pastoring, which we believe the Bible says are male roles in the church. For that reason, all our worship leaders are men. (Kauflin, 2007)

2. There is significant evidence in the freedom of form for women to minister in informal settings outside of the formal worship service (see Scripture references below).

There is a preponderance of evidence throughout the Gospels, Acts, and Epistles of the important role that women exhibit in ministry.

### **Scriptural Foundation:**

#### **Anna the Prophetess—Luke 2:36-38**

<sup>36</sup> And there was a prophetess, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years and had lived with *her* husband seven years after her marriage, <sup>37</sup> and then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers. <sup>38</sup> **At that very moment she came up and *began* giving thanks to God, and continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.**

#### **Samaritan Woman—John 4:25-26,28-30, 39-42**

<sup>25</sup> The woman \*said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ); when that One comes, He will declare all things to us." <sup>26</sup> Jesus \*said to her, "I who speak to you am *He*."

<sup>28</sup> So the woman left her waterpot, and went into the city and \*said to the men, <sup>29</sup> **“Come, see a man who told me all the things that I *have* done; this is not the Christ, is it?”** <sup>30</sup> They went out of the city, and were coming to Him.

<sup>39</sup> From that city **many of the Samaritans believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, “He told me all the things that I *have* done.”** <sup>40</sup> So when the Samaritans came to Jesus, they were asking Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. <sup>41</sup> **Many more believed because of His word;** <sup>42</sup> **and they were saying to the woman, “It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world.”**

### **Women at the Tomb—Luke 24:8-12**

<sup>8</sup> And they remembered His words, <sup>9</sup> and **returned from the tomb and reported all these things to the eleven and to all the rest.** <sup>10</sup> Now they were **Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the *mother* of James;** also the **other women with them were telling these things to the apostles.** <sup>11</sup> But these words appeared to them as nonsense, and they would not believe them. <sup>12</sup> But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he \*saw the linen wrappings only; and he went away to his home, marveling at what had happened.

### **Mary Magdalene—John 20:15-18**

<sup>15</sup> Jesus \*said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?” Supposing Him to be the gardener, she \*said to Him, “Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away.” <sup>16</sup> Jesus \*said to her, “Mary!” She turned and \*said to Him in Hebrew, “Rabboni!” (which means, Teacher). <sup>17</sup> Jesus \*said to her, “Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but **go to My brethren and say to them, ‘I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.’”** <sup>18</sup> **Mary Magdalene came, announcing to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord,” and *that* He had said these things to her.**

### **John Mark’s Mother and Rhoda—Acts 12:11-17**

<sup>11</sup> When Peter came to himself, he said, “Now I know for sure that the Lord has sent forth His angel and rescued me from the hand of Herod and from all that the Jewish people were expecting.” <sup>12</sup> And when he realized *this*, he went to **the house of Mary, the mother of John who was also called Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying.** <sup>13</sup> When he knocked at the door of the gate, **a servant-girl named Rhoda came to answer.** <sup>14</sup> **When she recognized Peter’s voice, because of her joy she did not open the gate, but ran in and announced that Peter was standing in front of the gate.** <sup>15</sup> They said to her, “You are out of your mind!” But she kept insisting that it was so. They kept saying, “It is his angel.” <sup>16</sup> But Peter continued knocking; and when they had opened *the door*, they saw him and were amazed. <sup>17</sup> But motioning to them with his hand to be silent, he described to them how

the Lord had led him out of the prison. And he said, “Report these things to James and the brethren.” Then he left and went to another place.

### **Lydia, Seller of Purple—Acts 16:14-15**

<sup>14</sup> **A woman named Lydia**, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul. <sup>15</sup> And when she and her household had been baptized, **she urged us, saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and stay.”** And **she prevailed upon us.**

### **Priscilla and Aquila—Acts 18:24-28**

<sup>24</sup> Now a Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by birth, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the Scriptures. <sup>25</sup> This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus, being acquainted only with the baptism of John; <sup>26</sup> and he began to speak out boldly in the synagogue. **But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.** <sup>27</sup> And when he wanted to go across to Achaia, the brethren encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him; and when he had arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace, <sup>28</sup> for **he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, demonstrating by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.**

Piper and Grudem (2016) again provide clarity and validity to the issue of the freedom of form for women to minister in informal settings outside of the formal worship service with the following answer to this question:

#### **Question #21 Are you saying that it is all right for women to teach men under some circumstances?**

When Paul says in 1 Timothy 2:12, “I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet,” we do not understand him to mean an absolute prohibition of all teaching by women. Elsewhere, Paul instructs the older women to “teach what is good, and so train the young women” (Titus 2:3–4), and he commends the teaching that Eunice and Lois gave to their respective son and grandson Timothy (2 Tim. 1:5; 3:14). Proverbs praises the ideal wife because “she opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue” (Prov. 31:26). Paul endorses women prophesying in church (1 Cor. 11:5) and says that men “learn” by such prophesying (1 Cor. 14:31) and that the members (presumably men and women) should be “teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs” (Col. 3:16). Then, of course, there is Priscilla at Aquila’s side correcting Apollos (Acts 18:26).

It is arbitrary to think that Paul had every form of teaching in mind in 1 Timothy 2:12. Teaching and learning are such broad terms that it is impossible that women not teach men and that men not learn from women in some sense. There is even a way that nature teaches (1 Cor. 11:14) and a fig tree teaches (Matt. 24:32) and suffering teaches (Heb. 5:8) and human behavior teaches (1 Cor. 4:6; 1 Pet. 3:1).

If Paul did not have every conceivable form of teaching and learning in mind, what did he mean? First, it helps to identify the setting; here the church is assembled for prayer and teaching (1 Tim. 2:8–10; 3:15). Second, perhaps the best clue is the coupling of “teaching” with “exercising authority over men.” We would say that the teaching inappropriate for a woman is the teaching of men in settings or ways that dishonor the calling of men to bear the primary responsibility for teaching and leadership. This primary responsibility is to be carried by the pastors or elders. Therefore, we think it is God’s will that only men bear the responsibility for these offices. (Piper and Grudem, 2016, underlined added for emphasis)

## **Nine Women are Named in Romans chapter 16.**

**Here is just a couple of examples:**

### **Phoebe—Romans 16:1-2**

<sup>1</sup>I commend to you **our sister Phoebe, who is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea**; <sup>2</sup>that you receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and that you help her in whatever matter she may have need of you; for she herself has also been a helper of many, and of myself as well.

### **Prisca (Priscilla) and Aquila—Romans 16:3-5**

“Greet **Prisca and Aquila**, my **fellow workers** in Christ Jesus, who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks but all the churches of the Gentiles give thanks as well. Greet also the church in their house.” (Romans 16:3-5)

“The churches of Asia greet you. **Aquila and Prisca greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.**” (1 Corinthians 16:19)

**However, the Bible Encourages Other Kinds of Teaching and Speaking by Women.**

#### **(1) Acts 18:26: Explaining the Bible in informal settings.**<sup>61</sup>

In discussing 1 Timothy 2:12, it is important to read it in the light of other passages that view some kinds of teaching by women in a positive way. For example, we read in Acts 18:26 concerning Apollos: “He began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him and explained to him the way of God more accurately” (Acts



18:26). The word translated “explained” (Greek *ektithēmi*) is plural and it indicates both Aquila and Priscilla were involved in explaining the way of God more fully to Apollos.

This incident is viewed with approval in the book of Acts, for there is no indication that anything was wrong with this conduct as it fits the ongoing narrative of the spread of the gospel to many gentile cities. *Therefore, this passage gives warrant for women and men to talk together about the meaning of biblical passages and to “teach” one another in such settings.* A parallel example in modern church life would be a home Bible study where both men and women contribute to the discussion of the meaning and application of Scripture. In such discussions, everyone is able to “teach” everyone else in some sense, for such discussions of the meaning of the Word of God are not the authoritative teaching that would be done by a pastor or elder to an assembled congregation, as in 1 Timothy 2. Another modern parallel to the private conversation between Priscilla and Aquila and Apollos would be the writing of books on the Bible and theology by women. When I read a Bible commentary written by a woman, for example, it is as if the author were talking privately to me, explaining her interpretation of the Bible, much as Priscilla talked to Apollos in Acts 18:26. Reading a book by a woman author is much like having a private conversation with a woman author. The woman author does not have teaching authority over an assembled congregation or a group of men. (Grudem, 1994, Italics added for emphasis)

### **Many Other Women Specifically Named in the New Testament**

Nympha—Colossians 4:15

“<sup>15</sup> Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea and also **Nympha and the church that is in her house.**”

**Philips’ daughters—Acts 21:8-9**

<sup>8</sup> On the next day we left and came to Caesarea, and entering the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, we stayed with him. <sup>9</sup> **Now this man had four virgin daughters who were prophetesses.**

**Philemon and Apphia—1:1b-3**

To Philemon our beloved *brother* and fellow worker, <sup>2</sup> and to **Apphia** our sister, and to Archippus our fellow soldier, and **to the church in your house:** <sup>3</sup> Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Women’s participation in the edifying presentation of the gospel and vocal prayer in the congregation were a normal part of early church life (1 Cor 11). (Kaiser, et. al., 2010)

Upon reading 1 Timothy, one becomes immediately aware that the integrity of the Christian faith is at stake. There are some in the church who teach false doctrines and are occupied with myths and other speculative ideas which militate against sound and sincere faith (1 Tim 1:3–4). Some have wandered into vain debates, seeking to be teachers without understanding and discernment (1 Tim 1:6–7). There is throughout a concern for maintaining and guarding the truth of the faith (1 Tim 1:19; 2:4–7; 3:14–16; 4:1–3, 6–7, 16; 6:1–5, 12).

We do not know the identity of the false teachers or the full content of their teaching. From the instructions given, we can conclude that the false teaching led to a disregard for proper decorum and practices in the church (1 Tim 2:8–15) as well as to a rejection of the institution of marriage (1 Tim 4:3). In light of this last aspect of the heretical teaching, it is noteworthy that particular attention is directed to young widows (in 1 Tim 5:9–15), who are urged to marry, have children and manage their homes (1 Tim 5:14). When these normal, socially prescribed roles and functions are neglected or rejected, these women are prone to “gossiping” and being “busybodies, saying things they ought not to” (1 Tim 5:13).

On the basis of this data, at least two reconstructions of the situation in Timothy’s congregation at Ephesus are possible: (1) the women in the church at Ephesus were the primary advocates and promoters of the heretical teachings which were upsetting accepted patterns of congregational and home life; (2) the women in the church had been particularly influenced by the heretical teachers. Such a situation in the Ephesian church is addressed in 2 Timothy 3:6–9, where women, the special targets of those “who oppose the truth” (2 Tim 3:8), become “unable to acknowledge the truth” (2 Tim 3:7).

In either case, Paul’s restrictive word in 1 Timothy 2:11–12 must be understood within a context where false teaching is at issue. The general prohibition against all those who “teach false doctrines” (1 Tim 1:3) is now focused specifically on the women who have fallen prey to such false teaching or who are involved in its promulgation.

The admonition of 1 Timothy 2:11—“learn in quietness and full submission”—is thus directed at the women who, on the basis of the heretical teaching, have become loud voices, strident advocates of ideas that are upsetting the ordered contexts of congregational and home life. ***The “submission” enjoined on them is most likely a submission to the elders in the church, who are guardians of the truth and ordered worship.*** The prohibition against their teaching is occasioned by their involvement in false teachings. Finally, the prohibition against “authority over a man” (1 Tim 2:12) must be understood within the context of their rejection of the authority of others, probably the male leaders in Ephesus

whose orthodox, authoritative teaching is being undermined by their heretical views. The unusual Greek word used carries primarily the negative sense of “grasping for” or “usurping authority.” Thus, the restriction of women’s place and participation in the life and ministry of the church at Ephesus is most probably “directed against women involved in false teaching who have abused proper exercise of authority in the church (not denied by Paul elsewhere to women) by usurpation and domination of the male leaders and teachers in the church at Ephesus.”<sup>3</sup> Paul goes on to ground this instruction in reflections on selected passages from Genesis. (Kaiser, et. al., 2010, Italics and bold added for emphasis)

Paul’s prohibition lead me to think that the regular teaching in mixed Sunday school classes and the regular leading of a mixed small group should be done by men, Of course, there are all sorts of possible variables at play—the topic, the way the content is delivered, who else might be leading or teaching—but as a general rule we have men teach the mixed adult classes to our church and men (or couples) lead mixed small groups. (DeYoung, 2021)

### **Spiritual Gifts of Grace are Not Gender Specific—1 Peter 4:10-11; Romans 12:3-8**

<sup>10</sup> As each one has received a *special* gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. <sup>11</sup> **Whoever speaks**, *is to do so* as one who is speaking the utterances of God; **whoever serves** *is to do so* as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Third, there are no sex symbols on the ministry gifts listed in the Bible. It does not say, “gift of teaching—male; gift of helps—female.” In other words, women have the same gifts for ministry to the body of Christ that men do.

Sixth, whatever Paul may have meant by the “women be silent” passages, he certainly did not mean that they should have no ministry in the church. This is clear for several reasons. For one thing, in the same book (of 1 Corinthians), Paul instructed women on how they should pray and prophesy in the church, namely, in a decent and orderly way (cf. 11:5). Further, there were also times when all the men were to be “silent” as well, namely, when someone else was giving an utterance from God (cf. 14:28). Finally, Paul did not hesitate to use women to assist him in the ministry, as is indicated by the crucial role he gave to Phoebe in delivering to its destination the great epistle to the Romans (Rom. 16:1).

Seventh, when understood in context, the “silence” passages are not negating the ministry of women, but are limiting the authority of women. Paul asserts that women were not permitted “to have authority over a man” (1 Tim. 2:12). Likewise, he follows his exhortation to “keep silent” by reminding them to be “submissive”

(1 Cor. 14:34). Of course, men too were under authority and needed to submit to the headship of Christ over them (1 Cor. 11:3). Indeed, the ultimate proof that there is nothing degrading about being submissive is that Christ, who was God in human flesh, is always submissive to the Father, both on earth (Phil. 2:5–8) and even in heaven (1 Cor. 15:28). That male headship and leadership is not simply a cultural matter is evident by the fact that it is based on the very order of creation (1 Cor. 11:9; 1 Tim. 2:13). Thus, elders are to be men, “the husband of one wife” (1 Tim. 3:2). This, however, in no way demeans or diminishes the role of women, either in the family or in the church. The fact that men cannot have babies is not demeaning to their humanity or their role in the family. It is simply that God has not granted them this function, but a different one. (Geisler, 1992)

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