

Men and Women in Ministry at Mountain View Community Church

1. We believe that both men and women are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27); are on equal spiritual footing before their Savior, Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:28); are recipients of the same spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:7); and are believer-priests responsible for doing the work of the ministry (1 Peter 2:9).
2. We believe that God calls both men and women to deploy every resource at their disposal to further the mission of the church.
3. We believe that men and women are given distinctive, complementary roles by God, and that the ultimate purpose of these roles is to help men and women work in harmony at fulfilling the mission of the church.
 - a. Men are to embrace a benevolent responsibility to lead, provide for and protect women in a humble and loving manner.
 - b. Women are to embrace a freeing responsibility to affirm, receive and nurture strength and leadership from worthy men in a humble and respectful manner.
4. We believe these roles are ordained by God as part of the created order. The Fall of man into sin did not create these roles (Genesis 2-3; 1 Corinthians 11:2-12; Ephesians 5:22-6:4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Timothy 2:8-15; 1 Peter 3:1-7).
5. We believe these God-ordained distinctions should express themselves in the ministries of the men and women at Mountain View.

Men are to provide servant-leadership for the local church family.
Women are to affirm and nurture the leadership of men, and co-labor with them.
6. In keeping with these patterns, we believe that some ministries are restricted to men. At Mountain View, men will serve as elders (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9), as team leaders of co-ed adult ministry teams¹, and as the primary teachers and leaders of co-ed adult² community groups and co-ed adult home groups (1 Timothy 2:11-14).
7. We believe the scriptures place the emphasis on what women can do rather than what they cannot do in ministry, and we seek to model this emphasis at Mountain View. In the New Testament alone, we see women active in prayer and prophesy, teaching children, discipling other women, performing works of service and charity, serving as a deaconess³, spreading the gospel through

¹ Including the deacon board

² We interpret adults to refer to post high school age

³ It is particularly important to examine Paul's usage of terms for deacon in 1 Timothy chapter 3. Clearly 1 Timothy 3:8-10 refers to qualifications for deacons (the Greek here is "diakonos") but scholars debate who is in view in 1 Timothy 3:11. The NIV and NKJV in verse 11 translate the Greek word, *gunaikas*, as "wives," thus indicating this refers to qualifications for wives of deacons. The NASB and TNIV however translate *gunaikas* as "women," thus indicating qualifications for women deacons or deaconesses. Both translations (wives or women) of this Greek word are possible but we believe that "women" is the preferred reading because:

(1) Paul introduces the women mentioned here in the same fashion he introduced the men in 1 Timothy 3:8, by using the word *likewise*. In 3:1-7, Paul lays out the qualifications for elders, and in 3:8 Paul says likewise there are similar qualifications for deacons. The *likewise* in 3:11 suggests that the qualifications for men who are deacons also apply to women deacons.

(2) If Paul were speaking of wives of deacons he could have made this very clear by adding *of deacons*. By leaving the word *women* without any modifier, it seems to imply that he was speaking of women in general, not just the wives of deacons. (Footnote continued at the bottom of the next page.)

evangelism, and affirming, strengthening and co-laboring in the ministry with their husbands (Luke 8:1-3; Acts 1:14, 9:36, 18:24-28; Romans 16:3-4; 1 Corinthians 11:5; Philippians 4:3; 1 Timothy 5:3-16; 2 Timothy 1:5, 3:15; Titus 2:3).

8. We believe that the cause of Christ is best served in a congregation when both men and women are free to use their gifts within the guidelines set forth in God's Word. Maturity is cultivated in the body by encouraging both men and women to be strong in ways appropriate to their gender.

The Elders of Mountain View Community Church

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(3) 1 Timothy 3:1-7 does not list qualifications for wives of elders. Since elders are held to higher standards than deacons, it seems odd that Paul would list qualifications for deacon's wives when he did not for elder's wives.

(4) In Romans 16:1 Phoebe is stated to be a diakonon ("deacon") of the church in Cenchrea, and

(5) Women in New Testament times clearly fulfilled many of the functions of the deacon (1 Tim. 2:10; 5:9-10; Acts 9:36).

For the above reasons we believe the Scriptures affirm the office of deaconess. We desire to develop the ministry of mercy, watch-care, and benevolence in both men and women at Mountain View.

For more information regarding the issue of women deacons see Chapter 11 in Recovering Biblical Manhood & Womanhood, edited by John Piper and Wayne Grudem and Connection Extra: Women in the Church, Biblical Data Report put out by Dallas Seminary, 1997. Copies of Connection Extra article can be obtained from the church office.