

Leadership at Mountain View Community Church **An Elder Response Regarding Women in Leadership**

At MVCC the elders strive to do all things in accord with the precepts of Scripture. This applies to not only what we believe, but how we seek to lead the church. According to Scripture (1 Timothy 5:17) and our Constitution (Article 7 Government), the elders are to direct the affairs of the church¹, and while having “full authority to make decisions regarding the church”, shall do so “with consideration to the needs and desires of the congregation.” At MVCC we take leadership very seriously. Not only do we want the right people whom God has called to be in leadership at MVCC, but we also, as leaders, want to lead well.

We are aware that our culture influences us in many ways as Christians, and as leaders. For this reason we seek to lead first and foremost in accord with what the Scriptures teach. This is one reason why we have written a position paper, Men and Women in Ministry at Mountain View, in which we state the types of ministries we see women doing in Scripture, yet state that we believe the Bible clearly teaches that the office of elder and pastor is restricted to godly men (see 1 Timothy 3:1-7). In our day and culture, many women clearly possess the training, skills, and leadership abilities to lead in a church setting. However, the Bible teaches that the office of elder is not open to a woman. One of the key roles of an elder is teaching. The Bible emphasizes that women should not teach² men, but can teach women and children (see 1 Timothy 2:11-14; Titus 2:3-4).

We want to be clear, however, that we do not believe that the Bible restricts women from all forms of leadership. For that reason, we have sought to ask mature women to serve in positions of leadership in all of our ministries of the church. While we desire men to be the primary leaders of our leadership

¹ According to Article 7, the highest human authority of the church rests in the congregation (i.e., the members). The congregation, however, has delegated authority to the elders to lead. The congregation votes on items such as the appointing or dismissing of elders and deacons, the calling, ordaining and dismissing of pastors, and the approval of the annual budget.

² A few observations should be made here:

- 1) The Greek word used by Paul in 1 Timothy 2:12 that is translated “teach” is didasko. When Aquila and Priscilla taught Apollos in Acts 18:24-26 the Greek word used there was not didasko but ekthemi, which means to set forth or explain. Thus the NIV and NAS say that Aquila and Priscilla “explained” to him a more accurate way. Didasko however means to “instruct” and in 100 usages of the word in the New Testament, 97 refer to public instruction or teaching of groups.
- 2) Paul’s prohibition of women teaching men is in the setting where the church is gathered for corporate prayer and teaching (1 Tim. 3:15)
- 3) Paul couples the word “teaching” with “having authority over men.” In 50 Crucial Questions, John Piper and Wayne Grudem say, “It seems then that the teaching that is 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.”
- 4) Piper and Grudem also say, “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 men not learn from women *in some sense*. There is 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 Peter 3:1).”
- 5) At MVCC we do not categorically prohibit women from teaching men. While we reserve the preaching of God’s Word to men only, as well as the office of elder to men only (primarily because the primary function of the office is that of teaching and exercising spiritual authority) we do allow women to teach the Bible in co-ed settings such as Adult Education Classes or Home Group. However we want a man to be the primary leader and teacher of those groups because again we believe this affirms the calling of men to bear the primary responsibility of teaching and leading.

teams (see position paper, [Men and Women in Ministry at Mountain View](#)), we also desire women to serve on our leadership teams to bring their calling, skills, and gifting to these ministries. We have set up a team leadership structure at MVCC. With the exception of the elder board, women serve on almost all of the leadership teams³. A few of the teams are currently composed only of women. We also desire women to be involved in other significant ministries. For this reason we have hired women for ministry staff positions (e.g., Director of Children's Ministry) and administrative positions (e.g., Office Manager, Secretary, Administrative Assistant), and we have recruited and encouraged women to be involved in a number of ministry capacities (e.g., Connections Team, First Serve) where they can truly serve God with their gifts and talents.

Most decisions in the church are made at the leadership team level, where women are "at the table", and then those decisions are approved of by the elder board when appropriate. Often, feedback and recommendations are provided by the elder board to the leadership team about the decision to be made, but it would be very rare for a decision to be overruled. When making decisions, or providing feedback on leadership team proposals, we first and foremost seek God in prayer and in His Word for His leadership. Secondly, we seek the input of others who may or may not share our opinion and belief on everything. We do this in many ways, including: (1) seeking the input of men and women in staff reviews, (2) seeking the input of the membership by holding town meetings where there is no official vote but instead is a time for honest sharing and dialogue, (3) seeking the input of our wives concerning difficult decisions when appropriate, (4) seeking for input and recommendations from our staff, (5) seeking input from other elected leaders in the church - the deacon board and the treasurer, and (6) providing an open forum for input on any subject by encouraging people on Sunday morning to write down comments, suggestion, prayer requests, etc. on their communication card.

Our prayer is that at Mountain View we will lead in a biblical manner, combining truth with love, and considering the needs and desires of our entire church, both men and women, young and old. We ask that those who call MVCC their home church hold us up in prayer that we might lead as the Lord Jesus would have us lead.

The Elders of Mountain View Community Church
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³ As of this writing, these leadership teams include: Deacon Board, Worship Planning Team, Praise Team Leadership Team, Missions Committee, Women's Ministry Leadership Team, Children's Ministry Leadership Team, Student Ministries Core Staff, Prayer Ministry Team, Home Group Leadership Team, Connections Team, and New Facility Planning Team.