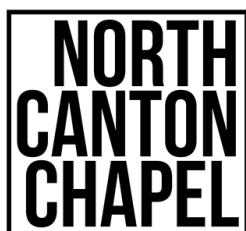


BROTHERS + SISTERS

GENDER, LEADERSHIP, AND MINISTRY AT NCC

A CONDENSED SUMMARY



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Introduction

We acknowledge that the discussion of gender roles—particularly that of women in ministry—is multifaceted and challenging for a variety of reasons. The scriptural passages that have bearing upon these issues are themselves complex, with nuanced biblical and cultural contexts that are layered and frequently disputed. Also, the convictions that each of us hold are shaped by a variety of church cultures, perspectives, traditions, and personal histories.

Because of this complexity, this conversation demands empathy, humility, and care. Sadly, women have often been sidelined in church contexts. Extreme examples include toleration and coverup of abuse. However, the more common (and often more hidden) loss is experienced in the minimization of their voices, roles, and the subtle disrespect of their viewpoints and contributions.

While the conclusions that NCC holds are important doctrinal matters, they are not dogma-level issues. Any discussion of these issues must be robed in humility and grace with an intentional posture to hear one another well. We believe Christians are free to disagree on some of the finer points of application as long as we hold to the confession that men and women are equally valuable image-bearers, intentionally designed with purpose and dignity, both necessary to faithfully engage the work to which Jesus has called us.

“Men and women are equally valuable image-bearers, intentionally designed with purpose and dignity, both necessary to faithfully engage the work to which Jesus has called us.”

At NCC, we want our posture to resemble that of New Testament scholar Craig Blomberg:

“All of us who speak and write on gender roles would do well to begin ‘I could be wrong’ and end every address with the caveats, ‘I respect the right of fellow evangelicals and evangelical churches to come to different conclusions, and I will cooperate with them rather than combat them for the larger cause of Christ and his kingdom, which so desperately needs such unity.’”¹

It’s our hope that such tenderness, thoughtfulness, kindness, and genuine humanity are reflected in the tone of both our doctrine and the practice of that doctrine. We want to be as generous as scripture will allow us to be, submitting ourselves to God’s good design and, ultimately, His written Word.

¹ Craig Blomberg, “Women in Ministry: A Complementarian Perspective,” in *Two Views on Women in Ministry*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan 2005, 123.

SUMMARY + PRACTICE

Because we at NCC believe that clarity is kindness, we want to be as clear, generous, thoughtful, and helpful in articulating how our understanding of gender shapes our practices. We welcome anyone seeking additional clarity to download the expanded **Brothers + Sisters** document which includes important scriptural examination, study, and additional resources. We also encourage anyone toward a personal conversation with our pastoral staff or a member of NCC's elder board.

Position Summary

At NCC, we hold to a generous complementarian position and aspire toward a posture of healthy and intentional mutuality. We succinctly summarize our position as: “equal *to*, different *from*, dependent *on*.”

Like many evangelical churches, we recognize that a theological confession of complementarianism does not necessarily result in a uniform complementarian practice.²

We expect that some who call NCC home will see our practice as too conservative. Others will see it as too liberal. We ask for unity, support, and kindness as we seek to join God's effort in building His church.

We want The North Canton Chapel to be a church where men and women thoughtfully reflect God's image as we give mutual witness to His divine design. The expanded version of this paper provides a theological vision for human flourishing that's rooted in Scripture, informed by church history, and attentive to our context.³

Church Staff, Boards, Gathering, and Groups

While many staff and leadership positions are open for women and men, we choose to reserve the roles of “pastor” and “elder” for men. Women and men serve alongside each other as deacons and members of our missions board. Every role in the Sunday morning worship gathering is also open to both men and women except the task of preaching. Women and men are equally invited to baptize, host, pray, lead worship, and distribute the elements of communion, but the task of officiating communion is reserved for pastors.

We welcome men and women to lead equally in all group opportunities with the exception of gender-specific groups (men lead men-only groups, women lead women-only groups). Mixed-gender groups can be led by either a man *or* a woman, or both a man *and* a woman in co-leadership roles according to their gifts. We welcome women and men to lead and teach in mixed-group training environments (discipleship classes, membership classes, mission team training, etc.) including areas of biblical exposition, doctrine, and theology.

² *The Role of Women at The Village Church, condensed version.*

³ For a fuller explanation of position, please refer to **Brothers + Sisters** available at nccchapel.com.