

MEN AND WOMEN

SERVING GOD IN DPC

Aim of this paper

This paper aims to explain why our church utilises a complementarian approach with men and women; and to clarify what this looks like in some different contexts within our ministries. A key purpose of this paper is to provide clarity, so that DPC women in particular have confidence to utilise their gifts across various layers of our church. Both men and women from DPC have shared in writing this.

The church thrives when men and women actively work together to grow followers of Christ Jesus. Our church is filled with men and women choosing to serve our God. You would have noticed within DPC, that some roles have both men and women serving, while other roles are specific to men or women. This can be met with a variety of responses, even from within our church. It is good to care about how we serve God. It is good to consider why we do things the way we do.

The DPC staff team and elders welcome further conversation around this. As we (both men and women) read this, let us continue to seek to be growing followers of Christ Jesus. Let's first see an overview of what the Bible says about men and women.

Biblical Foundations

The Bible teaches that when God created humanity, he wonderfully created male and female in his own image and it was very good (Genesis 1:27-28). We believe that both men and women are created equal as God's image bearers in ruling the world on his behalf. There is equality in both dignity and value. The Bible also teaches that God created men and women to be different from one another while remaining equal in worth. There was an order: Adam was to lead his wife and Eve was to help Adam as they worked together to rule the world under God. God's creation mandate to man in the garden is 'to work it and take care of it' (Genesis 2:5) and in the woman he makes a 'helper suitable for him' (Genesis 2:18). Eve being made to be Adam's helper doesn't diminish her value or dignity. They are called to work together to 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it' (Genesis 1:28). This demonstrates the goodness of the complementary relationship of men and women.

As male and female, humans are (1) equally created in the image of God, (2) to have different roles and responsibilities and (3) to work together.

Men and women both sin and fail to live under God's rule and are deserving of death and judgement (Romans 3:10-12, Hebrews 9:27).

Human relationships continue to be marred by our sinful hearts and our relationships with one another are therefore fractured (Genesis 3:16). We see that in our world today in all sorts of ways including in abuse, marginalisation and a distortion of gender differences. We have all rejected God as ruler and desperately need God's grace.

The Bible is clear that all who repent and believe in Jesus are brought into the family of God (Romans 3:22-24). Whether male or female, in Jesus, Christians are equally heirs adopted into God's family. As a church, we want to see human relationships flourish through the new hearts we have in Christ.

In Christ men and women are one (Galatians 3:26-29) yet the distinction of male and female in Christ still remains. In the New Testament the Genesis pattern is applied to husbands and wives (e.g, Ephesians 5:22-33), and reflected in the church for some specific roles of teaching and spiritual leadership (e.g, 1 Timothy 2-3), but it is not directly applied in general society.

The Bible demonstrates redeemed men and women with changed hearts working together as 'co-workers' for the gospel (see Romans 16:3-5 for one example). It also demonstrates men and women working in a way that embraces our gendered relationships as a good gift from God. The order of creation is reflected in the church, with particular doctrinal teaching and leadership roles being given to specific qualified men under the authority of King Jesus (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:7).

How do we work out where men should take the lead, so as to reflect this Biblical pattern of men leading? Where do we try to have men and women working together to bring our particular strengths as men and women? The Bible gives a practical model here. Firstly, each church is to have qualified men responsible for spiritual oversight of the church as a whole. (1 Timothy 2-3). Secondly, a woman should not teach the Bible to men in a way that is exercising authority over them (1 Timothy 2). Within this, men and women teach and admonish one another, working together as co-workers of the gospel (Colossians 3:16).

Biblical Outworkings at DPC

The way we see qualified men responsible for spiritual oversight of the church as a whole at DPC is through our Elders/Overseers/Ministry Area Leaders. The main place we see teaching with authority at DPC is in the preaching of the Scriptures in our main church meetings. There are other places such teaching may occur such as leading growth groups, giving a devotion at a ministry team meeting, or giving a youth group talk, depending on the context and manner in which it is done. We will need to think through these kinds of occasions and what kind of

teaching we are engaged in. We want an environment where, once we agree on the principles, people can apply them to the many and varied areas of church life.

We hope by outlining some examples below, this provides further clarity so that men and women will confidently continue to serve God together at DPC.

Male specific roles (spiritual oversight of the church family)

- Elders and Overseers
- Leaders of our main overall Ministry areas e.g. Reach Dubbo and Serve.
- Teaching the Bible to our Sunday meetings where there are both men and women

Better Together

The wonderful biblical pattern given to us is that men and women ought to be serving together in most areas of church life. We need each other and in God's kindness and wisdom he has men and women serving alongside one another to help us all continue in the faith of Christ. Below are some examples of areas of church life where we want to have men and women serving together.

- Leading Growth Groups (men lead men's groups, women lead women's groups, men lead and women co-lead mixed groups)
- Kidschurch teachers
- Mob youth group leaders
- Serving communion
- Leading our ministry teams
- Serving in our ministry teams
- As an MC in our church meetings
- Leading singing and music
- Praying in our meetings
- Reading the Bible in our meetings
- Staff
- Volunteer Staff
- Leading a devotion at a team meeting
- Ministry trainees
- Running team meetings
- Committee of Management
- Training (eg. general leadership principles for team leaders)
- Leader or Members of ad-hoc groups, eg 10 year strategic planning etc.

Some areas we specifically encourage women specifically to serve

- Preach the Bible to women. e.g. Women's days
- Meet one to one with other women, reading the Bible and praying together.
- Women set aside to be available for pastoral support in each church congregation

Further discussion

If you would like to ask questions about this paper, please chat to your growth group leader, your ministry team leader, or any of the staff ministry team.

Here are some helpful books if you'd like to read more:

- Embracing Complementarianism - Graham Beynon and Jane Tooher
- Word-Filled Women's Ministry - Gloria Furman and Kathleen B. Nielson

Serving together at DPC

There are so many opportunities to serve at DPC for both men and women. We each have unique gifts, be that up front/behind the scenes, creative/strategic, people oriented/administrative, or anywhere in between. By serving alongside one another as men and women we can more effectively be growing followers of Christ Jesus.

While this summarised outline is newly distributed, our Biblical convictions in this matter are not new. We hope and pray that this has been a helpful paper in order for us to continue to passionately love God and serve him together.

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