



# God's Intention for Men and Women



What are we doing & Why?

## *Why are we doing this?*

**NOT** because...

- ...we want comfort
- ...we want to be popular
- ...some other church did it
- ...some are clamoring for it
- ...we have an agenda
- ... we are bowing to culture

**Because**...

- ...we want to follow Jesus
- ...we believe study and growth are important – even when it's uncomfortable
- ...we want to honor all people as God does
- ...there are real impacts to our theology
- ...our leadership is unanimous & aligned that is it important
- ...we must be a witness to culture



# *Is it really worth it...?*

## Yes...

- ...Jesus calls us to faithfulness, not comfort
- ...an essentially element of Christian community is dealing with disagreement in love
- ...we follow the Spirit especially when it's difficult
- ...our primary objectives are faithfulness & love
- ...our objective is faithfulness, not numbers

## No...

- ...it is upsetting to people to discuss difficult biblical topics
- ...it's unlikely we will all agree
- ...some people may leave depending on what we do
- ...shouldn't unity be our top priority?
- ...it may limit our growth

# What have we done so far?

- 2 years ago, CAT/Strategic Planning Process/Congregational Assessment identified the critical areas of challenge & growth for the congregation
- From this, the “Inclusion” priority team was born
- This group of committed servants from Meadowbrook have labored for over a year to diligently and prayerfully plan how our efforts in this area should move forward

- **Small groups**: study together Scot McKnight’s book on interpreting Scripture, *Blue Parakeet*
- **David Jackson**: Reminded us/refreshed us on Meadowbrook’s history in this journey
- **Dr. Ken Cukrowski**, Dean of the College of Biblical Studies & Assc Prof of NT at ACU: Deeper study of the texts & principles in Scripture on this matter
- **Ben Fike**: Sermons setting the stage for our congregational discussions
- **Bible Classes**, special gatherings, Q&A sessions, etc. to ensure all voices are respected and heard as part of this process. More details to come as these specific plans are developed.

# What have we done so far?

## NEXT STEPS:

- 2 years ago, CAT/Strategic Planning Process identified the critical areas of challenge & growth for the congregation
  - From this, the “Inclusion” priority team was born
  - This group of committed servants from Meadowbrook have labored for over a year to diligently and prayerfully plan how our efforts forward
- After completion of the classes, elders develop & present updated statement on the Role of Women at Meadowbrook to the congregation**
- Congregational period of contemplation & prayer during which no new practices or changes are introduced**
- After this time, the elders may choose to respectfully, slowly, appropriately introduce changes within the framework of the congregational statement**
- Small groups: study together Scot McKnight's book on interpreting Scripture, Blue Parakeet*
- David Jackson: Reminded us/refreshed us on Meadowbrook's history in this journey*
- Dr. Ken Cukrowski, Dean of the College of Biblical Studies & Assoc. Prof. of NT at ACU: Deep study of the texts & principles in Scripture on this matter*
- Ben Fike: Sermons setting the stage for our congregational discussions*
- Bible classes, special meetings, PSA sessions, etc. to ensure all voices are respected and heard as part of these specific plans are developed.*

# What have we done so far?

## NEXT STEPS:

After completion of the classes, elders develop & present updated statement on the Role of Women at Meadowbrook to the congregation

**AT THIS TIME WE ARE NOT CONSIDERING THE ROLES OF ELDER OR SENIOR MINISTER**

After this time, the elders may choose to respectfully, slowly, appropriately introduce changes within the framework of the congregational statement

# How did we get here?

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- At Meadowbrook, we are constantly seeking God's will to grow and change as He leads us
- Our movement is founded in a commitment to return to God's Word and to challenge the "traditions of men" where they are not supported in Scripture
- We live in a time of unprecedented cultural change and serious decline in Christian influence and impact in our society – we must, moreso than ever, scrutinize and challenge ourselves against the Word of God to ensure we are creating no traditions, man-made rules or unbiblical obligations that obscure or mar the gospel of Christ we present to society

# Meadowbrook & the Role of Women - 1999

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## *Women's participation in worship*

Decision: We will support the position that women can be involved in:

- committees and ministry roles
- congregational scripture reading and prayer done in unison
- “women voices only” parts in congregational singing
- dramatic presentations, including scripture
- speaking and reading in classes
- commenting during “family time”

***We will reevaluate our tradition periodically.*** We also request that the worship committee publish in the order of worship when both men and women will be involved in events such as dramatic presentation or interviews. For example: “dramatic presentation....male and female roles” or list the names of those involved. **The decision was unanimous.**

# Meadowbrook & the Role of Women - 2008

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- ***What we have committed to thus far.***

- 1999 - Women can serve in committee and ministry roles, can participate in congregational scripture reading and prayer done in unison, “women voices only” parts in congregational singing, dramatic presentations [including scripture], speaking and reading in classes, commenting during “family time” [a Sunday night congregational time]
- 2008 - Women can speak to the congregation in personal testimony or descriptions and discussions of women’s ministry or events. “This list is not all inclusive”
- 2008 or 2009 - Women have co-taught a mixed adult Sunday school class with non-husband co-teacher.

- ***Where is all this going?***

- Frankly, we don’t know where it will take us. Maybe it is better not to know, not to have our minds made up because it will bias further study. That’s what we’re encouraging – STUDY. We must be people of the “book” and people who own our convictions. It is only the right thing to do to - investigate, study, pray, & consider what the Scriptures teach and what others have learned from their study.
- We’ll learn things other generations did not know. We will see solutions more clearly. We’re not any smarter than other generations, but using the principles they taught us, we learn more and see things more clearly because we have better tools. Each generation learns things the one before didn't know, and passes that on to the next. And, we have learned that it is all right to question what we are being taught.

# Why are we doing this?

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- There is strong agreement among the leadership that continuing this conversation is critical both to deepen our understanding of God's Word and will and to ensure we are carrying the Gospel - and not the traditions of Man - into the world where God has placed us
- The Eldership in unanimity believes this question should be studied as part of our plan and vision for our future
- ***It is the right thing to do.***

# What do we hope will happen?

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- **We will learn & grow:** Our first and foremost objective is to be faithful, Christ-like students of God's will - seeking in all that we say and do to reflect the heart of the Father. We believe this includes properly discerning Scripture and applying it to our lives - both individually and corporately.
- **We will submit to God's will together:** We want to be open to God's leading in these matters. We will be going through this study as a church together. Your elders will be in constant prayer and study for how to continue to lead.
- **We will love each other:** We are committed to conducting all of this in a spirit of gentleness, patience, grace and kindness - seeking "first to understand; then to be understood." We commit to listening, praying and wrestling with you on these difficult matters - not as overlords giving commands, but as fellow sojourners.
- **We will move forward into God's future planned for us**