

WOMEN IN MINISTRY & ORDINATION

PABC allows full freedom for women to minister in our church in terms of both function and office. We affirm and celebrate the New Testament teaching on male headship (Eph. 5:22-32) as a recognition that God often gives men a gift to lead, but we do not see this as precluding gifted women from taking leadership roles.

The New Testament balances its teaching on headship and its culturally related restrictions upon women in ministry (1 Cor. 11:3-16; 14:33-35; 1 Tim. 2:11-15) in the following ways:

- by Jesus' treatment of women (see John 4 as an example),
- by calling for a mutuality of submission in all relationships (Eph. 5:21)
- by listing significant female leaders in the early church (see Acts 18:24-28, 21:9,10; Rom. 16:1-3, 7; Phil, 4:2-3), and
- by giving a theological basis for the elimination of gender distinction in Christ and in the advancing Kingdom of God (Acts 2:17-21 and Gal. 3:28).

The ministry of women in the Old Testament as prophetesses and national leaders also support the overall teaching of the New Testament on women's breadth of ministry opportunities. At this time in our church life we believe that women may and should serve when the qualifications are met in any office of the church, **excluding Senior Pastor or Governing Elders.**

Our normal desire is for married couples to serve together in ministry, enhancing and complementing each other's gifts. However, if God prepares any man or woman for a leadership role, single or married, and if this person is recognized by our church as having an appropriate level of character, gifting, knowledge and experience, we will rejoice to affirm his or her calling into PABC ministry. This is in line with the New Testament principle that the recognition of God's gifting is the final criterion for release into ministry. By recognizing that the New Testament mentions significant female leaders, and by attesting to the giftedness of women today, we draw this conclusion and **we will also extend to women, when it is appropriate the legal right of licensure and the church ordination into ministry.**

The issue of whether or not to allow women to work freely in all capacities of ministry has sometimes been divisive in parts of the Christian Church. Serious interpreters of Scripture have defended conflicting positions. It is our judgment that this issue, though extremely important, falls into the category of doctrines that are not to be considered "essential" in terms of determining a basis for fellowship. In other words, we recognize that some churches will hold different views and we will respect them and gladly work with them for the purposes of the Kingdom.