

Questions and Discussion Points -- Elders Class – July 7, 2019

1. How might having both female and male elders benefit CMR?
 - Female perspective on such issues as marriage, child rearing/teaching, relationships, worship styles, event planning;
 - Better coverage of counseling and visitation;
 - Familiarity with female experiences in our culture (divorce, single moms, sexual assault);
 - Tapping in to 50% more of our congregational resources for leadership – not automatically eliminating 50% of members from consideration;
 - Providing encouraging examples [and not discouraging] to our girls;
 - Not offending prospective members outside our church family.
2. Is “representational” eldership something to pursue?
 - Cover diversity of viewpoints and allowing those affected by decisions to have a say in shaping them – ex. of deacons in Acts 6 [all Greeks to deal with Greek problem];
 - But this idea can be carried too far (splintering of congregation into identity groups, rather than emphasis on unity).
3. What about wives and husbands serving together at same time?
 - Positive reason would be spouses being able to share with one another the stresses and confidential concerns for congregation/individual members;
 - Negative concern would be placing too much demand on elders’ family and marriage for both spouses/parents to be so deeply involved in congregation;
 - Negative concern would be risk of dominance by two outspoken spouses over a relatively small group of elders (4-7); or, alternatively, two partners in disagreement.
 - Anti-nepotism business models recognize this.
4. How do we decide when to allow cultural/societal norms to influence how we interpret and apply Scripture?
 - Legitimate concern re “slippery slope” of abandoning biblical principles to accommodate worldly attitudes – e.g., sexual immorality; marriage; greed; recognizing and calling out sin;
 - But also, we must acknowledge that because of changes in society/culture, we no longer practice or condone explicit biblical directives concerning: slavery, speaking in tongues, women wearing veils, greeting one another with kisses, praying with upheld hands, forbidding the wearing by women of gold or braided hair; foot washing;
 - Consider the example in Acts 15:10, 19 (church compromise so as to “not make things more difficult” for the Gentiles who are turning to God);
 - Compare Gen. 17:13 [circumcision is an “everlasting covenant”] and Acts. 16:3 [Paul having Timothy circumcised because of the Jews] with Gal. 2:3 [Titus not circumcised] and Gal. 5:2 [“If you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all”];
 - Compare Acts. 21:17-26 [Paul’s joining in Jewish purification rites to show Jewish leaders that he is living in obedience to the Law] with Gal. 3 [returning to practice the works of the Law is foolish, cursed].