



Presbyterian Youth Victoria

Gender Ministry Policy

Purpose

To give clarity to PYV leaders about which PYV roles are considered appropriate for men and women in the light of biblical teaching.

Theological Basis

PYV affirms that women and men are assigned different roles, which in no way undermine their equal value:

- Both men and women are equals in that they are both created in the image of God (Gen 1:27), and are co-heirs of salvation (1 Pet 3:7).
- According to the scriptures, men are generally given the responsibility of exercising Godly authority, while women are generally given the responsibility of supporting and helping with this task. Thus, in a family context, wives are encouraged to submit to their husbands and husbands to love their wives (Col 3:18-19). In a church context, this is demonstrated by the fact that the elders of the early church were all men, while there were probably both men and women serving as deacons (e.g. Acts 12:1 cf Romans 16:1).
- The role of an elder includes authoritatively teaching the word of God and exercising pastoral authority. The gender roles should not be reversed in these matters (1 Tim 2:12).
- While we do not have New Testament evidence of women publicly preaching, there are examples of women giving private instruction (Acts 18:26).
- The fact that women prophesied in the early church means that they are not precluded from all public speaking roles (1 Cor 11:5).
- Women were valued and hard-working participants in the ministries of the New Testament church (Phil 4:3).
- Age is also a factor in the appropriate exercise of authority (Eph 6:1).

Application Within PYV

In relation to teaching the bible:

- If a significant proportion of the primary audience is adult, then the main bible teacher should be male.
- If the primary audience is children the main bible teacher may be either male or female.
- If the primary audience is female, the main bible teacher may be female.
- In a small group situation, where the focus is on discovery and discussion rather than authoritative teaching, it is appropriate for either men or women to facilitate this process. In mixed-sex adult groups where there is more than one leader, a male would normally be the main leader.
- In a meeting of adults, it is appropriate for a woman to share insights and encouragement from God's word (e.g. a devotion at a leader's meeting, as part of a unit at leaders' training seminar or as member of a question panel).



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When it comes to decision-making:

- Women may be members of PYV Council and its sub-committees, noting that this is a delegated authority given by the elders of the General Assembly of Victoria.
- Women are not prevented from taking any leadership position on a camp team, noting that camp teams are project-based teams exercising administrative authority, rather than permanent pastoral appointments.
- Authority of the camp convenor is administrative and does not undermine any other form of authority.
- If PYV trains men to take on the majority of senior leadership roles (such as camp and event convenors) this should be celebrated, rather than seen as a shortcoming.
- Within an activity group, the role of leaders and their assistants are assigned by the camp executive. Regardless of who is designated the leader, males and females should seek to work together in ways which nurture and affirm their respective masculinity or femininity.

Issues of Conscience:

- Where a leader is uncomfortable with the gender role in which he / she has been placed, his / her first recourse should be to privately revisit the scriptures to see if their objection has scriptural warrant.
- If the leader remains unhappy with the situation, he / she should go to the person to whom he / she reports to discuss a way in which his / her role may be modified. The supervisor should do all that he/she can to accommodate such requests.
- A leader may not require that his / her own conscience govern others in situations in which the correct application of the bible is not plain to see.

Limitations

- This document is intended to be in-line with official positions on gender held by the PCA and PCV.
- The age of adulthood in the church is usually considered 16 when congregational voting rights are granted, however for this policy the age of 18 is considered a more culturally significant transition into adulthood.
- If a PYV leader thinks that this policy is lacking, the best response is to propose amendments to it in a letter to PYV Council - secretary@pyv.org.au.