

Christ Fellowship: Sexuality and Gender Clarity

Statement of Faith

"God created marriage as a lifelong union between a man and a woman, and sexual intimacy belongs only in that relationship (Genesis 2:24). Sexual intimacy outside of marriage counters God's design, including premarital sex, same-sex sexual behavior, and adultery (1 Corinthians 6)."

HR Staff Handbook

"Staff members who are known to engage in premarital sex, same-sex sexual behavior, or adultery are subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination."

Application for Employment

"No person will be hired who is known to be engaging in premarital sex, same-sex sexual behavior, or adultery."

Christ Fellowship's View

Few topics bring greater pain and confusion to more people than sexuality and gender. Our hope is to help all of us grow in Christ in terms of how we understand and steward our sexuality and gender.

Creation: God designed us as sexual beings—from chromosomes to hormones to anatomy—in the complementary sexes of male and female. People should aim to live in harmony with their created sex from birth. (We are aware that some people are born intersex where their external anatomy does not match their internal biology). God gave us sex as a good gift to be enjoyed only in marriage by one man and one woman (Genesis 2).

Fall: As in all other areas of our lives, our sexuality is tainted by the fall (Genesis 3). Human desires were twisted so we are inclined to do what's wrong. While this does not mean every sexual act has been distorted, we are all sexual sinners who need God's grace.

Redemption: Through redemption all sexual sin can find forgiveness by God's grace based on Christ's death on the cross and resurrection from the dead. The church is the family of God in which members (whether married or single) are related as brothers and sisters by the blood of Jesus Christ in which we all share eternal life. Singleness is honored by the model of Jesus, the example of many church leaders, and Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 7. We believe both singleness and marriage are equally honorable ways to live for God.

New Creation: Jesus said, "At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven" (Matthew 22:30, NIV). Sexual union points forward to the greater union we will experience with God. Ultimate intimacy with the triune God surpasses sexual intimacy. Life without sexual intimacy is not a deficient life. Life without Jesus is a deficient life. Sex is a good gift, but it is not a good god. Sex is a blessing, but not a necessity.

Same-sex sexuality: God created one man and one woman to form a one-flesh bond and multiply. In the Old Testament, four passages address same-sex issues: two stories, one in Genesis 19 with a parallel in Judges 19, and two similar laws in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13. Genesis 19 tells the infamous story of Sodom, where men and women were threatened with rape. The laws in Leviticus forbid an array of sexual sins including incest, adultery, bestiality, and same-sex sexual acts. While dietary and sacrificial laws do not directly apply today, moral commands repeated in the New Testament do apply to us today.

Three passages in the New Testament mention same-sex behavior. In Romans 1, Paul says the lustful, unnatural sex of men with men and women with women is itself a

consequence of willful sin (Rom. 1:26–27). Further, 1 Corinthians 6 and 1 Timothy 1 put same-sex sexual behavior in lists with other sins. Paul’s use of the term “unnatural” in Romans 1:26 echoes the creation order in Genesis conveying a contrast with God’s design. In the next chapter (Romans 2), Paul includes in God’s condemnation those who self-righteously judge people. Paul teaches that all people are sinners in need of God’s grace (Romans 3:23). We read these opening chapters of Romans in light of the whole book that celebrates God’s amazing grace in Jesus, available to all of us.

Same-sex marriage: While gay marriage is not explicitly forbidden in the Bible, we believe the Bible only affirms marriages between a man and a woman. Our view is based on: the creation of Adam and Eve as male and female, procreation through intercourse, the marital analogies of God to Israel and Christ to the church, and Jesus’ quoting Genesis on marriage as male and female in a one-flesh bond. These passages combine with the seven negative passages on same-sex relations (along with no positive references) and the fact that biblical warnings, illustrations, and parables that refer to marriage assume a heterosexual relationship. In addition, Judaism and Christianity have historically rejected gay marriage. Marriage is only between one man and one woman, who join in a one-flesh union for life.

Temptation and sin: While the Bible declares same-sex sexual behavior and lust as sinful, that does not mean the temptation is itself sinful. The Bible distinguishes between sin and temptation (James 1:13–15). Temptations draw us toward sin, but there is nothing wrong with being tempted. Jesus was tempted in every way as we are and yet did not sin (Hebrews 2:18; 4:15). When by using the term “gay” a person means that they are attracted to the same sex (“same-sex attracted”), that attraction is no more sin than being opposite-sex attracted. As Christians, our identity and allegiance remain fundamentally in Christ, who is our life, but it may also be true about us that we are married, single, gay, or straight.

A Shining Light of Grace

You are welcome at Christ Fellowship. We welcome all people. We grieve that LGBTQ+ people have often been rejected by churches and mistreated. We welcome and invite LGBTQ+ people, singles, couples, and your children to come belong in the family at Christ Fellowship. In fact, we want you here.

You are created in God's image and valued by him. And we all are also marred by sin. None of us is morally pure, but rather we all are in desperate need of God's grace. Jesus Christ came as a human being, died on the cross, and rose from the dead to provide salvation for all people who would give him their allegiance. There are no perfect people at Christ Fellowship. We are real people striving to be authentic about ourselves.

We are people of grace, thankful for God's grace to us. We believe all humans should be treated graciously and justly. If you wonder whether you will be wanted and accepted at Christ Fellowship, or whether your son or daughter will be welcomed, we assure you that you already are.

We invite you to come to Christ Fellowship no matter what you believe. You do not need to be a Christian to come. You may not believe in God, you may currently follow another religion, or you may not be sure what you believe. Your beliefs are not a hindrance to coming to Christ Fellowship. We welcome people of all faiths and no faith.

Our mission is to be people helping people find and follow Christ. We would love to meet you, hear your story, and see how we can help you flourish in your relationship with Christ. We hope that you can experience a life full of the love, joy, and peace that God has for you.

A Serving Body of Christ

Ministry Guidelines with Sincere Impartiality

Our heart is to become a body of people in which everyone has a part to play (Ephesians 4:11–16). We are a church of volunteers who do the work of ministry by helping others find and follow Christ. We encourage everyone to impact others personally to help them find and follow Christ.

Worship Services: We welcome anyone and everyone to attend our worship services.

The Lord's Supper: We serve the Lord's Supper to all believers who want to participate, knowing what it means in terms of remembering the Lord Jesus Christ's sacrifice for us.

Baptism: We baptize anyone who expresses faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior. We require a short class and/or conversation before a person can be baptized that includes a confirmation of your (or your child's) saving faith in Jesus.

Baby Dedication: Any parent, grandparent or guardian who wants to publicly commit to raise their child in God's ways may participate in a baby dedication. We require a short class and conversation ahead of time that includes a confirmation of your commitment.

Groups: We invite anyone to participate in Life Groups, as well as other groups, Bible studies, and ministries of the church.

Care: We provide counseling, care, and support to all people, including weddings and funerals. However, we do not perform or host same-sex weddings.

Serving: Any person with a heart to serve can do so given that they meet the requirements for a specific role. For a given role, one or more of the following requirements might apply: be able to sing, know the Bible, be spiritually mature, pass a background check and a credit-check. We have guardrails in place for anyone who wants to serve children or students, including an application, an interview, and specific policies.

Leading: Leaders must demonstrate both a higher level of spiritual maturity and support for the beliefs of Christ Fellowship. Prospective leaders go through our

preleader process, sign their support for our Statement of Faith, and their commitment to our Leader Covenant.

Out of deep love and care for each person, other questions will be handled individually, face to face, in a personal, prayerful dialogue. We will treat each person with dignity and respect by seeking to listen first to understand. We know there are many unique situations and challenges that we each face.