

Announcement on policy on role of women

Over the past year, the elders of the Highland Oaks Church of Christ have led our church family in study and conversation regarding the role of women in the life of the church. Specifically, we have sought to address the following question: “Based on our shared study of Scripture, what opportunities will women have to use their gifts at the Highland Oaks Church of Christ?” Admittedly, there is a diversity of viewpoints and opinions within our church family and even within the elder group in response to this question, yet through much prayer we have arrived at a decision regarding how we will move forward as a church at this time.

Since 1997, the Highland Oaks church has been guided by a policy that has restricted women from certain roles in the church. The elder group decided to review this policy, and a process was established that included significant prayer and study of Scripture by the elder group, the provision of resources for our church family to read and study, the collective study of Scripture in our Sunday morning Bible class period, the opportunity for all members to express their thoughts and opinions in small group settings, and extensive time spent by the elder group in prayer and discernment. We used as a model Acts 15, in which the leaders of the early church in Jerusalem addressed a significant issue after input from the church and guidance from the Holy Spirit.

As one body, the elder group concluded that the Bible teaches full equality of men and women in status, giftedness, and opportunity for ministry and that the church is best served when men and women share responsibilities and serve together as complementary partners.

This policy change, however, comes with great responsibility and discernment. Although we affirm full equality of men and women, we are also mindful of the flock. As such, the elders have agreed that 1) those who serve as elders and 2) the preaching minister are to be male only. Following the model of Acts 15, we have deferentially chosen to withhold these two roles for the sake of unity in our church family. We believe this decision does not lessen the power or reality of proclaiming full equality of men and women in Jesus Christ. Rather, we value highly our common life together.

We recognize that not everyone will be in agreement with this policy change; however, we pray and request that you follow the leadership of the elders on this decision so that we may focus on the larger work of together serving our fellow men and women and leading them to Jesus.