

## **Fairfax Church of Christ**

# **Biblical Discernment Decisions**

Introduction: This listing is offered by the elders to serve as a reference for members, ministry leaders, and staff to assist in planning activities of the church.

We believe that it may be useful to have a listing available of previously made discernment decisions. We believe that history gives context to the present and understanding to those placing membership. This listing will be updated as new decisions are made, but the history will remain in place.

God calls on us to remain united in Him, Christ and each other as we explore ways to respect our differences on matters not central to salvation or fellowship. Every Christian should come to his or her own understanding of God's will in his or her own life, and on matters of conscience we are encouraged to be unified and gracious with each other. (2009)

### Gender Related [reordered chronologically]

- It is permissible for females to serve as interpreters (signing or voicing) for the deaf during worship services. (pre-1988)
- It is permissible for women to teach baptized young men in our Children's Bible school classes. (~1990, affirmed 2000)
- It is permissible for women to teach, lead and co-lead marriage or divorce seminars or other special interest classes sponsored by the church. (~ 1992)
- It is permissible for females to participate in Youth group prayers and leading prayers in youth group classes, retreats, and
- It is permissible for females to be on stage with skit/drama presentations during worship service. (1993, affirmed 2002)
- It is permissible for women to chair or lead committees, ministries or teams with men as members. (1994).
- It is permissible for girls to offer (or "lead") opening, closing or other prayers (with boys and adults present) during children's worship.
- It is permissible for girls to distribute communion emblems to adults during children's worship. (~1995)
- It is permissible for females to lead prayers, read scripture, and present lessons in small group meetings. Each small group is to decide what they prefer. (1997, affirmed 2009)
- It is permissible for a female to baptize a family member during worship with a male asking for the person's confession of faith.
- It is permissible during worship to have live testimonials by women, such as asking female mission participants to briefly share mission trip experiences or share in making announcements. (2000)
- It is permissible for a woman to serve as (and to be called) Children's Minister. (2000)

- It is permissible for husbands and wives to teach class segments or special classes to mixed gender audiences. (~2000)
- It is permissible for women to serve as a Youth Ministry interns.
- It is permissible for qualified women and men to serve as Ministry Leaders in roles that could be identical to those traditionally filled by male Deacons. Each such ministry leader will nonetheless need to be a sincere baptized believer who has gained the respect of elders, staff or other members of our congregation as honest, trustworthy and temperate, living in a manner that shows Jesus.
- It is permissible to amplify the voices of women singers during worship. (2005, affirmed 2009)
- It is permissible for a husband-wife team to teach mixed-gender adult classes. (2007)
- It is permissible for females to use their gifts and serve more fully in worship services (decided in the context of an alternative service).
- It is permissible for women to share more public roles in worship assemblies, while clarifying that some roles, like elder and Preaching Minister, and Worship Minister will remain male. (2009).

#### Use of instruments

- It is permissible to use guitars at youth retreats and other devotional settings in support of a cappella singing (1990s).
- Acknowledged differences of understanding about the use of instruments during worship (~1992) stating that we “have not and do not intend to introduce musical instruments in our Sunday morning worship service” other than as incidental background in occasional audio or video clips. (2006)(Affirmed 2009)
- It is permissible to have instrumental music as background in a video or audio clip played during worship services. (~2000)
- It is permissible to use instrumental music during the Saturday evening "praise time." (2004)
- It is permissible to include the orderly use of instruments in corporate worship (2008, affirmed 2009).

#### Other Concerns

- It is permissible to have communion on days other than Sunday. (2008)
- It is permissible for communion to be observed at any time of the week (2009).

Note: The elders recognize that not all things permissible are beneficial so they sometimes announce limitations appropriate for Fairfax, such as retaining its current a cappella Sunday morning services