



McKnight Crossings – Gender Summary (2025)

We have devoted extensive time to prayer, study, and discussion regarding women's roles in the church, including an in-depth study in 2014.

God commands us to love Him and to love people. Scripture's purpose is to equip us for every good work, and all healthy teaching should support these priorities, including our understanding of gender and ministry roles.

Our Approach

As leaders, we have asked ourselves: How can we contribute to the faith of the next generation? Our answer is to strengthen the body of Christ and advance God's mission by allowing women to serve in every role that aligns with our understanding of Scripture. While we may not see the full realization of this vision in our lifetime, we are committed to progress. We do not want to resist change in ways that parallel past injustices, such as the opposition to the abolition of slavery.

The cultural and societal structures of biblical times limited women's roles, but we must move beyond mere proof-texting and instead seek God's full intent for His kingdom. God created men and women as equals: "*male and female He created them*" (Genesis 1:27). Sin fractured this equality, and the Christian faith seeks to restore the unity between God and humanity. Paul affirms this in *Galatians 3:28*: "*There is no Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*" This discussion is not about individual rights but about discerning God's unfolding will.

Jesus' Example

A guiding question for us is: What would Jesus do? Jesus' ministry radically affirmed women. He engaged with them, valued their contributions, and included them in significant ways:

- Women supported His ministry financially.
- Women learned from Him as disciples.
- Women were early evangelists (*John 4*).
- Women were the first witnesses to His resurrection.

The early church continued this inclusivity. Peter quoted Joel, declaring, "*Your sons and daughters will prophesy*" (Acts 2:17).

Scriptural Considerations

Two passages often cited in discussions about gender roles in worship are *1 Corinthians 14* and *1 Timothy 2*. We believe these passages must be understood within their historical and cultural contexts. Many New Testament instructions were specific to the concerns of their communities and do not apply universally—just as commands about veils, widowhood, or raising holy hands in prayer are not strictly followed today.

Countercultural examples in Scripture include:

- Women leading worship through prayer and prophecy (*1 Corinthians 11:5*).
- Women hosting and leading church gatherings (*Acts 12:12, 16:40*).
- Women actively teaching (*Acts 18:26*).
- Women serving as deacons (*Romans 16:1-2*).



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Current Considerations and Challenges

While we affirm women’s significant roles in ministry, we continue to wrestle with how best to apply Scripture, particularly regarding church leadership. Passages such as *1 Timothy 3*, *Titus 1*, and *Ephesians 5* raise questions about whether full equality necessitates identical roles. Can we be equal yet serve in distinct capacities?

At this time, we believe that the role of **primary teaching minister** and **elder** should remain male-led. This decision does not stem from a refusal to follow God’s will but rather from an acknowledgment that we do not yet have full clarity on how to reconcile different scriptural principles.

Practical Commitments for McKnight Crossings (2025)

1. **Principles vs. Practice:** We differentiate between what we believe and how we implement those beliefs. Change takes time, and we seek to move forward thoughtfully and prayerfully.
2. **Expanding Opportunities for Women:** We believe women should be honored, trained, and encouraged to use their gifts to build up the body of Christ.
3. **Qualifications for Teaching & Leadership:** We affirm that leadership qualifications are based on one’s commitment to Christ, spiritual gifts, and empowerment by the Holy Spirit—not gender.
4. **Where Women Can Serve More Fully:**
 - Training girls and boys together in *kidsCrossings* and the **Student/Teen Ministry**.
 - Expanding women’s roles in worship, including **leading worship** and **preaching sermons**.
 - Encouraging women to **lead and teach small groups and Bible classes**.
 - Supporting women’s leadership in ministries throughout the week.
5. **Couples Praying Together:** When an elder prays or makes announcements, his wife will be encouraged to join him in sharing the moment. Leadership is a team effort, and we acknowledge the critical role of spiritually mature wives.
6. **Public Affirmation of Women Leaders:** Women leading ministries will be identified as *Ministry Leaders* in church communications, recognizing them as modern deaconesses.
7. **Elder Couples:** While elders are male, we will refer to them as **Elder Couples** or **Shepherding Couples** to reflect the essential partnership of their wives in ministry.

A Commitment to Growth

We acknowledge that our understanding may evolve over time. The answers we have today may not be the answers we have tomorrow. We are committed to continued study, growth, and openness to the Spirit’s leading.

McKnight Crossings is a vibrant faith community, rooted in the Restoration tradition, committed to examining our beliefs and practices with care, study, reflection, and intentionality.

Thank you for your patience, your faith, and your sensitivity to God’s leading.