



OUR SUPPORT OF WOMEN IN MINISTRY LEADERSHIP

First Evangelical Free Church (FEFC) of Chicago, Illinois

The following policy statement, “Philosophy of Women Leaders in the Church,” was discussed and affirmed at our June 1995 congregational meeting:

First Evangelical Free Church of Chicago affirms its past and present practices of women utilizing their gifts and talents in positions of church leadership. As stated in our church’s philosophy of ministry: “leaders are to be model disciples who are growing in their own ministry skills. . . . [they] will be recognized on the basis of their proven character, giftedness and service. . . . [they] must be growing disciples who are committed to the church’s purpose, doctrine, and ministry philosophy.” Women who are so qualified will be welcome to serve in leadership at First Free.

We acknowledge that the issue of women leaders in the church has become a source of disagreement among some in the body of Christ. In fact, godly biblical scholars have come to opposing points of view. Our church will be a place where people are not obligated to hold identical viewpoints on issues that are not central to our faith. In light of this philosophy, we encourage members to vote upon their convictions when presented with the option of appointing women into positions of church leadership. We also encourage members to model a spirit of grace and love toward those with whom they disagree, “with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing forbearance to one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:2-3).

Our denomination, the Evangelical Free Church of America (EFCA), holds that women may serve in positions of church leadership, except that they may not serve as senior pastor. First Free affirms the position of our denominational leaders. At First Free, women will be encouraged to serve God in any ministry capacity that is appropriate to their gifts, talents and spiritual development, except for the position of senior pastor.

Note: The EFCA Ministerial Association will not license or ordain women for the position of senior pastor; however, it will license women to other ministry roles. Local churches have the freedom to appoint (or not appoint) women as elders.