

NBC Elder's Statement ON BIBLICAL PATRIARCHY

1. Reasoning & Purpose for this Statement

In light of our current historical moment, and the wide-spread confusion in our day surrounding the topics of sex, gender, nature, and roles of men and women, we the Elders of Noblesville Baptist Church believe it is important to issue a formal statement regarding our position on the topic of Biblical Patriarchy. We are not looking to create contention within the body, but rather, we are striving to bring clarity to this conversation as it pertains to our biblical convictions.

Our unwavering commitment is to align our convictions, beliefs, and practices with the teachings of Scripture. We have spent considerable time in conversation and prayer seeking God's wisdom on these matters, and we hope this statement is beneficial to the people of Noblesville Baptist Church for years to come.

2. Definitions & Terminology

The following section is largely adopted from a helpful article written by our friend Andy Naselli entitled, "*Four Views of Hierarchy and Complementarity*"¹.

View #1. BIBLICAL PATRIARCHY (*Broad, Thick, or Natural Complementarianism*)

This view affirms hierarchy broadly in the *home, church, and society*. Biblical Patriarchy affirms complementarity in the sense that complementary differences between men and women are part of God's good design of our different natures and are reasons supporting the rules. In other words, there are physical, essential reasons for the roles God has assigned to men and women.

View #2. NARROW COMPLEMENTARIANISM (*Thin, or Ideological Complementarianism*)

This view affirms hierarchy narrowly in two specific areas: *marriage* (but emphasizes "mutual submission" and not a husband's authority) and the *church* (only qualified men may be pastors, but an unordained woman may do anything an unordained man may do). To some extent, this view downplays the differences between men and women taught in the Scriptures and observed in the natural world and thereby teaches somewhat of an interchangeability between men and women.

View #3. CLASSIC EGALITARIANISM (*Older Evangelical Feminism*)

This view strongly *rejects* hierarchy in the *home, church, and society*, yet it claims to affirm some aspects of complementarity. Naselli points out that this is an older version of Egalitarianism, which is distinct from the more modern view below.

View #4. MODERN EGALITARIANISM (*More Recent Evangelical Feminism*)

This view strongly *rejects* hierarchy in the *home, church, and society*, and largely denies any real complementarity or distinction between men and women whatsoever. The differences between men and women are effectively arbitrary.

The Elders of NBC embrace the above definitions of terms. We reject views 3 and 4 as unbiblical, and we affirm view #1. We are convinced that God's design for humanity is displayed through both scripture and nature along the lines of Biblical patriarchy, and yet we realize and accept that some members of our church will be convinced of view #2 Narrow Complementarianism. We are not grieved by this because we see there being room for disagreement, charity, and continued fellowship within the local church between those holding to either views 1 or 2.

Additional Terms

PATRIARCHY: a term which emphasizes the reality of God-given authority to fathers.

COMPLEMENTARIANISM: a term which emphasizes that God designed men and women to complement each other; they are not interchangeable.

The Elders of NBC joyfully embrace the Biblical nature of patriarchy and complementarianism as defined above. We believe that God has built both complementarity as well as hierarchy into the fabric of His creation.

¹ Naselli, A. (2024, February 29). Andy Naselli. Andy Naselli. <https://andynaselli.com/four-views-on-hierarchy-and-complementarity>

3. Biblical Patriarchy Further Explained

We affirm that men and women are equal in value, virtue, and giftedness, yet their roles and responsibilities within God's design are distinct. The complementary natures of men and women are reflected in the home, the church, and society. God has called husbands to lead within their homes, male elders to rule within his church (Eph 5:22, 1 Tim 2:12), and men generally to lead in civil affairs (Isa 3:12, Rom 13:1-7). God has ontologically designed men and women to suit his economic aims.

Home

Within the sphere of the household, the husband is designated as the head of the home, with Christ as his ultimate head. This headship does not give the husband license to domineer or rule harshly, but rather he is to lead by example, modeling his leadership after Jesus Christ—who led with love, grace, humility, and sacrificial service. The husband is called to love his wife with the same selfless love that Christ demonstrated for the Church, fostering an environment of respect, kindness, and gentleness in his leadership. Wives are called to submit to their husband's leadership and authority within the context of marriage. This submission is not to be a blind or unquestioning obedience, but rather a voluntary and thoughtful choice that arises from a desire to follow Christ.

Women possess spiritual gifts that reflect God's character—gifts of compassion, grace, and love—and have a unique capacity for nurturing and managing the home. In this sense, women contribute to the life-giving work of the family, especially in the role of bearing and raising children. While men are designed to protect, provide, and sacrificially lead, women are designed to nurture, beautify, and care for the family unit. These differences in nature and function are not indicative of varying worth, but rather a beautiful reflection of God's creative wisdom in assigning distinct roles that complement each other.

Church

The church itself is a larger family (1 Tim 5:1-2), not a business, and roles in the church ought not to be awarded on the basis of mere talent and skill. The church has father figures and mother figures who are complementary, but not interchangeable. Within the sphere of the church, spiritual authority is vested in those who hold the offices of elders and deacons. We believe both elders and deacons possess God-given, spiritual authority, signified by the service of ordination and laying on of hands, and therefore women are not to hold these offices or perform their functions. Both men and women are called to respect and submit to the leadership of the Church. Not all men in the church have authority in the church; only those men who have been ordained may be said to have authority. However, on occasion, the church may use some non-ordained men in leadership roles normally associated with the work of elders, namely leading worship, discipling, and teaching. These men are effectively “elders in training,” and they are appointed by the elders and serve under their direction. In some cases, the official designation of “pastoral intern” may be given to such men.

Society

Within the sphere of society, we believe the natural distinctions between men and women continue to bear weight upon their varying roles and responsibilities. We believe wisdom suggests some vocations are more masculine in nature, and are therefore more fitting for men (e.g., certain realms of political rule, law enforcement, and military combat). These tasks are suitable to the natural strength and protective instincts God has given men. Yet other vocations take on a more feminine nature and are thereby more fitting for women (e.g., certain realms of hospitality, healthcare, and social work). These professions call for the natural compassion and nurturing instincts God has given women. We understand Biblical Patriarchy expressed at the societal level is not always a black and white issue, and of course there are exceptions to rules. But in general, we believe God intends for healthy nations to uphold Biblical patriarchy at a societal level in addition to the spheres of the home and church.

4. Conclusion

We acknowledge God's wisdom and glory on display through His good design of masculinity and femininity expressed across various spheres of life. Our goal is to understand, embrace, and live out the beauty of Scripture's ideals for the home, the church, and society, and to do so while expressing the love, charity, and compassion of Christ toward both men and women.