

Pillar Community Church**

Statement on Sexual Ethics and Christian Obedience

Creation and Design

We believe that God created humankind male and female in his own image and likeness, and that Scripture, beginning with Genesis 1-2, reveals God's glorious design for marriage and human sexuality. Marriage is ordained by God to be an exclusive, lifelong, and covenantal union of one man and one woman, which signifies the relationship between Christ and his Church, and involves two partners who are both similar (i.e., human) and different (i.e., opposite sex) joining together for the sake of mutual support and, ordinarily, for the generation of humanity. We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to be enjoyed exclusively within this marriage covenant, and that any inward cultivation or outward expression of sexual desire apart from the one-flesh bond between husband and wife is out of accord with God's creational intent, and therefore against his good and gracious will. (Mal. 2:14; Matt. 19:4-6; Gen. 2:24; 1 Cor. 6:12-7:5; Gen. 1:28; Mal. 2:15; Gen. 2:18; Eph. 5:22-33; 1 Pet. 3:7; Col. 3:18-19; Gen. 2:25; Matt. 5:28; Matt. 19:9; Gal. 5:19-21)

We believe that God instituted the nuclear family at creation as the most basic unit of physical kinship; that marriage and the family are therefore good; and that stewarding these bonds in obedience to Christ is one of the primary means by which the Kingdom of God expands. We also believe that every Christian has been adopted into the family of God, and that the bonds of spiritual kinship between brothers and sisters of faith are in fact deeper and more fundamental to Christian self-understanding than natural family relationships. We believe that the local church should be a place in which all Christians experience true belonging and genuine intimacy, and that God gives each member of his household—married and unmarried alike—unique opportunities to extend welcome and hospitality so that all might partake in the joys, benefits, and responsibilities of kinship. (Prov. 22:6; Eph. 1:5; Gal. 4:4-5; Eph. 2:19; 3:15; Rom 12:5; Matt. 12:50; 19:29; Col. 1:1-14; 1 Cor. 12)

We believe that sin entered the world as a result of the rebellion of Adam and Eve and now permeates every aspect of creation, including human sexuality. Along with every form of sexual desire apart from the one-flesh bond between husband and wife, we believe that same-sex sexual desire experienced by gay, lesbian, bisexual, and other same-sex-attracted people is a product of the Fall; that same-sex sexual desire was not a pre-Fall reality; and that same-sex sexual desire will not exist in the new creation, after the return of Christ. (Gen. 3; Gen. 6:5; Jer. 17:9; Rom. 3:10-19; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; Matt. 22:30)

Christian Obedience and Sanctification

We believe God calls his people to a life of holiness, and that it is the responsibility of every Christian to turn away from all illicit sexual desire, and to steward their sexuality in obedience to Christ. Further, we believe that both singleness and marriage are vocations to be honored and commended by the Church. We believe that all Christians who joyfully embrace

celibacy—whether on a temporary basis before marrying, or as a lifelong pattern of faithfulness—uniquely model the life of the world to come, when the people of God neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like the angels. (Matt. 5:8, 48; 1 Cor. 6:13; Heb. 13:4; 1 Cor. 7:6–9; Matt. 19:10-12; Matt. 22:30)

We believe that theological dialogue about the nature of sexual orientation is necessary, and that continued conversation regarding the discipleship and spiritual care of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and other same-sex attracted Christians is especially important. While discussions about terminology can be fruitful, we believe they can also cause unnecessary division within the family of God and needless pain for many non-straight Christians. Whether individuals choose “gay” or “same-sex-attracted” to describe their orientation and experience is a matter of wisdom and liberty, and should not divide believers who otherwise share a commitment to historic Christian teaching about marriage and sexuality. (2 Tim. 2:14)

We believe that all Christians have been given a new spiritual identity in their union with Jesus Christ, through the work of the Holy Spirit, and as a result of their adoption by the Father as sons and daughters in God’s family. We believe that this spiritual identity constitutes the core reality of Christian existence; that it is the truest element of Christian personhood; and that it should therefore be the central feature of Christian self-understanding. As those who share one Lord, one faith, and one baptism, we believe that other features within the composite of individual identity—such as nationality, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation—do not change or add to this spiritual identity, but should be ordered in relation to this ultimate identity in Christ, which unites all within the household of God. (Rom. 6:6; 1 Pet. 2:9; 1 John 3:1–2; Phil. 3:8; Rom. 8:12–17; Phil. 3:4–11; Acts 22:25–28; 1 Cor. 9:19–23)

Relationships and Christian Community

We believe that the Christian tradition celebrates deep, committed relationships between believers that are marked by spiritual intimacy, emotional connection, and even chaste, non-sexual expressions of physical affection. Such expressions of intimacy and affection should be ordered according to the patterns and principles of spiritual kinship that exist within God’s family. As modeled by Jesus and his disciples, we believe that the pursuit of intimate, rich, platonic friendship is consistent with the biblical witness and Christian tradition, and that such relationships can be marked by varying degrees of permanence, affection, and a shared sense of partnership in life and ministry. (John 13:1–20; 21:12; 1 Sam. 18:3, 20:17,42)

We believe that all Christians have the capacity for both sinful (i.e., fleshly) and holy (i.e., Spiritual) desire for relationship with other people; that intimate friendship between believers can be a means of sanctification; and that the Holy Spirit can direct and shape affection for other image-bearers in ways that honor their dignity and celebrate their unique personhood. We believe that Christians should seek wisdom and prudence when entering any relationship marked by greater intimacy, and that believers must exercise care and resolve to avoid all forms of temptation. We believe that Christians must actively resist and turn away from every thought, action, desire, or behavior that does not align with God’s revealed intentions

for human sexuality, since we are not our own, but belong—body and soul, both in life and in death—to our faithful Savior, Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:12–13; Col. 3:5).

We believe that Christians should live for the glory of God, the good of their neighbors, and the mutual flourishing of their spiritual brothers and sisters in the Church; that authentic obedience to Christ is empowered by the Holy Spirit and expressed in self-sacrificial love; and that all Christian conduct should be blameless and above reproach for the sake of genuine sanctification and a compelling Christian witness.



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