

## How to talk to your pastor about equality for women in your church

There are 3 reasons you will not be successful in talking with your pastor.

1. He truly believes that women are forbidden to speak or have authority.
2. He is afraid that if he speaks out, he will lose his job, and cannot support his family.
3. You do not want to break up your church over this.

Those are very good reasons. That is why women and men have not been successful in speaking out.

It is never right to allow the church to engage in sin, which is what this absolute refusal to allow women to be equal, is. The Southern Baptist Convention had to acknowledge that slavery was a sin against human beings. They had Bible scriptures to back it up. In fact, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) was formed when a group broke off from the rest of the Baptists to form their own convention which supported slavery. These churches were in sin. They finally denounced this sin.

You alone cannot make a difference in your own SBC church, or any fundamentalist church. But all of us together can. That is the whole purpose of what this section is all about.

### You must help your pastor see how you as a human being feel.

You want to help your pastor understand how you feel about the lack of equality. Keep this on the personal level; help him to see what it does to you and to your family. Don't try to argue scripture. Know the scripture, but don't argue with him.

### What you cannot do

1. You can't make your pastor change his mind
2. You can't make your church see equality as you do

### What you can do

1. Every voice adds to the dissent women are feeling. When you write a letter to your pastor, that one letter represents many more women who are staying silent. Your pastor knows this.
2. In addition to writing letters to your pastor, you should send a copy of the letter to the president of the Southern Baptist Convention. Currently it is Dr. Johnny Hunt. That will change in June of 2010, and the new President's name can be found on their website.
3. If you attend another evangelical church that is preaching submission, write to the pastor, and find out where their main denominational headquarters are, or the Evangelical association they support. Join with other Christians to speak out.

### You must get the attention of the denomination's leadership.

Southern Baptist Convention is not a denomination. It is a group of affiliated Baptist churches that were originally supposed to be independent of any hierarchy. That changed when they adopted the Baptist Faith and Message 2000 and they required all employees in the national offices and positions to sign

that agreement. But we call it a denomination because it is simpler, and easier for people to understand. The leadership should be your main target, starting with your pastor.

### **Put it in writing**

Below are some sample made-up letters you can write your pastor. These letters are not actual letters written to a pastor, but are examples of how you can express yourself. Write your own letters using these principles and take from them what you yourself feel. Be honest and truthful in every thing you say.

It will be one of the hardest things you have to do, but it must be done. Pastors are loving shepherds of their flock. When one hurts, they hurt. Help him to see that you are hurting.

### **Here are some rules to follow:**

1. Email or snail mail
2. Be absolutely truthful
3. Be courteous
4. Talk from your heart. Does not have to be formal, just sincere.
5. Don't try to argue scripture. These scriptures have been argued over so much that the brain gets into the same rut. You must make him understand that as a person you feel that it is wrong to be treated this way, or that you feel it is wrong to treat women this way.
6. Be prepared to accept that your pastor probably will not answer you. Do not let that deter you.
7. If he writes back that the church has adopted a set of by-laws and that is what your church is going by, remember that by-laws can be changed. Your church can even change affiliations with a state association and choose one that allows women deacons and women pastors. Email me and I will explain more about this.
8. Know the scripture. Scripture is on your side. Read information from resources found on this website.
9. Enlist others in your church to stand with you on this.
10. Pray

### **The letters below should be changed to fit your situation.**

Whenever over one-half of the congregation is being denied full fellowship in the church, then that is a sin problem. Yes, it is a sin how churches treat women. Just as slavery was justified by certain scriptures, we use certain scriptures against women. We know now that we were misinterpreting those scriptures, and we will someday join others who already know that the scriptures used against women have been misinterpreted.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Pastor \_\_\_\_\_,

I want to be able to walk into this church without feeling that my church holds it against me that I am a woman.

For years I have felt that something was wrong, but could not put my finger on the problem. I thought it must be me. The more I have read about women's equality, the more I realize that my church should be the first place to embrace equality for women.

I have read my Bible and have seen how Jesus treated women in a day when a woman had no worth.

Jesus gave women dignity.

It started with the angel Gabriel telling Mary, instead of going to her father or husband-to-be, that the Messiah would be born to her. Then Jesus himself told the woman at the well that he was the Messiah, she was the first person to be told such news. It was the women who went to the grave and were the first to see and hear the risen Savior.

Since women were given this important news first about Jesus, how can my church say that I can't be a preacher or a deacon?

I haven't been called to preach, and already put in enough hours here at church, so I don't want to be a deacon.

I just want to feel that my church welcomes me as much as Jesus does. I can't feel that way as long as the Baptist Faith and Message 2000 tells me that there are certain offices that I can't hold in the church. I can't feel that way as long as The Danvers Statement on Biblical Manhood and Biblical Womanhood tell me that my husband is more important in my marriage than I am.

Pastor, you love this church, but this church by its very by-laws doesn't love me. Will you pray with me about this and see if we can do something to change the situation here so all feel loved by our church?

Name

Address

Phone number

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Pastor \_\_\_\_\_

For years I have accepted that my church does not have women deacons, and I certainly never thought that a woman should be the pastor. But recently I have begun thinking differently.

I have looked at the young girls we have here at church and wondered which one of them would become a missionary. You know that Missions is dear to my heart, and I have supported Lottie Moon and all of our mission offerings.

But one day, I was thinking about this and realized that when we send our young girls off to a mission field that they are preaching. They are teaching. In fact, I think they are baptizing. They have authority over native men in the mission field.

I began to feel like a hypocrite. I had been praying earnestly that one of these young girls would become a missionary. But what if she feels that the Lord wants her to stay at home and become a pastor? Would I pray just as hard for that?

My soul began to be burdened. I would send a girl off to a mission field, but I would not keep her at home. For some reason, I didn't see Jesus doing that.

Pastor, our church needs to be responsive to what Jesus would do. I know that some will get mad and leave the church. They will tell me that the Bible says women can't preach, and that women can't be a deacon. But we are sending women off to preach. Don't we need our women here at home preaching?

I am ready for a change. This has not been easy for me to write, and I have had to pray for the Lord to forgive me for my part in not allowing women to stand behind the pulpit here at our own church.

Let's do something and change this. God made women in his own image, just as he made you, Pastor.

Name

Address

Phone

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Pastor

My friends tell me that my church is wonderful, and that they love the music and they love your preaching. I do, too, but something is bothering me.

I came across some websites that discuss women being equal in the church. I always thought my church loved me and I loved singing praise songs along with the choir. But last week when I was standing with everybody and singing, I started looking around me.

There were more women than men singing. The women had their heads lifted up, and some even had their hands halfway raised. It crossed my mind that women love the Lord so much!

How could Jesus not love the women as much as he loves the men? I know you would say that he loves us just as much. That men are not more special to God than I am. At one time I would have accepted that.

But I don't anymore. If God had it put in the Bible that I couldn't preach and be a deacon, then he doesn't love me as much as he loves my brother. My brother hasn't been to church in years and you know I am here every Sunday. But if my brother and his wife started coming back to church, he could be a deacon. That doesn't seem right to me.

I read the Bible every day. If Jesus loves me, why doesn't my church?

Name

Address

Phone

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Pastor \_\_\_\_\_

My niece was murdered by her husband last week. They said it was suicide, but we know it wasn't. He had been beating her for years but she wouldn't speak up. Her pastor told her to stay with him and to pray for him, and he quoted 1 Peter 3:1 and told her that it was her responsibility to submit to this sorry husband of hers.

I am so mad. Her life could have been saved if she had left him. Her pastor knew what was happening. We suspected it, but she denied it, and now that it is too late, we know that it is true.

Their church is just like ours. They believe that if the women will just submit, then everything will be all right. How many more women have to be murdered before we speak up!

This church has always told us to submit and after seeing what happened to my niece, I'm not telling any woman to submit any more.

I was reading The Danvers Statement on Biblical Manhood and Biblical Womanhood and for the first time, I realized that we are teaching a very dangerous theology. God did not give man divine right to be head of his household. He has to earn it. He has to share it. No man, or no woman, for that matter, can ever have headship over another human being.

Our church has got to stop teaching this nonsense before more young women are killed by the husbands we have told them they are to submit to.

It's time to get serious about this, Pastor, and I am ready to do something.

Name

Address

Phone

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Pastor \_\_\_\_\_

I can't argue scripture with you because I get confused when you start saying words like exegesis and hermeneutics.

But I know how I feel inside. I just know it is wrong to tell women they can't be a deacon. What is it that a deacon does that women can't do? Women do more in the church than most deacons ever think of doing.

It can't be because deacons are closer to God. Jesus made that clear to Peter and John when they argued that they were closer to Jesus than the other disciples, and wanted to sit on his right hand side when he came into his kingdom.

I've read the Bible and I can't find in it anywhere that says that deacons are to be any different from any other person in the church. They are not holier; they don't have any special powers to heal the sick or to do anything else that a member of the church can't do.

They serve the Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper is supposed to be a celebration of all Christians to remember Christ by. Never was it to be a ritual where "special set-aside men" were the only ones who could serve it.

Pastor, I don't want to be a deacon. But I don't want my church telling me I can't.

Will you pray with me that we understand what Jesus was really teaching and try to do that here in this church?

Name

Address

Phone

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Pastor \_\_\_\_\_

You are afraid of me, I know that. You are afraid that if I start to speak out for equality for women in this church, that a bunch of old fossils will get mad and leave the church, taking their money with them.

You are afraid for your job if you speak out. You are afraid that the Senior Sunday School Class will get mad and start holding meetings to get rid of you.

I wish I could tell you that they wouldn't, but that is not the truth. They would. So I have to sit here in silence every week because I, too, am afraid of what would happen.

It ought not to be that way. You know as well as I do that women are just as qualified to be a deacon as that bunch of deacons we have. In our by-laws it gives "the qualifications of a deacon." We give mouth service to all of those qualifications, but the only one we are really concerned about is that the deacon be a male.

That doesn't make a bit of sense to me. James 4:17 says "Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin."

Pastors like you must start speaking up for women. You know those Bible verses used against us are contrary to what Jesus teaches. Why on earth would Jesus give men authority over women? Men are more aggressive than women and are the ones eager to go to war, are more likely to abuse their wives and children, are the ones least likely to get up and go to church each Sunday morning.

Pastor, let's pray together about this. With open minds and open hearts and let the Holy Spirit lead us.

Name  
Address  
Phone

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Pastor \_\_\_\_\_

My daughter Kim has been crying all week. We imagined the worst of course, but did not know what to do and waited for her to speak to us. In our minds we were already wondering how we would help her take care of the baby.

We thought we were prepared. That would have been less a shock than what she actually told us.

She feels the Lord is calling her to preach.

We had hoped it would be Matthew that was called to preach. You know these kids come from a long line of preachers on my side of the family. Matthew just never seemed interested. But Kim always was.

I don't know why I was surprised. I think it is more that I am worried for her. I know how you and this church feel about women preaching. I've been a deacon for 2 years and wonder how the other deacons will feel when I tell them my daughter wants to preach.

She wants to go to seminary this fall. Her mother and I are supporting her in this, but we are afraid for her. Nobody will hire her, she is just wasting her time and money. She says that she might have to leave the Baptist church she was raised in and become a different denomination. I know some of you will say that is good riddance, but I don't feel that way. She is my daughter, and I know her heart and love is for Jesus and she will be a good pastor or preacher or whatever God calls her to do.

We have prayed about this. If she leaves, we will, too.

Name

Address

Phone number