

## **Value Statement Writing Team: March 13, 2016 (Revised November 21, 2016)**

### **At the First Presbyterian Church of Conroe, we Value the Biblical Witness of Marriage...**

Our faith begins and ends with the One True Living God. We believe that God is revealed to us in the Bible. That's why we adhere to the strict teachings of the Bible. The Scriptures are filled with teachings and rules that should govern our relationships, including marriage.

The longstanding Christian belief is expressed in The Westminster Confession of Faith:

“Christian marriage is an institution ordained of God, blessed by our Lord Jesus Christ, established and sanctified for the happiness and welfare of mankind, into which spiritual and physical union one man and one woman enter, cherishing a mutual esteem and love, bearing with each other's infirmities and weaknesses, comforting each other in trouble, providing in honesty and industry for each other and for their household, praying for each other, and living together the length of their days as heirs of the grace of life.” (Chapter 24, Book of Confessions 6.131)

We believe this to be consistent with teachings found throughout the Bible, including the Old and New Testaments.

Among the earliest moments spoken by God is this: “Then the man said, ‘This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.’ Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.” (Genesis 2:23-24)

Jesus himself affirmed this important instruction about marriage. He said, in part, “Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.” (Matthew 19:4-6)

The Bible also teaches us how wives and husbands are to live together and relate to each other. Some people may be surprised to read, “Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.” (Ephesians 5:22) But this is balanced by the matching directive, “Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her...” (Ephesians 5:25)

The Biblical witness of Christian marriage affirms the importance of mutual sacrifices. “Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.” (Hebrews 13:4)

## **What do we say to someone who says, “I don’t agree...?”**

Not long ago the Supreme Court issued a ruling that changed the definition of marriage and opened the doors for couples who were previously barred from receiving the same social benefits and legal recognitions of other couples. This Value Statement is not an attempt to make a political statement or to cast judgment on others and the lives they live.

As a church we are compelled by judicial rulings to open for discussion our values and beliefs about relationships and about marriage. Here you will find people from all walks of life and in a variety of personal relationships. Our congregation firmly believes that we all belong to the One True Living God.

Nowhere in life are we more emotionally vulnerable than in our most personal relationships. Our opinions and beliefs are as diverse and varied as the people who come through our doors. We believe that we are to study the Word of God and to find what God would have each of us do with our own lives. We invite all to come and to be a part of the life of the First Presbyterian Church of Conroe.

## **The Hierarchy of Authority:**

**Jesus Christ is Lord and Head of the Church.**

**The Bible is the Written Word of God**, which bears witness to Jesus Christ, who alone is Lord and Head of the Church.

**Our Confessional Heritage** is the work of previous generations who confronted similar questions and concerns. The Confessional Statements have authority only to the extent that they are faithful to the Bible.

**Our Collective Wisdom**, the decisions that we make together, are to be our best effort to learn from our Tradition and to be faithful to the Bible. When we do this well, we believe that we are being faithful to Jesus Christ.

**Our Personal Wishes and Preferences**, are the least reliable of all sources of insight. Since all have sinned and fall short of the Glory of God, we work together to seek-out God's Wisdom for our life and faith.

## **The Bible:**

“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16-17, ESV)

“For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.” (Romans 15:4, ESV)

## **The Westminster Confession of Faith:**

“Christian marriage is an institution ordained of God, blessed by our Lord Jesus Christ, established and sanctified for the happiness and welfare of mankind, into which spiritual and physical union one man and one woman enter, cherishing a mutual esteem and love, bearing with each other's infirmities and weaknesses, comforting each other in trouble, providing in honesty and industry for each other and for their household, praying for each other, and living together the length of their days as heirs of the grace of life.”

**To learn more**, search the internet for:

The Westminster Confession of Faith

The Book of Confessions of the Presbyterian Church (USA)

Genesis 1:24-31, and chapters 2 and 5

Matthew 19:1-12

John 2:1-11

1 Corinthians 7

Hebrews 5 and 13:4

1 Peter 2:13 – 3:12