

REFLECT

- Something to explore further
- Something you've learned
- Something you want to change

The elders at Neighbourhood Community Church have recently decided that they should appoint their first women's worker. They haven't written a job description or thought how a female staff member would relate to them as trustees/ employers/ elders but they know they need to. They decide to consult a number of women who serve sacrificially in a voluntary capacity in different ministries in church life. They set up a "working group" and ask one of the women to chair it and an elder will attend. They particularly want to hear the concerns and perspectives of women. They ask the female chair to come up with the agenda and questions to be discussed and after the meeting invite her and one of the participants to meet the elders to give feedback. They listen well and ask them to help draft a job description and proposal to be jointly communicated to the next church members meeting.

Where women in church feel valued and God's good design is reflected, what impact will this approach have on the church family as a whole?

Rachel Sloan and Elinor Magowan
FIEC Directors of Women's Ministry

FIEC LEADERS CONFERENCE 2024 CULTIVATING A HEALTHY WOMEN'S MINISTRY (FOR MEN!)

1. What would it look like for church leaders to not shepherd women properly and not resource or value ministry amongst women?

Common pitfalls¹

- Shoddy Theology
- Waning Commitment
- Tired Thinking
- Relational Insensitivity
- Miserable negativity

Sophie feels frustrated with the male elders at Anytown Church. She is a partner in a law firm and used to expressing her views in partners meetings. She serves faithfully in Sunday school and makes sacrifices to attend her Lifegroup midweek. She's been involved in church life for over 10 years. During that time her personal circumstances have changed - she is single and feels this keenly and supports her aging mother who lives a distance away. On a Sunday evening, she shares a pew with one of the elders. At the end of the service he greets her briefly and starts to chat about his work and family life. Sophie is waiting for him to ask questions about her upcoming work responsibilities as she is dreading going into the office on Monday morning and has a difficult partner meeting that week. But he doesn't. She thinks he may ask how did Sunday school go that morning, but he doesn't. She is aware that the elders are discussing a possible church plant her side of town but before she can ask questions, he excuses himself and five minutes later she sees him deep in animated conversation with one of the younger men who attends a preaching class.

How could this elder have shown value to this woman, heard her concerns, and benefitted from her perspective?

¹ Lazy Complementarianism – Gary & Fiona Millar, Priscilla & Aquilla Conference 2023

2. How do we create a culture where ministry amongst women is valued, and demonstrate the goodness of what the Bible has to say about men and women?

- Have clarity on your theological convictions
- Demonstrate men and women working together as valued, essential co-labourers
- Invest in the training and development of women
- Resource the establishment of ministry amongst women (and men)

A young woman comes to you and expresses a desire to go into full-time Christian work. She has served faithfully in the young people's work, and you've noticed her evident prayerfulness, keenness to learn, ability to get alongside others and evangelistic heart.

What do you say to her? What can you do to help her?

Audit women's ministry in your church:

QUESTIONS	RANK 1= LOW 5 = HIGH	ACTIONS
1. As an eldership how clear are you on your theological convictions and their outworking when it comes to complementarianism?		
2. How much is women's ministry valued alongside the ministry of men in the life of the church?		
3. Rank your investment in women's gifting and ministry at your church.		
4. Do you resource women's ministry in your church fellowship?		

3. How can a male leadership team/eldership relate well to women in ministry (whether paid or voluntary)?

- Listen to them
- Include them as co-labourers
- Love them as sisters in Christ