

SEXUALITY AND CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

Our aim in the following statement is to combine theological thinking and Biblical commitment with contemporary understanding and compassionate pastoral concern in responding to homosexuality in general and same-sex partnerships in particular. We believe that the following statements sum up a Biblical position on this subject and do not believe that holding such theological and ethical views is in itself homophobic.

1. All of us are sinners and the only true hope we have is through the Lord Jesus Christ. This is so regardless of our sexuality.
2. God has a deep love and concern for all human beings, regardless of their sexuality and his desire is that all human beings repent and come to a knowledge of the truth and be saved (2 Peter 3: 9, 1 Timothy 2: 4). We specifically condemn unbiblical prejudice against homosexuals simply because of their homosexuality and wish to mirror God's love and concern in our own attitudes and actions.
3. Marriage is an institution created by God, which it is intended that one man and one woman enter into an exclusive relationship for life. The state has no authority to redefine marriage to include same-sex partnerships. Marriage is the only form of partnership approved by God for sexual relations and homoerotic sexual practice is incompatible with God's will revealed in Scripture.
4. Churches should be communities of grace in which redeemed sinners, who may experience many temptations of which same-sex attraction is one, should be encouraged and strengthened and helped to grow in Christian maturity and obedience. As with many others who are single and may experience loneliness and isolation it is the responsibility of churches to be a family to which such people can belong. We do not believe a sexual relationship is essential for a meaningful life and we therefore seek to foster positive attitudes to singleness in the church.
5. As with other habitual and un-repentant sin, continuing homosexual practice is incompatible with membership of God's family (1 Corinthians 6: 9 – 11). However like all who are currently outside God's kingdom we would expect that those who are still active in homosexual practice would be welcomed into church services and that the gospel would be shared with them as it would with anyone else. We urge gentleness, patience and ongoing pastoral care during this process. As with others who have repented and wish to change their lifestyle we urge continuing pastoral support and love after a person renounces same-sex sexual relations and seeks to live a new life. However both membership of and leadership in the church are not permissible for someone living in unrepentant disobedience to God's will.
6. On the basis of a commitment to obedience to God's will revealed in Scripture, churches may not celebrate or bless same-sex partnerships or perform same-sex weddings.

APPROVED EFCC AGM MAY 2016