



Church Policy Statement on Human Sexuality.

Introduction

This is a policy statement of Somerset West Baptist Church regarding beliefs concerning human sexuality.

What we believe about Human Sexuality.

Where culture might view sexual behaviour as nothing more than recreational play between two consenting adults for sexual release, we believe Scripture has a much higher view of sexual behaviour. We believe sex is the union between two persons, where they become “one flesh” (Gen 2:24). This is a graphic and weighty word that means two people are fused together at the deepest level. It is the bonding of two people into one entity – body and soul, physical and spiritual. This is why we believe God has instructed human sexuality to be enjoyed within the confines of marriage and that any sexual behaviour outside of marriage is not part of God’s original intentions.

I Corinthians 6:9-11 condemns a variety of lifestyles including those associated with adultery, prostitution, and homosexuality. The Bible condemns all forms of sexual immorality and encourages Christians to flee from it because of its destructive effects, and because the body of the Christian is the temple of the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 3:16 & 6:12-20).

Romans 1:18-32 makes it clear that it is not only sinful to engage in homosexual unions, but also to approve of such sins in others or encourage their practice. As a result, in order to maintain our consistent Christian witness, we cannot sanction, approve, or promote in any way adultery, fornication (a sexual relationship between an unmarried man and woman; i.e. “living together”), pornography, paedophilia, polygamy, bestiality, or homosexual unions. This is made clear also by other verses throughout the Old Testament as well as by these and other passages in the New Testament.

Our church follows what the Bible reveals as the “sure foundation” of the teachings of Jesus Christ and his apostles (Matthew 7:24-29 and I Corinthians 14:37). The church is called to teach and practice these teachings and is not at liberty to depart from them for a different authority if it is to authentically bear the name “Christian.” Though we strive to live peaceably with all people and to obey legitimate government authority, in instances involving matters as foundational as marriage we must ultimately obey God rather than man if the two come into conflict (Acts 4:18-22).

Sexual activities outside of marriage, including but not limited to fornication, adultery, incest, homosexuality, paedophilia, polygamy and bestiality are inconsistent with the teachings of the Bible and the church. Lewd conduct, transgenderism, and the creation or distribution or the viewing of pornography are incompatible with God’s intention.

The Scriptures have much to say about sexual behavior, from the beautiful affirmations of the Song of Songs to the clear prohibitions found throughout the Bible (e.g., Rom. 13:13-14; 1 Cor. 5:1-2; 6:9-10, 15-18; Gal. 5:16-21; 1 Thess. 4:3-8). The Apostle Paul affirms that among believers “there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality” (Eph. 5:3). All sexual activity outside a monogamous heterosexual marriage (refer to SWBC marriage policy) is specifically condemned as sin in both the Old Testament and the New Testament (Gen. 19:4-11[cf. 2 Pet. 2:6-7; Jude 7]; Lev. 18:22; 20:13; Judges 19:22-25; Rom. 1:24-27; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; 1 Tim. 1:8-11).

What we believe about LGBTQ

Recognizing that we all struggle with sin, Somerset West Baptist Church will provide an environment that welcomes people who struggle with sexual sin. We will seek to love all people in Jesus' name, pointing them towards Christ's power to forgive and heal. While the Bible teaches that those who engage in sexual sin, sin against their own body we also recognize that sexual sin is not characterized in Scripture as being more severe than other forms of sin. We will seek God to discern ways that we can directly and indirectly minister and share God's love with those who struggle with every kind of sin. We also recognize that there is a difference between temptation and behavior and while temptation is sometimes unavoidable we are responsible for our behavior.

All of human existence, including our sexuality, has been deeply damaged by the fall into sin (Gen. 3; Rom. 3:23; 5:12). We all are sinners, broken in some measure by this fall. Though Christians are rescued, reconciled, renewed and in process of being transformed, this brokenness also affects us in that we groan, as the whole creation, eager to experience final redemption knowing at present we live in a not-yet-glorified state (Rom. 8:22-23).

Everything, from our environment to our bodily genetic code, has been ravaged by sin and the fall. Whether the distorted attractions people experience are the product of their environment, their genetics, or another source, they are not what God intends and so do not render LGBTQ behavior legitimate.

Temptation, including sexual attractions, is not sin. Sin is yielding to temptation. Jesus himself was tempted, yet without sin (Matt. 4:1-11, Heb. 4:15).

The gospel is full of grace and truth. It is an offer of grace and forgiveness to sinners as well as a call to live a holy life. It empowers us in the struggle to resist sin, including all forms of sexual sin (Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Eph. 4:20-24; 1 Thess. 4:3-8; Tit. 2:11-13).

At the same time, all human beings deserve to be treated with dignity and respect because each of us bears the image of God. An LGBTQ person deserves this dignity and respect no less than any other, and we, as Christians, should demonstrate this in our thoughts, speech, and behavior. Speech, including humor, which demeans LGBTQ people, has no place in the Christian community. Likewise, this means we oppose any mistreatment of those who identify as LGBTQ.

We mourn with those who struggle with same sex attractions and transgenderism, and with their families, but as we grieve we know that God can bring victory to those that surrender and follow the clear divine teachings of Scripture.

We in the Church must minister to and support those among us who struggle with same-sex attractions and transgenderism, and those who have family members or others close to them who identify as LGBTQ.

In all these implications we must never compromise the biblical standard for sexuality while at the same time we must treat everyone, including those who identify as LGBTQ, with gentleness, compassion, and love, while pointing them to the only hope any of us have, which is the gospel of Jesus Christ. We will be "welcoming but not affirming".

Because membership in a church is an outgrowth of accepting the Lordship and leadership of Jesus in one's life, someone unwilling to repent of their LGBTQ lifestyle would not be accepted as a member at Somerset West Baptist Church. That does not mean they cannot attend church – we hope they do! God's Word has the power to change our lives.

Recommended Resources

Sam Allberry Is God Anti-Gay?

Sam Allberry Why does God care who I sleep with?

Dr Linda Seiler How Jesus Redeemed my Gender Confusion
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=W4WxPhWdU60>

John Piper Why is Homosexuality Wrong?
<https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/why-is-homosexuality-wrong>

Doug Wilson LGBT Basics
<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/lgbt-basics>

Sam Allberry How to Navigate Conversations About Sexual Identity
<https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/how-to-navigate-conversations-about-sexual-identity>