

A Position Paper on Sexuality¹

WestGate Church recognizes that while conversations regarding human sexuality and gender are complex and multi-layered, God still has some significant things to say about human sexuality and gender throughout the Bible. But before we begin, we must confess that we are heart-broken by the reality of the global church's posture towards the LGBT+ community which has not consistently reflected the command of Jesus for Christians to love all people.

WestGate, in line with the teachings of Jesus, desires to be a community marked by our love and hospitality towards everyone, regardless of one's theological and political views, ethnicity, race, sexual preferences and/or gender.

We want to pause and say to our LGBT+ community that we love you and are committed to developing deeper relationships with you. We want to hear your story and provide any support and resources to help navigate your journey to God and what His plan might be for us. We are committed to walk alongside all who desires to explore and follow Jesus and what that may look like in our lives.

We thought it would be important to lay out our position on sexuality and gender for anyone who is exploring our community. We consider ourselves to humbly hold the position of a "welcoming but non-affirming," meaning we welcome, love and care for the LGBT+ community while continuing to hold the biblical Christian view of marriage between one man and one woman.

Therefore, legitimate sexual relations are exercised solely between one man and one woman in a monogamous covenantal marriage. Hence, any sexual relations outside of marriage (referred to in the New Testament as "porneia or sexually immorality") including but not limited to, adultery, polygamy, polyamorous, premarital sex, and same-sex activity are inconsistent with the teachings of the Bible and the Church. Further, the creation, distribution and/or viewing of pornography, are incompatible with the biblical witness. In terms of gender, we hold to the biblical view of biological sex determining one's gender.

WestGate is committed to responding consistently to *all* forms of sexual relations outside of marriage in a manner that's gracious, appropriate, loving and helpful to individuals who desire to follow Jesus in our community. And we recognize that many might have questions on why we came to a "welcoming but non-affirming" view, so we encourage those to read what is said below. *But most importantly, we do not want to point you to a document or a position but someone you can have a healthy conversations with in regards to sexuality and gender. Our pastoral staff is ready and available for further conversations.*

¹ Much of our work is drawn from Preston Sprinkle's work from The Center for Faith, Sexuality and Gender and the gospel coalition article on transgender revolution. Please see:
<https://www.centerforfaith.com/blog/the-debate-about-same-sex-marriage-is-not-a-secondary-issue>
<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/responding-to-the-transgender-revolution>

Here are the three key reasons for our “welcoming but non-affirming” view:

(1) First, whenever marriage is mentioned in Scripture, sex difference is either assumed or explicitly asserted as an essential part of what marriage is.

In Genesis 2, Matthew 19, Ephesians 5, 1 Corinthians 11 and others where the story of God, creation, and redemption is tethered to gender difference in marriage. One quick example: in Genesis 2:18 and 20, Eve is described as a “suitable” helper. The Hebrew word for “suitable” is “kenegdo” and it captures both similarity and difference. That is, Eve is like Adam since she’s human, but she’s not like Adam since she’s female and Adam is male.

(2) Whenever same-sex relations are mentioned, they are prohibited, condemned, or described as sin²—in spite of the remarkable diversity the Bible presents on all kinds of other theological and ethical issues.

For example, Romans 1:26-27 explains “Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error.”

(3) The historic, multi-denominational, global witness of the church has agreed with these first two points, even though this global church can hardly agree on anything else.

Whether Roman Catholic, Protestant, Eastern Orthodox, Russian Orthodox, Coptic Christian, Syrian Orthodox, Charismatic or non-Charismatic, Reformed or Wesleyan, African, Latin American, South American, European, Scandinavian or Asian Christian, the uniformity on this issue is unparalleled.

² Lev 18:22; 20:13; Rom 1:26-27; 1 Cor 6:9-10; 1 Tim 1:9-10