

# **Voices: 10 ways to support women in ministry**

August 1, 2023

Many attendees of the 2023 Baptist General Convention of Texas annual meeting stopped by our booth and shared their support for women in ministry. Both women and men had questions. Women had many stories to share—of their pain, their calling and their journeys. It was joyous and heart-wrenching.

A motion in support of women in ministry was presented, revised, amended and finally adopted during that meeting. The original motion specifically named “women in all ministry and pastoral roles,” but the adopted motion substituted “leadership” in place of “pastoral.”

We, like Meredith Stone—executive director of the national Baptist Women in Ministry organization—are disappointed by the change of terms. But, like Stone, we also are “hopeful that the motion will provide measures of support for women ministering and leading in Texas.”

As an independent organization cooperating and collaborating with Baptist Women in Ministry, Texas Baptist Women in Ministry’s goal is not to change any church’s beliefs to match a predetermined set of values.

In fact, our main goals are to affirm, connect, inspire and advocate for women in ministry. One way we can do this is by helping churches assess where they stand on this important issue and to evaluate how well they are implementing their values.

If you are wondering how you or your church can support women in ministry in Texas, we would like to offer 10 ways you can demonstrate your support.

# 10 ways to support women in ministry

**1. Converse with a woman in ministry.** Better yet, buy her lunch and listen to the story of her experiences as a woman in ministry. Be as generous and respectful as you would to any other pastor, minister or preacher.

**2. Call her pastor.** If you are into titles and love to call people “Reverend,” “Doctor,” “Pastor” or other ministerial title, then call her pastor.

**3. Invite women to lead.** Make an intentional decision to invite women to preach, teach and present at all co-ed events. This includes convention events as well as annual meetings, leadership conferences, preaching conferences and more.

**4. Pay her well.** Women in ministry should be paid equitably to the men in ministry at your church. Consider her experiences, education and value to the church.

**5. Feature churches with female pastors.** Churches with women in ministry should be highlighted as examples of God’s faithfulness to the next generation. This includes on social media, in newsletters and other written publications, and in committee meetings.

**6. Create new policies.** Consider the differences women in ministry have compared with men in ministry. Create new family-leave policies, as well as policies on yearly sexual harassment training and how misconduct will be handled.

**7. Consider her spouse.** When events are created, name the events using gender-neutral terms to be inclusive of her spouse—for example, “Pastors and Spouses Appreciation Luncheon” instead of “Pastors and Wives.”

**8. Speak up and speak up boldly.** When men stand up and speak

violently about women in ministry anywhere—including at conventions—stand up and speak out boldly against language that denigrates the *imago Dei* and incites division. Passive support is not enough.

**9. Provide pathways to employment.** For every little girl sitting in the pew of a Texas Baptist church, create shadowing and internship opportunities in all areas of ministry. Celebrate and highlight young women who receive a call to ministry. Provide scholarships and leadership opportunities for her.

Invite female seminary students to preach on a regular basis. Then, ensure when she graduates from seminary, she has a job in a Texas Baptist church that will embrace her fully.

**10. Evaluate your table.** Use a church consultant and other resources to evaluate how well your church or convention is implementing its stated values around women in ministry. When discrepancies are found between professed and enacted values, build a new table where women and people of various backgrounds are equal architects.

This can be as simple as rethinking the way your church does baptisms and communion to something more challenging, such as having equal representation of men and women in the leadership of your church and convention.

If you or your church need or want help assessing or demonstrating your support for women in ministry, please reach out to [Texas Baptist Women in Ministry](#). We are here to help you.

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*Disclosure: TXBWIM board member Mariah Humphries also serves on the board of the Baptist Standard and had no involvement in the decision to*

*publish this article.*