

## **Recognition of Marriage and Biblical Sexuality (from the bylaws of Calvary Chapel Chelmsford)**

We believe that God created man and woman, and they each respectively and inherently have the genders of male and female. When God made the genders, He specifically did so in order that they would complement and complete one another. Thus God is the One who created the institution of marriage, and the Scripture records “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.” (Genesis 2:24) Marriage is by definition, the joining of a naturally born male to a naturally born female, and this definition does not change based on societal preferences, cultural shifts, or political mandates. For this reason homosexuality, and all other “sexual preferences” or “orientations” apart from a genetic male and genetic female are unnatural, sinful, and unacceptable to God. Accordingly, this ministry will not perform any marriage ceremonies between two individuals of the same sex. It will not condone nor recognize such same-sex marriages, civil unions, or domestic partnerships even if the government passes laws that provide for recognition of such unions.

We believe that marriage is intended by God as a covenant relationship that is to last for life. Therefore, the Biblical standard for sexuality is intended by God to be one genetic man, with one genetic woman, for life within the protection of Biblical marriage. Hence, there are many sexual activities that are inconsistent with the teachings of the Bible, and incompatible with a Christian witness. Some of these activities include (but are not limited to): fornication, adultery, homosexuality, incest, bestiality, pedophilia, and the like (1 Corinthians 5:1, 6:9, Romans 1:26-27). We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to only occur between a man and a woman who are married to each other. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. For this reason, this church will not condone relationships or activities that include such behaviors.”

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of the church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by the church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, should abide by and agree to this Statement on Marriage and Sexuality and conduct themselves accordingly.

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with scripture nor the doctrines of the church.