

From the Elders

CONCLUDING OUR STUDY

GLENWOOD CHURCH OF CHRIST / MARCH 2017

Just over one year ago, we announced to the Glenwood family that we would undertake an in-depth study of the role of women in the church. We are nearing the conclusion of that process, and in the next few weeks we will share with you the direction we believe God is leading us. As we move through this time of discernment, we want to offer to you our heartfelt thanks for exhibiting love, steadfastness, and patience throughout this process.

We recognize that the path we followed to get to this point was, in many ways, unique in our fellowship. Many of us were raised in congregations such that when an important decision like this one was made, the elders simply announced the decision, and we moved ahead together. From the genesis of our process, however, we all shared a strong desire to allow each member of our family the opportunity to learn from, grow during, and contribute to our study. As a result, we took intentional steps along the way to provide numerous occasions for you to be involved and to have a voice. We appointed a task force made up of thirteen Spirit-filled, godly men and women. This group was comprised of people who varied in their viewpoints on this issue, and from the beginning, they modeled for us great unity within their diversity. That task force invited other Glenwood family members to participate in this process by appointing a prayer team and a Bible study team to partner with them. They also invited respected teachers from our Christian universities to come share their wisdom with us, giving us tools to work through this difficult subject together. Additionally, throughout these past months, we organized multiple gatherings designed to give you opportunities to ask questions, share concerns, and process the presented data. We thank you for taking the time to attend the Listening Groups, Discussion Groups, and Focus Groups! Though we all have

prayed earnestly throughout this process, we invited everyone into an intentional 40 Days of Prayer. This quick summary of our process is meant to remind you of our commitment to engage this study together, as a family. And for those of you who participated in all or any of these ways, we thank you! We believe the process is as important as our destination, so thank you for traveling with us these past few months.

Over the next few weeks, we will spend time in discussion and prayer. Please pray for us as we seek God's direction for our family. Thank you for the verbal and written input you provided us during the Focus Groups and through the survey. Although we were committed to providing a voice for every member of this family throughout this process, we believe God has given us the responsibility and charge to make the final decision of where we go. We do not take that responsibility lightly, so please have confidence that any decision we make will be bathed in prayer while seeking the guidance of God's Spirit within us.

We love you all.

Your Shepherds