

Does promoting men's ministry mean we're discriminating against women?



This is something that we're sometimes asked, so here are some thoughts...

The problems

There's a 1 man : 2 women ratio in the UK churchⁱ

How does this affect ALL Christians?

- For men: there's a massive need for more effective evangelism, discipleship and ways of doing church
- For women: for half of them in the church (over 2 million), Christian marriage is NOT an option → the choice is... stay single and childless, or marry a non-Christian?
- For children/young people: spiritual fatherlessness → only 11% of today's church's grandchildren will have a Christian father & mother if current trends continueⁱⁱ

The church needs to be reaching men and women equally effectively.

The church also needs to ensure that Christian women and men have equal opportunities to marry someone who shares their faith and have children. At the moment, that's not possible for half of all Christian women, which is something that most of the church isn't really aware of.

Christian Vision for Men's CEO Nathan Blackaby is Co-Chair of the [ENGAGE](#) network, which is about 'making Christian marriage possible'. Please note: that's '**possible**' not '**compulsory**'! Biblically, singleness is good, and marriage is good. If people want to remain single, and that desire is coming from a place of emotional wholeness – great!

At the same time we know that

- If a Christian gets married, it's best if they marry another Christian – from biblical teaching (1 Cor 7.39 ; 2 Cor 6.14) and research by the Evangelical Allianceⁱⁱⁱ
- Research shows that most Christians want to marry another Christian^{iv}

The solutions

The ENGAGE vision

"To make singleness or marriage a genuine choice for all Christian women and men, through a church which is gender-balanced and teaches about healthy Christian singleness, dating and marriage."

For the purposes of Engage, "Christian marriage" is everything a marriage between a Christian man and Christian woman can potentially be, when God is at its centre.

The ENGAGE network

- Is a national network of Christian organisations and relevant ministries
- Raises awareness of the issues for young people and adults
- Brings experts together to find and implement solutions
- Works to connect men to Jesus and the church to men (see www.cvm.org.uk)
- Promotes teaching about healthy Christian singleness, dating, relationships, marriage and parenting
- Takes a balanced approach to support children/young people, women and men

Get involved!

For individuals, churches and national organisations

- Pray for change
- See our website www.engage-mcmp.org.uk for lots of resources to use about healthy Christian singleness, dating/relationships, marriage, young people's relationships, men's ministry and lots more
- Sign up for our news/resources email
- Get in touch via the ENGAGE website and like/follow us on Facebook

So...

If we promote men's ministry, won't people think we're discriminating against women?

We think men and women in the church should equally honour and encourage one another in all our varied lives and ministries. We don't want women to be discriminated against, but at the moment, one of the biggest ways that church is discriminating against women is by it not being possible for all those that want to get married to a Christian and have children to do so. That's injustice. That's what is causing heartache for many, many Christian women (particularly those aged 30/35+). That's what we're working to overcome.

So...

- Do single Christian women want there to be more men in the church so that, like Christian men, they have a genuine choice about whether they one day marry a Christian and have children? Yes.
- Do Christian women married to a non-Christian husband want him to come to faith? Yes.
- Do Christian women married to a Christian husband want him to grow in his faith? Yes.

Interestingly, a well-respected national Christian female leader recently said (unprompted, and not to someone from CVM) "I'm an egalitarian feminist, and when Christian women are talking to me about the lack of men in church, I tell them to support Christian Vision for Men."

When we see the reality of the gender imbalance, we can see that promoting effective men's ministry doesn't mean discriminating against women or promoting stereotypes. Quite the opposite in fact. And obviously, men should be promoting women's ministry too!

ⁱ Tearfund 2007; Evangelical Alliance 2012; YouGov 2015

ⁱⁱ See slide 20: http://media.wix.com/ugd/b7e400_66ba1a4fc22d4b54989309208fd7c256.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ Evangelical Alliance, see

http://media.wix.com/ugd/b7e400_d3c00a3aa17245e58ea22ee51f6bfc38.pdf

^{iv} <http://www.singlefriendlychurch.com/research/research>