



Leading Your Church to be as Gay-Friendly as the Bible Teaches

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A free resource for churches

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Our response to homosexuality and same-sex marriage will be *the debate* in the Church, for the next decade. It will split churches, families and friends unless Christ's followers find a fresh approach to address these challenges and opportunities. In this discussion guide, we believe we have!

Leading Your Church to be as Gay-Friendly as the Bible Teaches is a free, eight-lesson discussion guide. It was written to help pastors introduce their staff and other leaders, and eventually their church members to a biblically conservative but more gracious approach to understanding the experience, language, and theology of LGBT men and women.

This guide goes beyond doctrinal statements of what the Bible teaches on this subject. Leaders who complete the eight weeks will feel far more comfortable having thoughtful, biblical, and grace-filled discussions with their friends, neighbors, children, and LGBT men and women. This guide also provides a specific plan of action to begin changing the culture of your church by educating students, parents, and the entire church.

The eight discussions offered in these quick-reading, 61 pages include:

Discussion One: An Introduction—Includes “a word about words” section exploring what we mean by “gay friendly,” and what terms like LGBTQ, “gay lifestyle,” and *affirming* and *non-affirming* mean?

Discussion Two: *Not all LGBT/SSA Men and Women are Alike*—Discusses the differences between Christians who identify as LGBT men and women, and those who consider themselves to be same-sex attracted (SSA). There are LGBT Christians who believe as you do theologically, or might if we made it safe for them to have those conversations with us. Thoughtful, proactive churches will want to tailor their approach to LGBT men and women, depending on their age, spiritual maturity and the sexual choices they are making.

Discussion Three: *Six Things Most SSA Christians Would Like You to Know*— Shares a story of a Christian young man who struggled with same-sex attraction (SSA). His inner dialogue and perspective may help you see beyond "the issue" to the person.

Discussion Four: *How Affirming Christians Interpret the Bible Differently*—Looks at a number of the arguments made by those who believe the Bible allows for same-sex marriage and sexual relationships and how to answer them with greater wisdom and confidence.

Discussion Five: *Eight Popular Reasons Given for the Affirming View*—There's an element of truth and compassion that drives the affirming view. There are also many false assumptions made and we explore those as well.

Discussion Six: *"Why Not Let LGBT Men and Women Marry?"*—Juxtaposes same-sex marriage against God's design for marriage, and explores how the Bible offers alternatives for same-sex marriage. Also included is a discussion regarding, "Should I attend my friend's same-sex wedding?"

Discussion Seven: *What we Believe the Bible Teaches About Human Sexuality*—This is a prototype for a *Statement of Human Sexuality*, the leadership of your church can custom tailor, to reflect the theology of your church for a variety of sexual and marriage issues.

Discussion Eight: *A Church Covenant—Changing the Culture in Your Church*—This too, is a prototype for a church covenant, your church leadership can customize, which essentially becomes, the "how then shall we live together" statement for your church.

In addition, there are appendices covering a number of important things your church can do to be proactive, such as;

- Forming a task force to spearhead changing your church's culture.
- Ideas for better preparing your students to be more biblically literate on these matters.
- Keeping your children safe.
- Addressing legal issues and church policies to protect your church.

Please encourage your pastor to simply read the first section in this study entitled "*Why This Discussion Guide?*," to see if this study is right for your church.

Church leaders have a choice to be either **reactive** or **proactive** in their response to LGBT people, and many younger Christians in particular, are waiting for more grace-filled answers. Are they hearing them from your church?

A *Small Group Edition* of *Leading Your Church to be as Gay-Friendly as the Bible Teaches* is available on our STORE page.

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