Policy on Marriage and Human Sexuality

Introduction:

This policy statement reflects the religious beliefs and practices of Ocean View Baptist Church concerning marriage and human sexuality.

Marriage and Human Sexuality Statement of Definition:

We understand the settings for the full expression of human sexuality to be within the sacred bond of marriage between one man and one woman and for unmarried people to live celibate lives of joy and purpose in glad obedience to God.

Biblical Understanding:

We have come to this understanding by believing that the Bible teaches the following:

1. That the Bible is the inspired Word of God (II Timothy 3: 16, II Peter 1: 21), without error in the original (Psalm 119: 160), and is the complete revelation of God’s will for the salvation of humankind. It is also the final authority for all Christian faith, life, and moral values (II Timothy 3: 16, Psalm 119: 105, 133). Thus, our response to human sexuality will be according to and influenced by God’s Word, spoken in light of our interpretation of His Word, and viewed from God’s creation and design.

2. That the nature and effects of sin on humankind originate from the fall of Adam and Eve (Genesis 3). We suffer the consequences of Adam’s disobedience and have inherited a sinful nature from him (Romans 5: 12-21). This means that we as individuals (mind, body, soul, emotions, and thought) are touched by sin. Thus, we have all sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3: 23). In essence, we have failed to measure up to God’s standards. Our compromised, corrupted, wounded and broken nature affects all matters of life, including how we express ourselves sexually.

3. That compassion, love, forgiveness and restoration are for all sinful and broken people and that God’s grace is available to all who repent and follow Him (Luke 5: 30-32; John 8: 1-11; 1 Corinthians 6: 9-11).

4. That marriage is rooted in the Genesis account of creation, reflected in the teachings of Jesus, maintained consistently throughout Scripture and is defined as “a covenant and sacred bond between one man and one woman in a lifelong commitment to one another, which is instituted by God and publicly entered into before Him.”
   a. Marriage is established by God and intended to be permanent (Matthew 19: 4-6), as taught by Jesus.
   b. Marriage is a relationship before and under God (Genesis 2: 20-24), not merely a human agreement between two consenting individuals (a "civil union").
   c. Marriage is the most intimate of all human relationships, uniting a man and a woman in a “one-flesh” union (Genesis 2: 24). “One-flesh” suggests sexual intercourse and normally
procreation (Genesis 1: 27-28, 1 Corinthians 6: 16). God created sex to be good (Genesis 1: 31, Songs of Solomon) and to be enjoyed within the context of marriage.

d. Marriage is to be exclusive between one husband and one wife (Genesis 2: 22-25; 1 Corinthians 7: 2-5), where no other human relationship is to interfere with the marriage commitment.

e. Marriage is a reflection of the relationship that exists between Christ and the Church—His Bride (II Corinthians 11: 2, Ephesians 5: 32, Revelation 19: 7).

5. That all alternative sexual conduct/practices outside of heterosexual marriage including adultery, consensual sex before marriage, consensual homosexual/bisexual practices, pornography, and fornication are sin and in need of repentance and openness to the transforming power of God. Although one’s sexual disposition or orientation towards same sex or opposite sex does not alone constitute sin, we are all responsible for those actions or willful sexual practices we make outside the context of a monogamous, heterosexual marriage (Leviticus 18: 22, 20:13; Romans 1: 18-32; I Corinthians 6: 9-20, I Thessalonians 4: 3-8, Hebrews 13: 4).

Response:

Our response to all alternative sexual conduct outside of heterosexual marriage should reflect the way Jesus responded to the adulteress in John 8: 1-11.

but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. 2 At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. 3 The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group 4 and said to Jesus, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. 5 In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?” 6 They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. 7 When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, “Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.” 8 Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground. 9 At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. 10 Jesus straightened up and asked her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” 11 “No one, sir,” she said. “Then neither do I condemn you,” Jesus declared. “Go now and leave your life of sin.”

- By heeding to Jesus’ admonition to examine oneself first.
  - It begins with the self-examination of one’s own sin. The Pharisees, who wanted to stone the adulteress to death for her sin according to their law, refused to look at their own sin, which more than likely included self-righteousness, pride, arrogance, and greed. Sin is sin according to God. An honest examination of one’s own sin will lead to personal repentance and non-condemnation of others.
- By offering grace, mercy, and affirmation to leave one’s sin and pursue an abundant life found in Christ.
  - No stones were thrown at the adulteress that day. Rather than condemnation, Jesus extended grace and gave her the gift of life.
  - He showed mercy by bringing reconciliation to her. His compassion offered healing, relief and freedom from her sexual conduct that was contrary to God’s intended purpose.
  - Jesus also affirmed the adulteress to leave her life of sin and pursue or journey on towards an abundant life found in Him (John 10: 10, 1 Corinthians 6: 9-11).
Application:

As our culture moves towards the social and moral acceptance of various sexual practices expressed through adultery, consensual sex before marriage, consensual homosexual/bisexual practices, pornography, and fornication and as people struggle to abstain from such said practices, the church will be encouraged to ...

- treat all people with love, respect, dignity and compassion;
- engage in difficult conversations with humility, love, prayerfulness and care.
- protect the sanctity of marriage as defined as “a covenant and sacred bond between one man and one woman in a lifelong commitment to one another, which is instituted by God and publicly entered into before Him” and allow only such marriages to be performed in and by the church;
- promote good, healthy marriages and the value of singleness and celibacy, whether chosen or unchosen;
- create a climate of Christ-like character development by embracing and committing oneself to Biblical standards and reinforce who we are in Christ (a new creation, His child, washed, sanctified, and free);
- create a climate of acceptance, not to the actions, which the Bible deems as sinful, but to the person desiring restoration;
- create a climate of assistance by offering help and support to persons struggling with sexual conduct outside the realm of heterosexual marriage;
- speak into the lives of, and if need be, exercise the steps of reconciliation in Matthew 18 with Christians associated with the community of Ocean View Baptist Church who willfully and consciously continue in the practice of sexual sin (or other sins for that matter) in order to encourage them to forsake all sinful practices associated with their unique history and struggles and to follow God’s ways and purposes.

Ocean View Baptist Church does not support any form of physical or psychological oppression of a human being because of sexual orientation.

Marriage Policy:

As a result of our religious beliefs concerning marriage and human sexuality, it is our policy that the facilities of this church may not be used for any ceremony that approves of, solemnizes, supports or allows a same-sex union, or any union which, in the judgment of the Pastors and/or Board is inconsistent with our religious beliefs concerning marriage and human sexuality. It is also the policy of the church that no pastor or member of the church staff shall officiate at any ceremony designed to solemnize, promote, create, or approve of a same-sex union.

Only ordained clergy or licensed ministers employed or approved by the church shall officiate at marriage ceremonies on the church property.

Applicants desiring to have a marriage ceremony on church property shall affirm the church’s “Policy on Marriage and Human Sexuality” and shall conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the policy.

A civil government’s sanction of a union will be recognized as a legitimate marriage by the church only to the extent that it is consistent with the definition of marriage found in this Policy Statement.
Employment, Church Board and Church Leadership Policy on Marriage and Human Sexuality:

As a result of our religious beliefs concerning marriage and human sexuality, it is our policy that every ordained pastor, licensed minister, employee hired by the church, Church Board members, and other leaders as determined by the Pastor(s) and/or Church Board shall affirm their agreement with Ocean View Baptist Church’s “Policy on Marriage and Human Sexuality” and conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent with that policy.