Women in Church Life

A Congregational Study

About this Study

The following information was collected by the Elders of the Tusculum Church of Christ during late March to early April, 2025. The online form was closed on April 2. Handwritten responses were entered manually and are also represented in the following data.

In total, there were 169 responses.

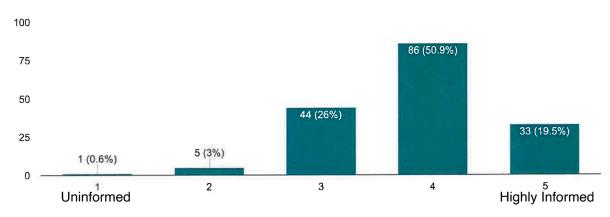
Pages 1-9 of this report are charts that represent the raw numbers and percentages of the responses.

Pages 10-20 of this report are the result of statistical analysis we conducted on the responses, looking especially for correlations and connections around various factors.

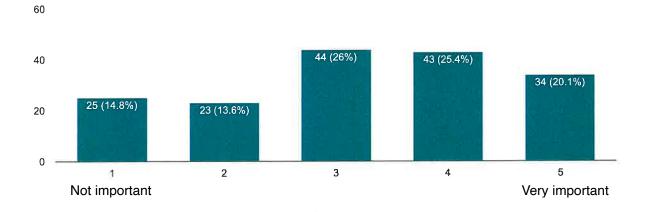
The Eldership is dearly grateful to the members of our church because your responses were honest and thorough. It helps the Eldership to lead wisely and with great sensitivity to all of our members, each of which is a valued part of our church.

How informed do you believe you are regarding what the Bible teaches about women's involvement in the church?

169 responses

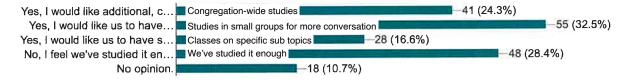


More than 60% of the community around us are people under age 40, with an average household size of 2.6. The largest specific demographic group ...is for our church's ability to reach our community? 169 responses



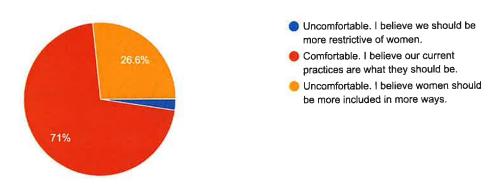
We recently had an in-depth quarter-long study of the topic "Scripture and Women" as a Sunday morning Bible class. Do you believe it would be bene...! for our congregation to study this topic further?

169 responses



There were 12 who offered additional comments.

Generally speaking, how comfortable are you with our church's current practices relative to women? 169 responses

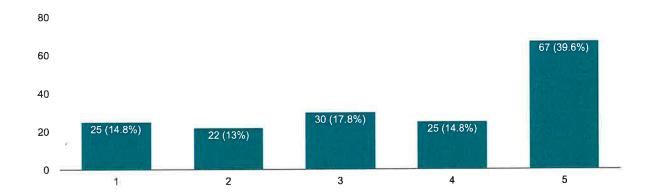


Specific Applications

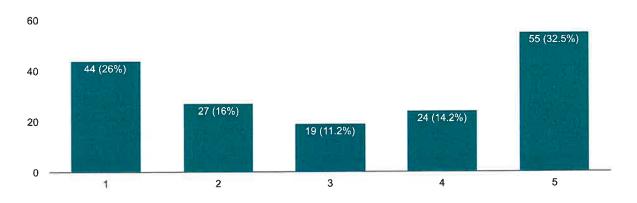
169 responses

The following charts were presented where people could score each practice on a scale of 1 (Very Uncomfortable) to 5 (Totally Comfortable).

During Sunday Morning Worship, a family goes to the front to extend the congregational welcome. "Thanks for being with us today!" The children read the day's Scripture, standing beside their parents

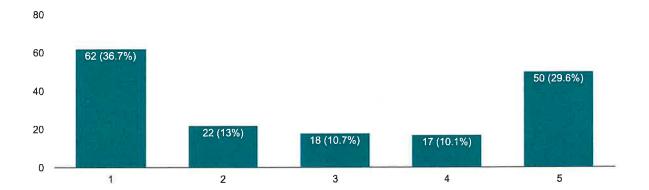


In Sunday morning worship, a female child or adolescent does the Scripture reading for the day, accompanied only by the male worship leader who is on stage. 169 responses



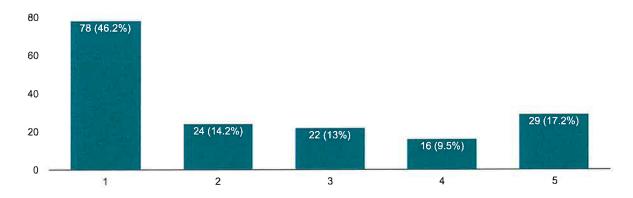
During Sunday Morning Worship, a female by herself goes to the front to extend the congregational welcome. "Thanks for being with us today!" Then she does the Scripture reading.

169 responses

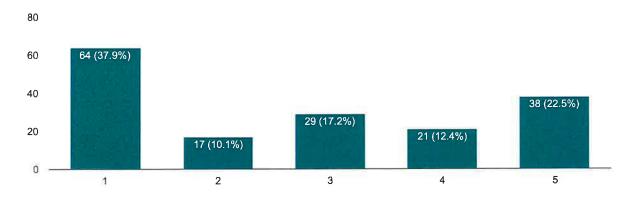


In Sunday morning worship, a female does the opening prayer.

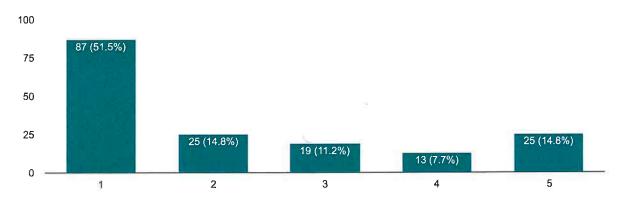
169 responses



In Sunday morning worship, a husband and wife together share a reflection and pray over communion.

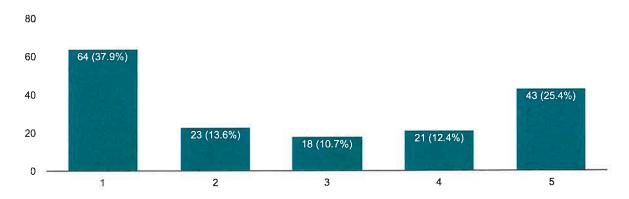


In Sunday morning worship, a woman by herself shares a reflection and prays over communion. 169 responses

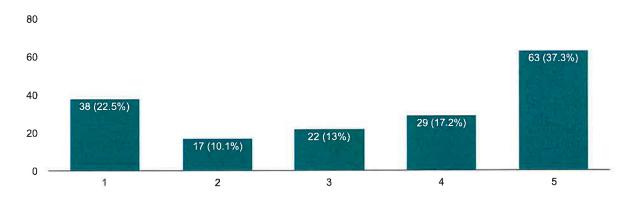


A female stands by herself and does the Scripture reading for the day,

169 responses

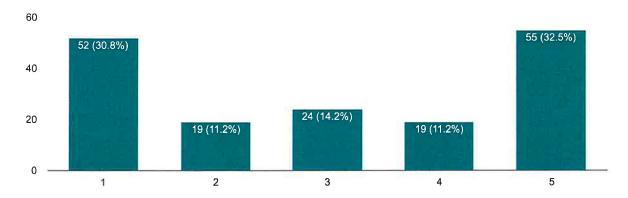


In Sunday morning worship, a young woman responds, wanting to be baptized. At her request, a woman mentor figure baptizes her.



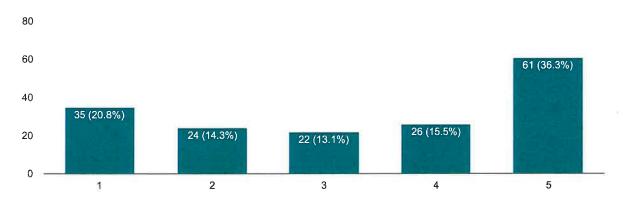
In Sunday morning worship, a young man responds, wanting to be baptized. At his request, a woman mentor figure baptizes him.

169 responses

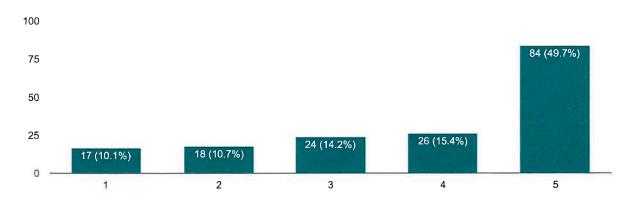


In a Bible class or life group setting, after the group has taken prayer requests, a female leads the group in praying for the requests.

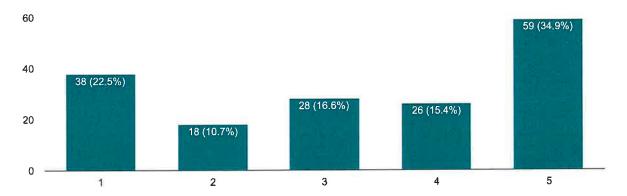
168 responses



In a Bible class setting, a male and female co-teach a class with both genders present, taking turns presenting and interacting with class participants.

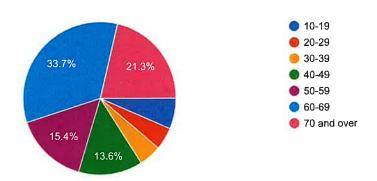


The church has multiple Bible classes. There is one Bible class option where a woman teaches the class by herself. Both men and women are permitted to learn from her in this class setting if they want to.

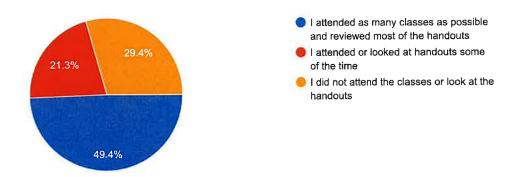


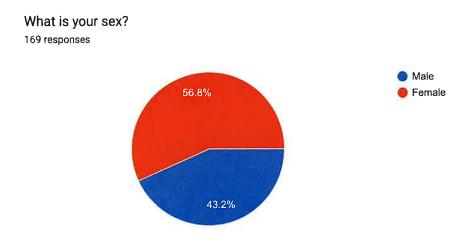
Additional Information

Please select your age demographic 169 responses



(Optional) Did you participate in the recent class "Conversations About Scripture and Women"? 160 responses

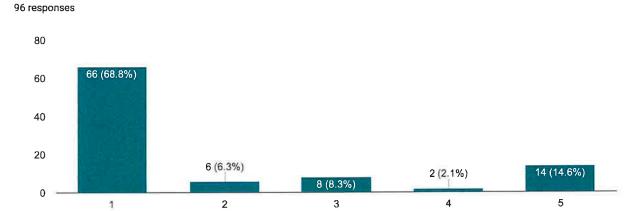




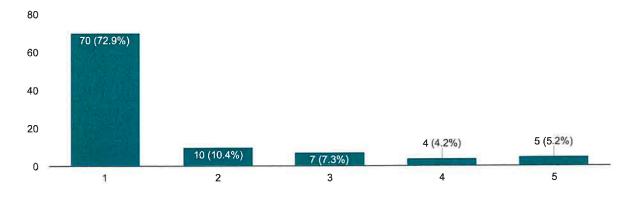
Questions Specifically For Women

Women only were invited to answer these questions on a scale of 1 (No, I wouldn't want to at all.) to 5 (Yes, I would like to very much.)

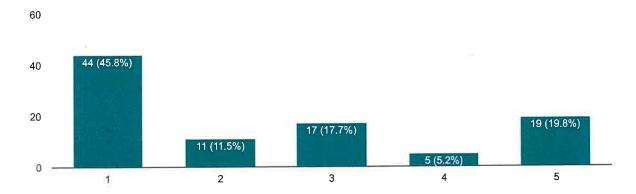
If you as a female were given the opportunity to read Scripture on Sunday morning, would you like to?



If you as a female were given the opportunity to pray publicly on Sunday morning, would you like to? 96 responses

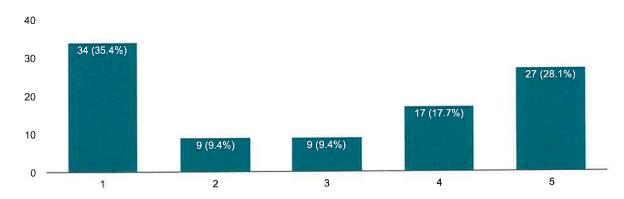


If you as a female were invited to pray in a Bible class setting, would you like to? 96 responses

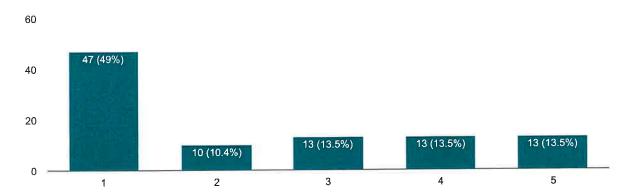


As a female, if a person you've been mentoring and studying the Bible with asked for you to baptize them, would you like to?

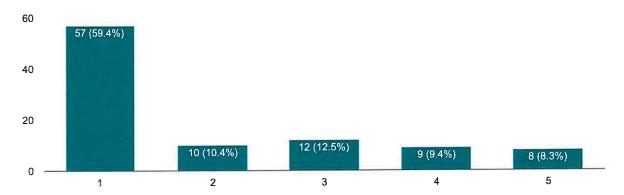
96 responses



If you as a female were given the opportunity to co-teach an adult Bible class with a man, where both men and women attended, would you like to?



If you as a female were given the opportunity to teach an adult Bible class where men were also permitted to attend your class, would you like to?



General Thoughts

◆ 1. Self-Assessed Bible Knowledge on Women's Involvement in the Church

(Scale of 1 = Not at all informed, to 5 = Very informed)

Knowledge Level	Count	Percentage
1 – Not Informed	1	0.6%
2	5	3.0%
3	44	26.0%
4	86	50.9%
5 – Very Informed	33	19.5%

A Interpretation:

Over 70% of respondents rate themselves at a 4 or 5, indicating a high level of confidence in their understanding of this issue. This is their self-perception.

♦ 2. Desire for Further Congregational Study of the Topic

This question received a variety of nuanced responses, including long written comments. Summarizing:

- "Yes, I would like additional, congregation-wide study." Various wordings added up to ~30.1% of responses.
- "Yes, I would like us to have more studies in small groups." Variants add up to ~22.5%
- "Yes, I would like us to have separate classes to hear from different viewpoints." 8.9%
- "No, I feel we've studied it enough." 27.2%
- No opinion / unique comments Remaining responses.

Interpretation: Roughly two-thirds (65%+) of the congregation desires some form of continued study, with a preference for either congregation-wide or small group settings.

♦ 3. Importance for Reaching the Community

(Scale of 1 = Not Important, to 5 = Very Important)

Importance Rating	Count	Percentage
– Not Important	25	14.8%
2	23	13.6%
3	44	26.0%
4	43	25.4%
– Very Important	34	20.1%

A Interpretation:

The congregation is split. Around 45% rate this as highly important (4-5) for community outreach, but 28% rate it as low priority (1-2). The remainder (26%) are neutral.

Here is the **age-based breakdown** of how important respondents believe the topic of women's roles is for **reaching the community**. The values shown are **percentages within each age group** (i.e., what percent of each age group selected each option on the 1–5 scale):

♦ Importance of Topic for Reaching the Community – by Age Group

Age Group	Not Important (1–	Neutral (3)	Important (4–5)
10–19	0.0%	45.5%	54.6%
20–29	25.0%	0.0%	75.0%
30–39	12.5%	50.0%	37.5%
40–49	30.4%	21.7%	47.8%

50–59	26.9%	23.1%	50.0%
60–69	31.6%	26.3%	42.1%
70 and older	36.1%	25.0%	38.9%

Interpretive Insights

- Younger adults (20s) are most likely to view this issue as highly relevant for community outreach, with 75% rating it as "Important" (4 or 5).
- Youth (10-19) and those in their 50s are also very supportive of seeing this as a missional issue.
- Older adults (60-70+) are more likely to view it as unimportant for outreach, with 31-36% choosing "1" or "2."

4. Comfort with Current Practices Relative to Women

Response Category	Count	Percentage
Comfortable (Current practices are biblical and wise)	120	71.0%
Uncomfortable (Should be more restrictive)	4	2.4%
Uncomfortable (Should be more inclusive)	45	26.6%

A Interpretation:

While 71% are *comfortable*, a significant 26.6% are uncomfortable because they want greater inclusion. This group represents a substantial minority that will require pastoral attention. Interestingly, only 2.4% desire greater restrictiveness.

Survey Results Analysis

The Openness Group

There is a statistically significant connection between those who are uncomfortable because they desire greater inclusion combined with those who are comfortable with our current practices, but are open to much more inclusion (ranking five or more possibilities at 4-5). From this we must understand that being comfortable with our current practices does not necessarily indicate being closed to additional inclusion.

Openness Group Overview (n = 169)

Group Description	Count	Percentage
Uncomfortable — believe women should be more included	45	26.6%
Comfortable but Open — affirm current practices, but open to ≥5 changes	41	24.3%
Total Openness Group	86	50.9%

Interpretation

- Just over half the congregation (50.9%) shows meaningful openness to change.
- 26.6% explicitly say they are not satisfied and want more inclusion.
- An additional 24.3% are *currently comfortable*, but signaled strong openness by rating 5 or more new practices with a 4 or 5.
- This "Openness Group" is **double the size** of the satisfied-only group, and **over ten times larger** than those who desire more restriction (only 2.4%).

Here is a breakdown of the **Openness Group by Age**, showing both **counts** and **percentages** within each age group:

Survey Results Analysis

♦ Who is in the Openness Group? (By Age Group)

Age Group	In Openness Group	Total in Age Group	% in Openness Group
10–19	11	11	100.0%
20–29	6	8	75.0%
30–39	5	8	62.5%
40–49	12	23	52.2%
50–59	15	26	57.7%
60–69	25	57	43.9%
70 and older	12	36	33.3%

Interpretive Takeaways

- Younger members (especially under 30) show the strongest openness to greater inclusion:
- All teens (10-19) are in the Openness Group.
- 75% of those in their 20s and 62.5% of 30s are also open.
- Older generations (60+) are more cautious:
- Only 43.9% of those 60-69 and 33.3% of those 70+ are in the Openness Group.
- Middle-aged members (40-59) show a near-even split.

This suggests that **future-facing decisions** will likely resonate more with younger members, while **intentional communication and study** will be essential for older cohorts.

Those Outside the Openness Group

♦ Non-Openness Group (n = 81 / 47.9% of respondents)

Subgroup Description	Count	% of Total
Restrictive Group — want tighter limits on women's roles	4	2.4%
Neutral Group — mostly selected 3s (ambiguous/undecided)	3	1.8%
Opposed, No Study — resistant to change and further study	33	19.5%
Opposed, Open to Study — resistant to change but want study	41	24.3%

Strategic Implications for Leadership

- 47.9% of the congregation does not fall into the Openness Group, but:
- Nearly half of this remainder (24.3%) still want to continue studying the issue.
- Only 19.5% are strongly resistant to both change and further learning.
- The **truly restrictive camp** is extremely small (just **2.4%**).

All Six Groups Combined:

Here is a Master Categorization Chart, listing all six groups in order from most open to most restrictive, including both their counts and percentages of total respondents:

Master Chart Summary

Group Description	Count	% of Total
Uncomfortable – Desire More Inclusion	45	26.6%
② Comfortable but Open to ≥5 Changes	41	24.3%
(The two above combine as the "Openness Group")	86	50.9%
Neutral – Mostly 3s	3	1.8%
Opposed to Changes – Open to Study	41	24.3%
5 Opposed to Changes and Opposed to Study	33	19.5%
6 Restrictive – Want Tighter Limits on Women	4	2.4%

This chart illustrates for us:

- A slight, but growing majority are open to greater inclusion (50.9%)
- A significant portion is opposed to changes, but open to study (24.3%)
- 21.9% total are firmly closed off (opposed + restrictive)

Possibilities for Inclusion

Here is a refined analysis of the 12 potential practices, ranked by the **combined percentage of 4s** and 5s, indicating overall openness and comfort.

Practices with the Strongest Openness (4s and 5s Combined)

Practice Description	% 4s+5s	Notes
Male + female co-teach in Bible class	65.1%	Highest overall comfort
Family welcome w/ children (male or female) read Scripture	55.0%	Strong baseline support
Woman baptizes a young woman (by request)	54.4%	Encouraging support for mentoring roles
Woman leads prayer in Bible class/life group	51.5%	Clear comfort in class settings
Woman teaches mixed adult Bible class alone	50.3%	Slightly more than half support this
Female child reads Scripture w/ male leader present	46.7%	Considered more acceptable than adult public roles

Survey Results Analysis

Practices with More Resistance (Below 40% 4s+5s)

Practice Description	% 4s+5s	Notes
Woman extends welcome + reads Scripture (alone)	39.6%	Support drops without male presence
Woman does Scripture reading alone	37.9%	Similar pattern
Husband and wife share/ pray at communion	34.9%	High level of discomfort even with shared leadership framing
Woman does opening prayer in worship	26.6%	High resistance to public prayer
Woman offers reflection + prays alone at communion	22.5%	Lowest comfort—major point of resistance

Strategic Summary

- The clear readiness zone lies in class settings, shared leadership, and private ceremonies (like baptism).
- Public worship roles without male accompaniment, especially those involving prayer or spiritual leadership, face the steepest resistance.
- These findings align with the broader trend: teaching and praying in private/mixed settings is more acceptable to members than leading worship solo.

Survey Results Analysis

Gender Difference: Overall Support for Various Practices

Gender Comparison:

Group	Average Score Across All Practices
Men	3.26
Women	2.86

Men, on average, rated all 12 practices about 0.4 points higher than women did on the 1–5 scale.

Surprising Insight: Men are, on average, 14% more open to women's further inclusion across these twelve possibilities than women are.

Key Patterns:

- 1. Across every single practice, men gave higher scores than women.
 - This is consistent and not marginal: the differences were often between **0.3** and **0.6** points.
- 2. The largest disparities appeared in:
 - Opening prayer in worship: Men (2.64) vs. Women (2.17)
 - Woman baptizing a man: Men (3.30) vs. Women (2.83)
 - Woman offering communion reflection alone: Men (2.42) vs. Women (2.02)

Survey Results Analysis

Women Ready to Participate

A point of curiosity for the Elders was, "Even if we approved additional practices, are there women here who would step up and want to participate?" For this reason, the survey contained a set of questions only for women to learn about their personal interest level in greater participation. Unsurprisingly, many of our women—just like many of our men-don't desire to speak, pray, or otherwise lead publicly. Likewise, there are some women who favor greater opportunities for women, even though they themselves don't desire to be more involved publicly.

This chart shows the number of women who expressed strong desire (rated 4 or 5) to participate in various roles—listed from most to least desired:

n=96

Role or Opportunity	Women Ready (4 or 5)
Baptize someone they've mentored	44
Co-teach an adult class with a man	26
Pray in a Bible class or life group	24
Teach a Bible class by herself (men present)	17
Read Scripture in worship	16
Pray publicly in worship	9

What This Tells Us About the Women of Tusculum

- 1. There is a cohort of women who feel ready to do more—not hypothetically, but practically.
- 2. There is a clear preference for relational and teaching roles.
- 3. Worship leadership is the area of greatest hesitance.