

GRACE COMMUNITY CHURCH

THE FOLLOWING POSITION HAS BEEN TAKEN BY THE ELDER BOARD REGARDING DIVORCED/REMARRIED PEOPLE SERVING AS ELDER/DEACON/DEACONESS IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

In 1988 the Church Board studied the matter of divorced/remarried people serving as elders or deacons(ess) in the local church. It was agreed by the Board, after careful study, that Scripture does not permanently prohibit people who have been divorced/remarried from ever serving as officers in the church (elder/deacon/deaconess). It was agreed that if a divorced/remarried man or woman met the Scriptural qualifications set out in I Timothy and Titus he/she could be nominated for these positions, and if the congregation affirmed him/her, they could indeed hold these offices in the local church.

The interpretation of Biblical texts traditionally cited as teaching that divorced or remarried people are automatically and permanently disqualified from consideration for the role of elder or deacon(ess) in the local church is influenced more by the Church Fathers and tradition, than by sound exegesis. In some cases, it would be appropriate for a person with a divorce or remarriage in their background to be considered for elder or deacon(ess) in the church.

Oftentimes extensive sin is committed by both parties in a divorce. Sincere repentance can secure full restoration to fellowship and participation in the life and ministry of the church. However, their reputations may have been so marred that it would take many years, and maybe more than one lifetime, to regain a status in the church and the community that is above reproach. For this reason, eligibility for the office of elder or deacon(ess) may be impossible. Even though a sin may be completely forgiven, it may leave scars in a person's life that significantly limit his or her capacity to serve the Lord.