Occasional Female Preaching

I've been there before, visiting a church with your family only to discover that—contrary to Scripture—a woman is preaching the sermon. What do you do? You want to hear the Word but you also want to obey the Word. You don't want to be disruptive but you must protect your family. As respectfully as possible, I took my family out between songs and debriefed with them, especially my son, why we lamentably had to leave.

If you are on holiday or away on business or moving to a new community, every Fellowship church you visit will come with its differences—it won't be your home church. However, in terms of bleeding secondary matters (like baptism, which reaches back to the Gospel itself) you should also expect some commonalities, like finding that a biblically qualified man is delivering the sermon as expressed in our 1997 position statement. While not strictly a matter of orthodoxy it is a matter of orthopraxy.

Deeply rooted in a wider complementarian understanding of gender, this is what Paul commands in 1 Ti 2:12a—"I do not permit a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man." This obviously doesn't disqualify a woman from teaching anything—throughout history woman have taught a whole host of subjects in secular spheres. It does, however, restrict the role of preaching to mixed-congregations to biblically qualified men (particularly elders/overseers/pastors). Nor does it disallow a woman from having the spiritual gift of teaching anymore than someone might evangelize but not be an Evangelist. Paul does permit, indeed command, women to teach other women in Titus 2:3–5 in devotional and practical ways.[1] However, women may not teach in a mixed setting, like when we gather together in Lord's Day worship.

Sadly, however, some Fellowship churches do not share the same 1997 biblical conviction. There are not only familiar cases in the west but also some examples in our central regions.[2] (The latter is something that may be news to many of our churches). The CCT March Survey Results (released Oct 22, 2026) states the following:

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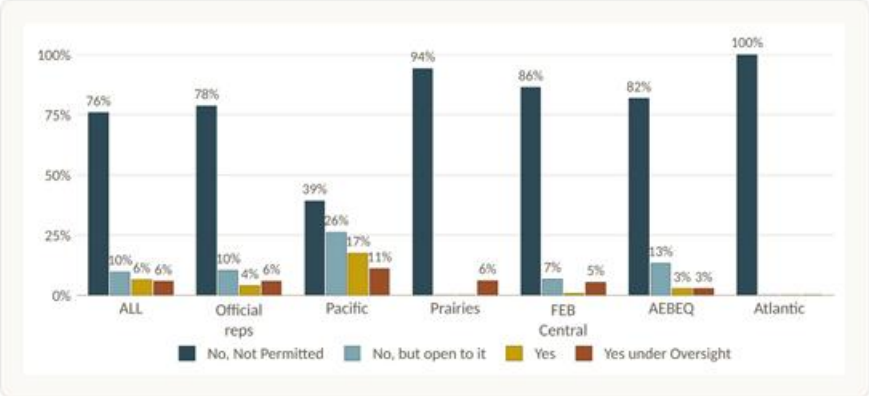
[1] I would say that men should teach theologically and if a ladies group wanted to explore something of a more theological nature, invite their God-given pastor to speak on it and then have him or a female facilitator to apply that teaching to womanhood.

[2] E.g. from East to West: Greenbelt Church in Ottawa or Faith Church in St. Thomas. There are others. These are shared not to demean these sisters but as examples of churches that engage in this practice.

Q26 **Do women currently preach in the primary worship gathering of your local church?**



By and large FEB Central churches are complementarian—their elders (99%) and preachers (94%%) are qualified men. Most would not allow occasional female preachers. However, the presence of occasional female preaching, or those open to it, in FEBC (and AEBEC), let alone FEB Pacific, is disconcerting.

FEBC testifies that any remnant egalitarianism is an outgoing trend and not the direction of the movement.[3] At the same time they engage in a tiered approach when addressing egalitarianism: 1) is the lead-pastor male?, 2) is the eldership male?, 3) are the staff pastors male?, 4) are occasional preachers male?. As the body responsible for enforcing our Bylaw and 1997 Position Statement FEBC draws the line at 1 and 2, strongly discourages 3 and tolerates 4. (There acceptance of occasional female preaching at staff/board level was made clearer in correspondence from Tom Haines, Oct 21, 2026).

My ultimate prayer for churches that practice occasional female preaching (and regions that tolerate it) would be that they would reform their views and practices in accordance with the Scriptures. For fellowship's sake, it is difficult to associate together, plant churches, send missionaries and fund seminaries when practices like occasional female preaching are occurring amongst us.

[33] https://keepfebcomplementarian.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/A-Letter-from-the-Regional-Director-Tom-Haines_Oct-6-2025.pdf