

A Statement on Human Sexuality

from the SCBA Regional Team and Trustees

We recognise that the subject of Human Sexuality has been raised in recent times amongst our Association of churches, pioneers, and chaplains because of the Baptists Together consultation on ministerial rules for Ministers who are on the national Accredited Ministers list.

We recognise that a range of views on human sexuality are held with our Association family. Indeed, the views of members of the SCBA regional team and trustee board vary on this matter despite our unwavering commitment to interpret Scripture faithfully; we do not all agree, but we remain resolutely committed to walking together in love. As a regional team and board of trustees, we do not believe that uniformity of opinion on this, or indeed a great many other issues, is required for us to continue in covenant relationship together, serving each other, and participating alongside one another in the mission of God to which we are called.

We hear and acknowledge the unease that the consultation on ministerial rules has caused many in our Association, and with that in mind we wish to offer the following which we hope may allay some of those concerns.

1. The Southern Counties Baptist Association team and trustees recognise our calling to serve all our churches and Ministers. Our staff team and our Board of Trustees re-affirm our commitment to do so to the best of our ability as we continue to walk together and watch over each other in the love of Christ.
2. We encourage your engagement with the consultation process regarding ministerial rules for nationally accredited Baptist Ministers. However, we also want to assure you that any response you wish to make is entirely voluntary. There is no compulsion for any Minister or church to respond to this consultation should they decide not to.
3. We re-affirm our commitment to the Baptist Union's Declaration of Principle (https://www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/220595/Declaration_of_Principle.aspx) and therefore believe, "That our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh, is the sole and absolute authority in all matters pertaining to faith and practice, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures, and that each Church has liberty, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to interpret and administer His laws." In other words, the SCBA cannot and will not attempt to dictate the decision or practice of our member churches in this matter. Rather, we encourage each church to prayerfully consider their own response as together they interpret and administer Christ's laws as revealed in Scripture, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
4. We will therefore seek to serve those in our Association by offering spaces for Ministers to reflect together about human sexuality, provide opportunities for theological reflection, and highlight resources for churches who wish to consider this issue.

5. We are wholeheartedly committed to proceeding with humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with each other in love, and making every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

For further information and resources about Human Sexuality, please see https://www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/353811/Listening_Human_Sexuality.aspx

It is our great privilege to serve our Association churches and Ministers. We pray for you all. Please be assured of our prayers for you very especially in this matter. We pray for wisdom, grace and most of all that the love of God may be made known in and through each member of our Association.

May you know God's abundant blessings,

The SCBA Regional Team & Board of Trustees