

# Liberty Baptist Fellowship

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**Subject:** Liberty Baptist Fellowship (LBF) Endorsed Chaplains Guidance in Response to the Supreme Court Ruling on the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) on 26 June 2013.

In light of the 26 June 2013 Supreme Court ruling on Section 3 of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), which states "the word 'marriage' means only a legal union between one man and one woman as husband and wife, and the word 'spouse' refers only to a person of the opposite sex who is a husband or a wife" is unconstitutional, and the resultant Department of Defense policy changes to extend benefits to same-sex domestic partners as spouses the following policy guidance for conducting ministry for all military and VA chaplains who are endorsed by the Liberty Baptist Fellowship are as follows:

## **Doctrine**

All religious ministry and pastoral care conducted by military and VA chaplains endorsed by LBF will fully reflect the doctrine and practices set forth by Liberty Baptist Fellowships doctrinal statement that all LBF Chaplains sign and agree to before becoming endorsed. Doctrinal statement is located at *Liberty Baptist Fellowship.com*.

## **Ministry of Presence**

LBF stands firm and fully believes that "all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography" are condemned by Holy Scripture as sin. Such practices violate God's biblical standards for sexual purity and are equally destructive to healthy marital relations and Christian social order. Responsible and caring ministry offered by LBF Chaplains will seek to offer repentance and forgiveness, help and healing, and restoration through the mercy and grace of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

## **Limitations**

In harmony with Holy Scripture, LBF chaplains will not conduct or attend a wedding ceremony for any same sex couple, bless such a union or perform counseling in support of such a union, assist or support paid contractors or volunteers leading same-sex relational events, nor offer any kind of relationship training or retreat, on or off of a military installation, that would give the appearance of accepting the homosexual lifestyle or sexual wrongdoing. This biblical prohibition remains in effect irrespective of any civil law authorizing same sex marriage or benefits to the contrary. Chaplains in violation of these restrictions will be subject to removal of their endorsement in accordance with *The Liberty Baptist Fellowship Endorsement Endorsement Policies and Guidelines*.

## **Expectations**

Chaplains are free to lead or participate in a worship service conducted on any military or VA installation or location designated for worship. This excludes conducting a service jointly with a chaplain, contractor or volunteer who personally practices or affirms a homosexual lifestyle or such conduct.

## **Pluralism**

All military and VA chaplains without exception are endorsed to ensure the free exercise of religion for all service members according to DOD 1304.28, par. 6.1.2 while serving in the pluralistic environment of the military. Every chaplain remains protected under DOD policy and applicable

federal law to preach, teach, counsel and provide ministry of presence in accordance with the tenets of their denominational faith group and their own religious conscience.

Therefore, endorsed Liberty Baptist Fellowship military and VA chaplains will:

- a. Provide sound, biblical pastoral care for all service members, DoD personnel and their families.
- b. Conduct religious support and pastoral care in accordance with the LBF Chaplain Endorsement guidelines.
- c. Treat all service members, DoD personnel and their families regardless of rank or behavior, with Christ-centered dignity, honor and respect while assisting the institutional leadership in its religious mission requirements and responsibilities as guaranteed by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.

Liberty Baptist Fellowship firmly believes and supports this vital ministry to our military, DoD personal and their families. We believe the above guidance will allow you to continue to offer outstanding ministry as it relates to worship, counseling, ministry of presence and readiness. We firmly believe these guidelines offers you direction and security in your ministry due to the new changes to DOMA.

If you need to discuss these guidelines further, or if you experience undue prejudice or irreparable harm as a result of following these expectations, please contact Liberty Baptist Fellowship immediately, at (434) 851-2425.

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