

1. Our Spirituality

a. Worship is Central to Our Life Together

We believe that living in a relationship with God as our Father, Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour and with the Holy Spirit as Friend and Helper is the greatest purpose of every child of God. We believe that God has called us to worship Him as individuals, as families and as His church – in group gatherings. Praise and worship expresses itself our daily lives as, among other things: the actual singing of songs accompanied by instruments (**Psalm 27:6**); personal holiness and obedience (**Rom. 12:1, 1 Peter 2:12**); using our money, wealth and possessions to further God's Kingdom (**Prov. 3:9; 1 Chron. 29:3**); walking in loving and healthy relationships with each other (**Matt. 5:23-24; 1 John 4:20**); care of the poor and needy (**James 1:27; Isaiah 58:6-7**), and a life of sacrificial service (**Hebrews 13:15; Eph. 2:10**). One of our highest priorities is our call to help all people come into a healthy, Biblical relationship with God.

b. Bible-based

We believe that the Bible is God's Word and that it contains everything that we need for life and godliness. We believe it to be inerrant, infallible, and God-breathed, and therefore the final authority and standard for everything we believe and do (**2 Tim. 3:16**). We believe that it contains all the guidance we will need for our lives, church and ministries. We would like to try to avoid 'good ideas' and not attempt anything which has no biblical basis, that is unrelated to Scripture or that contravenes clear Biblical teachings.

c. Grace

We believe that Jesus came to reveal a full understanding of the grace of God (**John 1:16-18**). We understand this grace to be a freedom from legalism, guilt, shame and condemnation. We understand that grace is an extension of the character of God and not a reward for our efforts. Through grace God communicates His unconditional love for us apart from our behaviour. We believe that God's desire is that we experience His grace in our walk with Him and that we display this grace in our attitudes and relationships towards each other.

d. Holiness

We believe that God's grace leads us to repentance (**Romans 2:4**) and that living a holy life is an essential part of God's call on our lives (**1 Thess. 4:7**). We believe that holiness expresses itself in a life that is consecrated in obedience to God and separated from sin in the world. It also expresses itself in being set apart for God's use (**Lev. 20:26; 1Cor 1:2; Eph. 1:3-6; Heb. 12:14; 1Pet 1:15-16**). Without being self-righteous or judgemental of others we seek to call others to repentance and agree to place ourselves in relationships of mutual accountability because we recognize our responsibility to help each other in our journey before God (**Matt. 12:35-37; Rom 3:19; Rom 14:11-12; Heb. 4:13; Heb. 13:17**).

e. Disciples of Jesus Christ

While we appreciate the contributions, denominations have made to our Christian heritage, we believe that Jesus has called us to be His disciples, not loyal followers of a particular denomination. We will continue to be committed to our particular denomination but understand that our main goal is to help each other live out the lifestyle, values and pursuits of discipleship as taught by Jesus.

f. Choosing Faith

While we will always face challenges in doing God's will, we choose to walk by faith and believe that we will succeed in all that God has given us to do. We choose to be forward-looking, positive and work toward solutions rather than entertain reasons why things will not work. We want to also keep our spirits in check by not walking in doubt and not becoming negative, discouraging and complaining in our speech.

2. Our Relationships

a. Relationship-Centred

We believe that the second greatest commandment Jesus affirmed was for us to love each other. Therefore, we seek to preserve relationships as a high priority. We want to encourage every member to journey with God "in-relationship" with others. We want to help people understand community-based Christianity and not self-centred religion. We value people over programs and do not want to use programs, structures or events that replace what should happen through relationships. We do not want to 'use' people to build the

church. We believe that the church exists for people and not the other way around.

b. The Importance of Family

We believe that God established marriages (a life-long covenantal commitment between a male and female - as defined in God's word) and families as society's most basic social units. We also recognize that there are several unbiblical attempts to redefine and undermine these building blocks of society. We therefore seek to encourage and support marriages and families and will attempt to develop a way of life and ministry that does not place increasing pressure on families. We would like to develop a way of life and ministries in which couples and families can participate together, as opposed to busy programs which separate family members.

c. Celebrating Diversity in Our Unity

We want to acknowledge our diversity and preserve our unity around that which is important to God and to all members. Our diversity is racial, cultural, age, gender, education, place of residence, church background, etc. We want to create avenues where all people feel free to express themselves, and where no one group of people has undue control to the exclusion of others.

d. The Accountability of Membership and Small Groups

We believe that Jesus shared His life with a community and that this was the pattern of the early church. We do understand that the church is universal in spanning time and place. Yet we believe that it has local, contextual expressions. We believe that the universal church expresses itself in local congregations and that commitment to a congregation of believers expresses itself in membership and not merely in casual association. This allows us to hold each other mutually accountable and to network together to accomplish God's purposes for our lives. We also believe that integrity in the lives and ministries of our members requires that we provide a context for accountability relationships and give high priority to the development of meaningful corporate gathering and weekly small groups where that can take place.

3. Our Ministry

a. Every-Member Ministry

We believe that every person has been gifted by God and has an important role to play in ministry. We do not believe that only leaders and a few others are called to serve the rest of the members of a church. Instead the whole church ought to be a serving community. To be a Christian means to be God's instrument of grace and to make a commitment to serve. We only want to develop ministries that provide platforms for teams of people to serve together. We want to avoid doing for others what God has called them to do. For example, the Children's ministry must disciple children, but must not do this on behalf of parents. It is parents who are the primary spiritual teachers of their children. As a result, we believe in providing training, support and resources to help people fulfil their calling. We also want to create avenues through which people can minister.

b. Spiritual Gift/Calling Centred Ministry

Since God has gifted every believer for ministry, we want to help people discern where it is that God has gifted them to serve and help them understand how to serve with their gifts. Ideally, we do not want people to 'volunteer' occasionally to do work. Instead we want them to serve using their spiritual gifts in areas to which the Holy Spirit has called them to serve over the course of their lives. We would like every leader and every member serve around their gifting.

c. Developing a Healthy Balance Between "Caring for the Reached" and "Reaching the Lost"

We believe that anytime the church focuses too much on the existing believers or on the lost, it becomes unbalanced. We would like to maintain a balance between teaching, shepherding and encouraging existing believers and reaching out to the lost in our society and around the world. We would like to reflect this balance in everything that we do, e.g. how we allocate our resources such as time and money, where people serve and which ministries we develop.

d. Prayer-Driven and Holy-Spirit Empowered

We believe that Jesus is Lord of His church, and that He guides us through His Holy Spirit. We want to consult the Holy Spirit in prayer in everything that we do. We would like to present all our decisions to the Lord in prayer and rely

upon His Spirit's anointing to make it a success. We believe that it only the Holy Spirit that can change lives, and so we want to walk in His anointing for ministry.

e. Networking & Strategic Partnerships

We understand that we will not be able to reach our whole community on our own and that to help reach the world, we will have to develop partnerships. We are dependent on help from others to achieve what God has called us to do. We will therefore start to build partnerships with other churches and Christian ministries who share our vision and values in order to serve God's mission. For example, on short-term mission trips, we do not seek to reach people without working together with the established churches or mission organizations in that particular area. As much as we will learn and be helped by others, we recognize our responsibility to help other churches and ministries as far as we are able to.

f. Simple-Church

We would like to do all things as simply as we possibly can, working as effectively as we can. We recognize that busyness often weakens our effectiveness. We would therefore look at processes and ministries in which there is no duplication. Instead we would like processes and ministries to serve multiple purpose. We will need to be disciplined in order to streamline all ministry and avoid time-consuming procedures things that have little effect on the actual fruit of ministry.

g. A Decentralized Ministry

Ministry is to take place out in the midst of a fallen world, so our challenge is to provide a balance between times when believers are gathered together to be equipped for ministry and times when they are sent out to do the ministry for which every member has been commissioned by Christ.

h. A Willingness to Change and Innovate

We are convinced that in order to follow Christ, we must be committed to change and willing to innovate so that we do not place any barriers to growth in our way to becoming the body of believers Christ wants us to be. We will constantly evaluate our forms and methods, seeking cultural relevance and maximum ministry effectiveness for Christ **(1 Chronicles 12:32)**.

i. Ministry Excellence

Since God gave His best (the Saviour), we seek to honor Him by maintaining a high standard of excellence in all our ministries and activities (**Colossians 3:23,24**). We believe excellence honours God and inspires people. This includes the concepts of evaluation, critical review, diligence and transparency (**Colossians 3:17; Malachi 1:6–14; Proverbs 27:17**). Excellence for us is always doing our personal best, without trying to attain the standards that God has set for others or empowered them to achieve.

4. Our leadership

a. Christ's Headship

We acknowledge Christ as the Head of our church and submit ourselves and all our activities to Him (**Ephesians 1:22,23**). We believe that His will must be sought for direction for His church, and that all who lead and serve, do so under His authority.

b. Servant Hood Leaders

We recognise that the word of God teaches that Jesus has called some to leadership in His church. Those called to leadership are both servants and leaders. Leaders are entrusted with the responsibilities of teaching, being examples, leading, oversight, disciplining, imparting vision and pastoral care along with the rest of God's people. We believe in a "flat" church without hierarchies and that all leaders and others are peers with different assignments in the Kingdom of God.

c. Faithfulness in Small Things

We recognise that leadership is a call, responsibility and privilege. It is also an area of ministry to which people may aspire. However, it is not achievement in the secular world which qualifies individuals for leadership. Instead, the path to leadership is faithfulness in small responsibilities which qualifies a person for advancement in leadership. We believe that leadership is not transferable from one church/ministry to another. We respect people who have served as leaders in other churches or ministries but believe they should follow the same path to leadership as existing members. Other important qualities that we believe qualify people for leadership are: spiritual maturity; Christ-like character; humility and the ability to submit to existing leadership. We also believe in the

development of the leadership potential of all our members and seek to do this through mentoring relationships.

d. Consultative Decision-Making processes

We'd like to allow most decisions to be discussed by all 'role-players' before putting them into practice. This means involving all members and especially those who will be doing the ministry and receiving ministry. This helps us draw from each person's creativity and helps us consider all the facts before doing anything. This way of doing things also helps us build a 'team' spirit among us. We also want to take everyone into consideration before making decisions. We do not want some people to take decisions on behalf of others, as far as this is practically possible. While this may slow certain processes down, we believe that it will preserve unity.