

CATCH THE VISION



Membership Information Class

GRACE FELLOWSHIP CHURCH
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OUR HISTORY

WHO WE ARE

Pastors Joe and Deborah Oakley began Grace Fellowship Church as a Bible study in a home with four other people in the fall of 2001. They had a vision for a contemporary, Spirit-filled church that experienced the manifest presence of God and extended His kingdom on earth. God gave us a slogan to describe this in a simple way:

“Touching Heaven ~ Changing Earth.”

To fulfill our vision, God gave us the mission to *“Love God and Love People.”* As we express our love for the Father through prayer, praise and worship, and obedient discipleship, we experience His manifest presence, which changes us. We then go out into the world empowered to love others into His kingdom. We fulfill our Great Commission ministry through Great Commandment love.

Our church began as a prayer meeting. Pastor Deborah was meeting with two other women to pray about starting a ministry together. They consulted their husbands, who felt they would eventually minister together, just not at that time. As the three couples continued to pray, they began to sense that God’s direction for them was to start a church. Through many confirmations, they began to move forward.

At that time, Pastors Joe and Deborah had been out of full-time ministry for two years. Pastor Joe said he would never start a church again because a previous church plant died a long, slow, painful death. He only wanted to pastor if God opened a church that was already established.

However, Pastor Deborah believed that God was leading us to plant another church. She helped Pastor Joe face his fear of failure by asking, “What would you do if you knew you would not fail?” Pastor Joe responded, “Start another church.” She said, “There’s your answer.”

However, we did not want to run off and start something without getting counsel. Pastor Olen Griffing is our father in the faith, and we consulted him along with Pastor Joe’s father, who is also a pastor. Both felt we should pursue starting a church.

When we received the vision to plant the church – immediately the devil tried to talk us out of it. He even used good advice. Pastor Joe listened to a tape series by a prominent church planting expert who advised not to start a church if you are over 45 years old. Pastor Joe was 46 and wondered if he was too old.

In the Fall of 2001, Pastor Joe and Deborah went to a pastor's retreat and Pastor Olen prayed over Pastor Joe. In the midst of the prayer he began to prophesy and one sentence jumped out at Pastor Joe: "You are not too old."

Pastor Olen did not know Pastor Joe was struggling with that, but God did. That word gave us the faith and determination to move ahead, and we began our first church service in a home in December, 2001. Within a few months, we had grown to over thirty people and were running out of space in the home.

On Easter, 2002, we began meeting in the gym at the YMCA in S. Grand Prairie. Over the next year we were a "portable church" where we set up and tore down for each service. We also started our praise team at the Y. Up until that time, the band consisted of Pastor Joe on acoustic guitar. Now, we had guitar, bass, drums and several singers. Over the next year, we grew to over 100 people and began looking for a more permanent location.

In early 2003, we were in prayer over where this permanent location would meet when Pastor Joe had a vision. In this vision, he saw the pastor of another local church open the door of the house we were praying in, throw in a set of keys and say, "Here, you take it." Within a week that very pastor called and asked if we were interested in renting their building. We immediately said yes.

Since Pastors Joe and Deborah both worked full-time jobs when we started the church, we had saved money for this very opportunity. We were able to purchase that church's chairs and equipment and move in with everything we needed to function. God has blessed us in this location, and we have experienced steady growth in numbers and spiritual maturity.

In the Fall of 2004, Pastor Joe had another dream. In this dream he was up on the platform when, in the middle of a service, people of all ages and colors began walking into the church. After the service, they said they all felt led to join Grace Fellowship Church. Pastor Joe woke up wondering what the dream meant.

He found out a few months later. Another church called Faith Harvest Church met in the same shopping center we are in. Their pastor resigned and the core group was left without a pastor. Pastor Joe met with the church leaders to see if there was any way we could help them.

One Sunday morning the members of Faith Harvest met and voted to merge with Grace Fellowship. Then, just like in Pastor Joe's dream, the people from Faith Harvest – people of all ages and colors - came into our church service. They were received with love and acceptance. The joining together of our congregations took us to a new level of faith and excitement.

That dream from God imparted our vision to be a multi-ethnic, multi-generational church. Since then, we have intentionally worked towards diversity in our membership.

We began to grow substantially in early 2006. Our leadership team began to pray about if and when we should go to two services. We were feeling led to do so on Easter Sunday, but asked the Lord for a confirming word.

Some of our leaders went to a pastor's meeting. During lunch, a pastor came up to Pastor Joe and asked, "Joe, have you gone to two services yet?" Pastor Joe answered, "No, but we've been praying about it. Why?" The pastor said, "I got a word from the Lord during worship that someone here should go to two services. I didn't feel right about giving it at that time, but when I came into the room and saw you, I knew it was for you. And do you know when you should start it? Easter Sunday."

Needless to say, we started two services that Easter Sunday. Our previous high attendance had been 220, yet that Sunday we had 350 in our two services. That's 60% more people than had ever attended Grace Fellowship before!

In June of 2008, Pastor Joe had two dreams where we had an African American worship pastor. At that time, Pastor Joe was not aware that our worship pastor was praying about making a change.

Within a few weeks of the dreams, our worship pastor resigned, and we began our search for a new one. We did not limit our search to African Americans, but a church we know recommended one of their members who is African American. God immediately knit our hearts together and he accepted the position. After that, we experienced more growth, with a significant increase in our African American membership.

Like many churches, our attendance went down significantly as a result of the COVID pandemic. However, we are growing back in numbers and maturity. We believe that God will continue to build our church, spiritually and physically.

Our current building has been a blessing, it is not big enough to fulfill the vision God has called us to. We are praying and giving toward buying land or a building. We have a desire to truly impact the community around us as together we "*Touch Heaven and Change Earth.*"

We have a firm conviction that we should, and we will continue to grow. In fact, we believe that God wants all churches to grow.

God Wants Churches to Grow

We have a deep conviction that God wants churches to grow in numbers and in maturity. Some churches emphasize outreach and numbers; others emphasize discipleship and maturity. We believe both are important. But the fact is: you cannot disciple people without reaching them first. That means the church should be growing in numbers. This does not mean that every church should be a huge "mega church," but that every church should be reaching the lost.

There are different kinds of church growth. Churches grow by transfer growth, like when people move into the area and look for a church. Churches grow by children being born to church families. Churches also grow by reaching the lost. This is true kingdom growth.

We do not apologize for believing God wants His church to grow. Here's why:

1. God loves the whole world and He gave His Son for the salvation of all men. He does not want any to perish (2 Peter 3:9). He wants *all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth* (1 Timothy 2:4).
2. Without Jesus Christ, people are lost and going to hell. As long as there is one person within driving distance of our church that does not know Jesus, we must reach them.
3. The early Church grew at an incredible rate.

Acts 2:41 *Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.*

Acts 2:47 *And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.*

Acts 4:4 *Many who heard the message believed, and the number of men grew to about five thousand.*

Acts 5:14 *More and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number.*

Acts 11:24 *A great number of people were brought to the Lord.*

Obviously, God is not against large churches, and He is not against counting people. That's because all people count to Him, and they should count to us!

We have a huge vision that includes reaching thousands for Jesus Christ. We want to see them saved and discipled to become mature believers. We thank God for the great things He has done for us, in us and through us. We believe Him for even greater things in the future!



OUR VALUES

WHAT WE VALUE

Values are biblical beliefs that define the core of our ministry and drive the direction of our ministry. Values answer two important questions: “Why do we do what we do?” and “What’s important to us?”

If something someone wants to do conflicts with our core values, we won’t do it. For instance, one of our values is the Word of God. We will do nothing that is unbiblical. Another of our core values is excellence. We want to do everything unto the Lord to the best of our ability. However, if someone wants to do something with excellence, but what they want to do is unbiblical, we still won’t do it because all other values must be in line with God’s Word.

Our Core Values

1. We value The Word of God.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

- We believe everything we do must be **Biblically based**.
- We desire to be **Christ centered** in everything we do.

2. We value relationships.

“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?” Jesus said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.” (Matthew 22:35-40)

- We believe that relationship with God is our first priority, so we desire to **know God** intimately and to make Him known to others.
- We believe that relationship with other people is our second priority, so we desire to **know each other** and lovingly care for each other.

3. We value small groups.

Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer... Every day they continued to

meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. (Acts 2:41-47)

- We believe **small groups** are essential to building our relationship with God and with other believers. Relationships are rarely developed from Sunday church attendance. You must be in a smaller group of people.
- Small groups also provide a place for **discipleship**, developing spiritual gifts and pastoral care.
- We desire to be a **loving, caring fellowship** of believers where individual needs are met.
- We desire to strengthen relationships in **family** units as well as in the family of God.

4. **We value the Kingdom of God.**

But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. (Matthew 6:33)

- The word kingdom comes from two words: “king” and “domain.” A kingdom is where the king rules or has dominion. To seek God’s kingdom is to seek to be under the **Lordship** of Jesus Christ.
- We believe that the kingdom of God includes **every true believer** in Jesus Christ, whether they are in heaven or on earth.
- We believe the church exists to **extend God’s kingdom** on earth.
- We desire for our church to **preach the kingdom, seek the kingdom, and pray for the kingdom** of God to come on earth as it is in heaven.

5. **We value prayer.**

This, then, is how you should pray: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.” (Matthew 6:9-13)

- We believe that **prayer is essential** to everything we do.
- We desire for our church to **pray without ceasing**.

6. **We value praise and worship and the presence of God.**

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God-this is your spiritual act of worship. (Romans 12:1)

- We believe we should experience the **manifest presence of God** in our worship. That means God’s presence should be obvious.
- We desire to be a **“presence-driven”** church, where everything flows out of God’s presence in our midst.

7. We value the grace of God.

For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.
(Romans 6:14)

- We believe everything we receive from God is given by His grace, which is His **unmerited, undeserved favor** and blessing.
- We desire to be a **grace-oriented** church. This means we will be accepting of differing opinions among believers in areas where the Bible is silent.

For instance, some people choose to celebrate certain holidays and others don't. Or, some parents choose to send their children to public school; some send them to Christian school and some home school. We believe there is no "one right way" and that parents must seek the Lord for what's best for their children.

Just because God leads you in a certain direction, does not mean that He's leading everyone else in that same direction. That's where we must show grace to each other.

8. We value unity in diversity.

You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth."
(Revelation 5:9-10)

- We believe heaven is composed of people of **all races, genders and ages** and the church should reflect heaven on earth.
- We desire to be a **multiethnic, multicultural, multigenerational** church where everyone is welcome, loved and accepted for who they are regardless of race, age, gender or income level.
- We are a church where **women are free to minister** in their gifting and calling.

9. We value spiritual leadership.

And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. (Ephesians 4:11-13)

- We believe spiritual leaders are to seek God for direction in ministry and to **equip** the saints for the work of the ministry. GFC is elder governed, pastor led and staff run - and the congregation ministers in their gifts.
- We believe that ministries function best in **teams**.

10. **We value the gifts of the Spirit.**

There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all...

(1 Corinthians 12:4-11)

- We believe **every believer** has received gifts from the Holy Spirit.
- We desire for every believer to discover, develop and minister their gifts.
- We believe gifts should be exercised in **church** and in **everyday life**.

11. **We value the body of Christ.**

For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body -- whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free -- and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. For in fact the body is not one member but many. ...Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually. (1 Corinthians 12:12-14; 27)

- We believe that **every member has a specific place** / role in the church.
- We desire to be closely connected to the body of Christ in the DFW metroplex. We have a “**kingdom mentality**” which means the church is bigger than just us. That’s why we pray for other churches and help people find the right church for them if Grace is not a fit for them.

12. **We value an outward focus.**

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen. (Matthew 28:19-20)

- We believe the church exists not to just meet the needs of its own people, but to **reach out** to the **nations** and our **own community** to meet needs and make disciples.
- We desire to be aware of the **felt needs** of our community and to seek God as to how to best meet those needs so we can lead them to Christ.

13. **We value openness and honesty.**

Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that you may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. (James 5:16)

- We believe the church is a place for people to **be real**.
- We desire to be a **safe place** where people can experience healing and wholeness.

The church should not be a place where people have to hide their problems, sins or failures. It should be the place where people are accepted where they are and helped to experience God's grace, healing, forgiveness and restoration.

14. **We value excellence.**

And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. (Colossians 3:23-24)

- We believe everything we do must be done **“as unto the Lord.”**
- We desire to do everything we do to the best of our ability.

We believe that God deserves our best. To do things with excellence, we must constantly strive to improve ourselves while we also lean on each other's gifts, talents and experience. This is why we always try to improve and do things better. This is also why we minister in teams. No one person has all the answers and abilities; we need each other.

It's easier to do things poorly, average or mediocre than to do them with excellence. Doing something badly requires no effort at all. Excellence requires our best. Excellence requires sacrifice. We need that attitude in all we do.

The church is primarily a volunteer organization, but we should still do everything with excellence, which means to the best of our ability.

O Lord, our Lord, How excellent is Your name in all the earth. (Psalm 8:1)

Approve the things that are excellent... (Romans 2:18)

If anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things. (Phil. 4:8)



OUR VISION

TOUCHING HEAVEN ~ CHANGING EARTH

To get anywhere on purpose, you must have vision, a mental picture of where you are headed. All great accomplishments start with great vision.

In May 1961, President Kennedy said “We will put a man on the moon by the end of the decade.” On July 20, 1969, the first man stepped on the moon. Bill Gates had a vision: “A computer in every home and on every desk.” The CEO of Coca Cola in the 1950’s said, “I want to make it possible for anyone in the world to be able to taste a Coke during my lifetime.”

All these things are great accomplishments that emanated from great vision. But the greatest vision of all time was when Jesus Christ told a small group of people “Go into all the world and make disciples of everyone.” That vision has changed the world, but it has not been totally accomplished yet. That vision involves you and me.

Every church has a part in fulfilling that overall vision, but each church may have a different vision about how their part is accomplished.

True vision is specific and states where we are going. True vision affects things for eternity. What things are eternal? God, His Word, and people. Therefore, a true vision will be Christ-centered, Bible-based and people-oriented.

Our vision statement at GFC is ***Touching Heaven ~ Changing Earth.***

The long form of our vision statement is to touch heaven and change earth by experiencing God’s presence and power, equipping God’s people, extending God’s kingdom and empowering the next generation for Jesus Christ. When we do this – we touch heaven and change earth.

The Great Commission is found in Matthew 28:19-20 where Jesus said:

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Our vision has four parts:

- Experiencing God’s Presence
- Equipping God’s People
- Extending God’s Kingdom
- Empowering the Next Generation

The first three of these are found in the Great Commission.

GFC Vision

Experiencing God's Presence →
Equipping God's People →
Extending God's Kingdom →

Great Commission

I am with you always
Teaching them all I have commanded you
Go and make disciples of all nations

The fourth comes from Psalm 78:3-6:

Empowering the Next Generation → *Empowering the next generation to share the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord*

We believe we fulfill this Great Commission vision through Great Commandment love. The Great Commandment is found in Matthew 22:37-40 where Jesus said:

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

When we say we want to touch heaven, it means we want to experience God's presence and power in our church and in our lives. We experience God's presence in our services through Spirit-led worship, prayer, the gifts of the Spirit and preaching. The two main ways we touch heaven are through prayer and worship.

Touching Heaven through Prayer

Grace Fellowship Church was birthed in prayer and everything we do is bathed in prayer. We believe that God does nothing apart from prayer and everything by it. In other words, if we don't pray, things don't change. We will experience no personal change or world change apart from prayer.

Why pray? What is the purpose of prayer? It's one thing to pray out of obedience or guilt, but prayer takes another dimension when you understand its purposes. We find those purposes in the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:9-13.

Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

From this pattern for prayer, we see seven purposes of prayer.

1- Knowing God or relationship with God

Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

The primary purpose of prayer is getting to know God. All through the Bible, God

desired relationship with man. God desires relationship with us and relationship is not possible without prayer. Relationship without conversation is a contradiction. It is through prayer that we come to know God.

2- Extending God's kingdom

Thy kingdom come.

Part of our job on earth is to extend God's kingdom. There are many things we do to get that done, but nothing we do will be effective apart from prayer. Jesus taught us to pray for God's kingdom to come on the earth as it is in heaven. In effect, we are to pray for heaven to invade earth. How do we do this?

Jesus taught us in Matthew 16:19:

I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

Keys represent authority. Keys open doors and close doors. We have the authority as Christ's **ambassadors** to bind and loose things on the earth; to permit some things and to forbid some things. How do we know what things to allow and what to forbid? The key is to know what is allowed in heaven and what is forbidden in heaven.

The original Greek in Matthew 16:19 is very interesting. Look how the Amplified Bible translates this verse:

I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind (declare to be improper and unlawful) on earth must be what is already bound in heaven; and whatever you loose (declare lawful) on earth must be what is already loosed in heaven.

So the key is knowing what is allowed in heaven and what is prohibited in heaven. For instance:

- Is sin allowed in heaven? No. So we should always deal with sin through repentance.
- Is unforgiveness allowed in heaven? No. So we should always be forgiving and loose those who have wronged us.
- Is sickness allowed in heaven? No. So we should lay hands on the sick and pray for healing by binding sickness and disease.
- Is Satan allowed in heaven? No. So we should cast out demons and set captives free whenever we can.

Get the idea? If something is not allowed in heaven, then we as ambassadors of the kingdom of heaven should bind that on earth. If it is allowed in heaven, we should loose it on earth.

3- Submission to God's will

Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

Prayer does not change God but it changes those who pray.

If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land. (2 Chronicles 7:14)

When we pray God transforms us. Our pride becomes humility. Our selfishness becomes submission. Our fear becomes love. Our unbelief becomes faith.

4- Getting our needs met

Give us this day our daily bread.

- James 4:2 tells us we have not because we ask not. There are things all of us have not yet received from God because we have not asked. Therefore we should believe big and pray big prayers.

5- Receiving forgiveness

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

There is no forgiveness apart from the prayer of confession.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

6- Warfare prayer defeats the enemy

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:

We must constantly remember that we are in a battle and that the enemy is not our husband or wife or our child or our boss or our neighbor or our friend. Our enemy is Satan himself and his number one goal is to defeat the children of God. But we have the promise of God's word that we overcome him through warfare prayer.

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. ...And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. (Ephesians 6:10-18)

7- Praise and worship

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever.

This brings us to the other way we touch heaven: through worship.

Defining Praise and Worship

To worship God means to show Him extreme devotion, intense love and admiration. A. W. Tozer defines worship as “to feel in the heart and express in some appropriate manner.”

It is not enough just to feel in your heart; worship also involves expressing that feeling. Worship is a heart attitude expressed. Worship is love communicated. The question is: how do we communicate our worship to God? Actually, the question is: how does God want to be worshiped? Jesus told us:

Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and His worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth. (John 4:22-24)

Jesus said true worship is in spirit and in truth. It comes out of our spirit, led by the Holy Spirit and is expressed based on the truths of God’s word. We will talk more about this later. For now, we must realize that the heart of worship is giving.

- Thanksgiving is giving thanks to God for what He has done.
- Praise is giving glory to God for who He is.
- Worship is totally giving ourselves in absolute surrender to God.

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God - this is your spiritual act of worship. (Romans 12:1-2)

Our vision for worship at Grace Fellowship Church is to experience God’s manifest presence by worshipping Him in spirit and in truth.

Experiencing God’s Presence

Experiencing God’s presence is of utmost importance to us. We believe that people need to encounter God in church. If we don’t – we miss the whole point. The point of church gatherings is not just to sing songs or hear a sermon; the main point is to experience the presence of God together.

We desire to spend time in the manifest presence of God, be changed by the power of Spirit, then go out to change our world with the message of Christ.

There are many aspects to the presence of God.

First, is the **omnipresence** of God, which means that He is everywhere at the same time. He does not have to leave one place to get to another – He is everywhere simultaneously.

Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, You are there; if I make my bed in the depths, You are there.
(Psalm 139:7-8)

"Do not I fill heaven and earth?" declares the Lord. (Jeremiah 23:24)

Second, is the **inner presence** of God. When we repent and are born again, the Holy Spirit comes to live within us.

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? (1 Corinthians 6:19)

Christ in you, the hope of glory. (Colossians 1:27)

Third, is the **manifest presence** of God. Manifest means "revealed, evident, obvious, clearly visible, plain, to be aware of." God's omnipresence is always all around us, but there are times where we are aware of Him.

How does God manifest His presence? By what He says and does, by His Word, His Spirit, signs and wonders, and the gifts of the Spirit.

So if the whole church comes together and everyone speaks in tongues and some who do not understand or some unbelievers come in, will they not say that you are out of your mind? But if an unbeliever or someone who does not understand comes in while everybody is prophesying, he will be convinced by all that he is a sinner and will be judged by all, and the secrets of his heart will be laid bare. So he will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, "God is really among you!" What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church. (1 Corinthians 14:23-26)

Sometimes the Bible refers to the manifest presence of God as His glory.

2 Chronicles 5:12-14 tells us that when God's people were united in their praise and thanksgiving: *Then the temple of the Lord was filled with a cloud, and the priests could not perform their service because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the temple of God.*

There are different words in the original Hebrew for God's glory. Some mean "beauty, splendor, honor, majesty, brightness." Glory is the outshining of God's character – all that He is.

The word used here is "kabowd" (kaw-bode'); which literally means, "weight, huge quantity, fullness." The word does not mean simply "heavy," but "imposing, making a strong impression, impressive, importance." When the glory of the Lord filled the temple, it was so heavy that the priests literally could not stand in His presence. We've seen that when people fall under the power of God, many times it's just the weight of his glory that does not allow them to stand.

We believe our worship prepares a place for the manifest presence of God. When He shows up, He speaks, He does miracles, He changes us. Then we go out and change our world.

So how do we enter God's presence?

Entering God's Presence

Thanksgiving and praise precede entering the presence of God.

Psalm 100:4 Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise; give thanks to Him and praise His name.

Thanksgiving is the entryway. Thanksgiving gets us in the door. Then, praise gets us into God's presence.

Psalm 22:3 says that God inhabits the praises of His people. Some translations say God is enthroned in our praises.

The Hebrew word used here means "to sit down specifically as judge." It also means, "to dwell, to remain; to abide." In other words, God lives in our praise. That's where His presence is manifest. That is where He rules and reigns. That is a way the King comes to the earth.

It is only when we approach God with thanksgiving and praise that He manifests, or reveals, Himself to us. Thanksgiving and praise usher in the presence of God. What does an usher do? Greets you and shows you where to sit. That's what praise does – welcomes God and places Him in His rightful place – on the throne!

Once God has reveals Himself, then worship is our response to His presence. If His presence is not manifest, there is no worship. If we do not respond to His presence in an appropriate biblical way, there is no worship.

Having a thankful heart and expressing that thanks to God gets us into a realm of His presence that we otherwise would not enter. When we are in that manifest presence, wonderful things happen. When we touch heaven – changes happen in us! When we live in God's presence, good things happen.

Blessed are those you choose and bring near to live in Your courts! We are filled with the good things of Your house, of Your holy temple. (Psalm 65:4) Glory and honor are in His presence; strength and gladness are in His place. (1 Chronicles 16:27)

In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore. (Psalm 16:11)

How to Worship

The Bible is very clear and specific about how God wants to be worshiped. He wants us to worship in spirit and in truth. Here are some of the truths the Bible teaches about how we should worship God by:

Praising

I will greatly praise the Lord with my mouth; Yes, I will praise Him among the multitude. (Psalm 109:30)

Singing

Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises. (Ps. 47:6)

Shouting

Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you righteous; And shout for joy, all you upright in heart! (Psalm 32:11)

Lifting our hands

Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless the Lord. (Psalm 134:2)

Clapping

Clap your hands, all you nations; shout to God... (Psalm 47:1)

Playing musical instruments

Praise Him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise Him with the harp and lyre, praise Him with tambourine and dancing, praise Him with the strings and flute, praise Him with the clash of cymbals... (Psalm 150:3-5)

Standing

Behold, bless the Lord, all you servants of the Lord, who stand by night in the house of the Lord. (Psalm 134:1)

Bowing/Kneeling/Prostrating

Oh come, let us worship and bow down; Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. (Psalm 95:6)

Dancing

Let them praise His name with dancing and make music to Him with tambourine and harp. (Psalm 149:3)

Giving

Give to the Lord the glory due His name; Bring an offering, and come into His courts. Oh, worship the Lord... (Psalm 96:8-9)

The New Song (spontaneous songs of praise)
Sing to the Lord a new song... (Psalm 96:1)

We've talked about experiencing God's presence, now let's look at how we change earth by equipping God's people and extending God's kingdom.

Changing Earth

Changing earth starts with us being changed. When we are born again, we change kingdoms.

He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. (Colossians 1:13-14)

When we are born again, we are made a new creation.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Although we are new creations and part of God's kingdom when we are saved, we are only beginning our journey of change. God spends the rest of our lives changing us and making us more like Christ.

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose. For those God foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brothers. (Romans 8:28-29)

In this lesson we will discuss the church's role in change: equipping the saints.

Equipping God's People

Ephesians 4:11-16 says:

And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head – Christ – from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

These verses show that God uses leaders/ministers to equip us and to grow us up. These leaders are part of what is called the five-fold ministry: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. God gave us leaders because we need to be led!

Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you. (Hebrews 13:17)

Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other. (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13)

These verses are not popular in our self-centered, independent, society where you can go your own way. Nevertheless, they are still true.

The purpose of the five-fold ministry in the church is to equip the saints to minister and build up the body of Christ.

Pastoral leaders are shepherds whose main jobs are leading and feeding God's sheep: this is equipping. We usually think of equipping as a class where a teacher imparts knowledge. That is part of equipping, but not all of it.

The root Greek word for equip in Ephesians 4 is "katartizo" (kat-ar-tid'-zo). It means "to repair, to mend, to adjust, to join together, to prepare, to restore, to complete thoroughly."

Let's examine three places in the Bible where the word "katartizo" is translated with these different meanings.

*Going on from there, He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, **mending** their nets. And He called them... (Matthew 4:21)*

In this verse, the word katartizo is translated "to mend." Mending nets involved cleaning the nets of seaweed and sticks, retying parts of the nets that had been torn or damaged, and then untangling and folding the nets so that they would be usable at a moment's notice.

They were not being prepared for storage, but for service. All of this was so that their nets would be ready to catch more fish.

The same is true of us. Equipping includes cleaning up dirty areas of people's lives, mending broken areas of people's lives and preparing them for service.

*By faith we understand that the universe was **formed** at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible. (Hebrews 11:3)*

In this verse, *katartizo* is translated “formed,” which means “to put in order, arrange, adjust.”

One of the roles of ministry leaders is to help believers discover their spiritual gifts. Then, they train people how to use their gifts and place them in the proper place in the body. If things get out of order, leaders adjust those things.

*And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself **restore** you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.* (1 Peter 5:10)

In this verse, *katartizo* is translated “restore, in the process of being strengthened, perfected, completed, made what we ought to be.”

In classical Greek the word *katartizo* was a surgical term having to do with putting a broken bone back into alignment so it could heal properly. The basic idea is to put something into the condition it was intended. The condition God intends for us is seen in Ephesians 4:13 – the fullness of Christ.

So, equipping means to mend, adjust, prepare, train, perfect, to make fully qualified for service. Obviously, none of us are there yet, but Ephesians 4 gives us a picture of what a mature Christian looks like. As we are changing and growing in Christ, these characteristics should be seen in our lives.

Mature Christians are Christ-like. This means they:

Minister	v. 12	(they give time, talent and resources)
Walk in unity	v. 13	(they know unity leads to blessing)
Know and trust Christ	v. 13	(they are growing in faith)
Have doctrinal stability	v. 14	(they are not easily swayed)
Speak the truth in love	v. 15	(they balance grace and truth)
Are growing	v. 15-16	(they are growing in relationships)
Do their part	v. 16	(they know and do what they’re called to do)

Are these characteristics evident in your life?

Ephesians 4 teaches us that God uses other people to equip us. This includes leaders and others in the body of Christ.

This is why small groups are so important. We won’t really change if we are not in relationships with others. Relationships have a way of bringing things out of us that would not be evident any other way. Anybody can get along with anybody if they’re not around each other. It’s when we are in close proximity that iron sharpens iron and the sparks fly!

None of us are perfect in our relationships, but we must walk in love, acceptance, unity and forgiveness toward each other. In fact, another way that *katartizo* is translated in the New Testament is “being joined together in unity.”

*Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be **perfectly joined together** in the same mind... (1 Corinthians 1:10)*

Your growth will be stunted if you are not in relationships with other Christians or submitted to spiritual authority.

The word of God shows us how to relate to each other and how to relate to our leaders who are equipping us. To attain maturity in the Christian life takes someone willing to speak the truth in love into our lives. This involves direction and correction.

*Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should **restore** him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. (Galatians 6:1)*

When we are equipped, we will do our part of the ministry, both inside and outside of the church. Ministering within the church is the way we build up the body of Christ. Ministering outside of the church is how we extend God’s kingdom.

Extending God’s Kingdom

The kingdom of God is not a physical place; it exists within believers (Luke 17:21). So we extend God’s kingdom by bringing more people into His kingdom.

The church has historically done a great job of declaring God’s truth, but a poor job of sharing God’s love. We’ve done a great job of sharing God’s hatred of sin, but a poor job of sharing God’s love for sinners.

We can’t share the good news and be the bad news. We must also be the good news. That means that as Christians, we’ve got to do more than talk the talk; we’ve also got to walk the walk. We call it:

Show and Tell

You will find this 2-fold pattern of ministry (show and tell) throughout the Bible.

*In my former book, *Theophilus*, I wrote about all that Jesus began to **do and to teach** until the day He was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. After His suffering, He showed Himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that He was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. (Acts 1:1-3)*

The Bible is the record of what Jesus did and taught. His two-fold pattern of ministry involved demonstration and proclamation: show and tell.

Jesus went throughout Galilee, **teaching** in their synagogues, **preaching** the good news of the kingdom, **and healing** every disease and sickness among the people (Matthew 4:23).

This was also true of His disciples. Paul said in 1 Thessalonians 1:5:
*Our gospel came to you not simply with **words**, but also with **power**, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction.*

John said in 1 John 3:18:
*Dear children, let us not love with **words** or tongue but with **actions** and in truth.*

This means we must show *and* tell:
We must proclaim God's goodness *and* show God's goodness.
We must proclaim God's power *and* show God's power.
We must proclaim God's love *and* show God's love.

1 John 4:17 says *love has been perfected in us, because as He is, so are we in this world.*

You're the only Jesus some people will ever see. St. Francis of Assisi said, "Preach the gospel all day long, and if necessary, use words!" People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care! We've got to be the good news and live the good news (demonstration) to earn the right to tell the good news (proclamation).

That's what Jesus did. He was called the friend of sinners. He loved everyone right where they were. He loves us right where we are and He wants to love others through us.

Our lives must show something to people that attracts them before they will hear us. Are you showing and telling? Are you living a life before others that is attracting them to Christ? Most people are drawn to a Christian before they are drawn to Christ.

Think about it, when strangers come to your door to tell you about their religion, is that attractive to you? Not usually. You don't know the person and you really don't care what they have to say. We must earn the right to speak into other people's lives. How do we do that? How do we change the earth?

Ways We Change Earth

1- By loving other believers

Shouldn't the answer to changing the earth be to love unbelievers? Yes, that is an answer, but it is not the first answer. Why? Because Jesus said in John 13:34-35:
A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another.

They'll know we are Christians by our love. Love is the mark of a true Christian. People will not believe we are disciples of Christ unless we love each other. If we don't love each other, people will not think we are really followers of Christ, who is love personified.

Almost 100% of people believe Jesus was good and loving. If they don't see us living like Him, they don't believe we are His followers.

But the Bible teaches something even more amazing: the world will know Jesus is the way of salvation by our love and unity.

Jesus prayed the following prayer for believers in John 17:20-23:

My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in Me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in Me and I am in You. May they also be in Us so that the world may believe that You have sent Me. I have given them the glory that You gave Me, that they may be one as We are one: I in them and You in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that You sent Me and have loved them even as You have loved Me.

This is one of the most powerfully disturbing thoughts in Scripture: that the world will only come to believe that Jesus was sent from the Father when they see us living in unity. The world will not believe God loves them if they do not see our love for each other.

The way believers get along is a deciding factor in people believing in Christ. We can believe right, preach right, sing right, do everything right, but without love and unity, no one will believe us.

Love and unity among Christians is a key to changing our world. So, we begin by loving each other. The second way we change the earth is:

2- By loving unbelievers

How do we love unbelievers?

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. (1 John 3:16)

We begin loving by laying down our lives for others. We do this by sacrificially meeting the needs of those around us.

We need to be aware of needs and meet needs. What are some contemporary needs? Time (busyness) /dealing with financial problems / overcoming fear / family issues /overcoming addictions.

The church needs to show the love of God in a practical way because the world needs to experience the love of God in a practical way.

We can begin by looking around us for people who need Jesus. Even though we are unable to meet every need we come across, what can we do for every need we come across?

We can do the greatest thing anyone can do for another:

3- Pray

Think of people in need and begin praying for them. Tell them you're praying for them. Most people are very open to prayer. If the Spirit leads you and the person agrees, actually pray out loud for them. If not, just tell them you'll be praying. Then pray. Then follow up.

To change the world, Christians need to show and tell God's love and power. Love your neighbors. Be moved with compassion. Meet needs. Pray for people.

When we do this, we will extend the kingdom of God on the earth and the earth will be changed! Together we can accomplish our vision of ***Touching Heaven ~ Changing Earth!***



OUR PURPOSE AND DESTINY

Our Purpose

Grace Fellowship Church exists to be a multi-ethnic, multi-generational, Spirit-filled congregation with the vision to touch heaven and change earth by experiencing God's presence, equipping God's people, extending God's kingdom and empowering the next generation for Jesus.

Our Destiny

Grace Fellowship Church will become a place where people from all races, cultures, and generations gather to **EXPERIENCE God's Presence and Power**.

We are committed to achieving this goal in our worship services through Spirit-led praise, prayer and preaching.

We will **EQUIP God's People** to achieve their God-given potential and become leaders in church, family, business, government, education, media, and the arts.

We are committed to achieving this goal through our small groups, discipleship classes and on-going leadership development.

We will **EXTEND God's Kingdom** by intentionally reaching out with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We are committed to achieving this goal by meeting needs in our neighborhood, our nation and the nations of the world.

We will **EMPOWER the Next Generation** for Jesus by discipling them to become mature disciples who experience God's presence, equip others to achieve their God-given potential and extend God's kingdom by reaching out with the Gospel.

We are committed to achieving this goal through our children's, student and young adult ministries.



OUR MISSION

LOVING GOD ~ LOVING PEOPLE

What's the Difference Between Mission and Vision?

Mission and vision are very similar. Mission literally means “to be sent.” We can see that when we think of missionaries who are sent on a mission. All of us are on a mission from God. Our mission is what we are sent by God to do.

In our thinking, mission is a biblical statement of what we are called to do and vision is a clear mental picture of our prophetic future. Vision describes where we are going. Mission is what we do to fulfill our vision. We touch heaven and change earth by loving God and loving people.

Our Mission

Our desire is for us to be a place where people can build a relationship with God and with others. When someone asks, "What kind of church is Grace?" we want the immediate response to be, "It's full of people who love God and love people – a place where you can belong, be accepted, be loved, to be with friends, and grow closer to God."

That's why our mission statement is ***Loving God and Loving People***. We are saying that our one thing is love.

Where do we get this? From Matthew 22:35-40:

Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus said to him, " 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

Jesus reduced the whole Bible down to one thing we need to know and do: Love! Love God and love people.

Love fulfills the Ten Commandments. If you love someone, you won't murder them, steal from them, or lie to them. When we love others we do what is right and what is best for them.

How do we do this one thing? How do we love God? How do we love people? The starting place for love is to receive God's love. God is not only loving, He IS love. What does that mean? It means that God is the source of love and He never acts toward us outside of love. Everything He does is motivated by love, done in love, with the goal of a loving relationship.

In order to love God, we need to know how much God loves us. 1 John 4:19 says *we love Him because He first loved us.*

God loved us first, even when we were ungodly, unlike Him, unlovely. How much does God love us? You determine the worth of something by how someone is willing to pay for it. We were bought with a price – the blood of Jesus. So, how much does God love us? As much as he loves Jesus! God loves us completely, absolutely, fully, not half-heartedly. It cost His very life.

God's love is unconditional love, which means we can't earn it or deserve it. You can't do anything to make God love you any more than He does. You can't do anything to make God love you less than completely.

In Jeremiah 31, God says, *I have loved you with an everlasting love.* We do not have to worry about God's love for us running out or coming to an end.

Romans 8:38-39 says that nothing can *separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* Nothing can separate us from God's love! Nothing! We either choose to accept God's love or reject it.

Your deepest need is the love of God. Your mission in life is to love Him and love others. That is why you were born. It's your one thing. It doesn't matter who you are – God loves you. It doesn't matter what you've done – God loves you.

The one thing that matters is that you are in relationship with God through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Do you have a relationship with God? You can't earn your way there. You can't get good enough on your own. You must accept by faith that the price has already been paid – the blood of Jesus. This one thing is the most important decision you will ever make.

Loving God

We love God by putting Him first in our lives. In Revelation 2:4-5, Jesus rebuked a church for leaving its first love. We tend to think of first love as puppy love. But the Greek word for first in this verse is: *protos* (pro'-tos); which means foremost (in time, place, order or importance).

So, first love is not just first in time, but first in importance. What has first place in your heart and life? What is most important to you? What is your main priority? How do you ever really know? The Bible gives us one way to know.

All through the Bible God said to give to Him first before anything else. This is called the Principle of Firstfruits.

Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine. (Proverbs 3:9-10)

Notice that blessing followed giving the firstfruits, which were the first 10% of the crop. God said that tithe belongs to Him. We really don't break over into offerings until the first fruit – the tithe – is given to God.

We should give to the Lord before anything else. We should not be giving only if we have anything leftover. If that's your plan – I can guarantee you there will be nothing left over for God. However if you put God first – you will be blessed and have plenty.

Here's the big question: Is there anything you would not be willing to give up for God? Is God really your first priority?

We also express our love for God through worship. Worship is so valuable to God that He seeks it out.

John 4:23 says: True worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.

As we saw earlier, the essence of praise and worship is giving. Worship is giving ourselves totally to God in abandonment and intimacy, nothing held back. Worship is costly. You cannot truly worship without giving, without sacrifice. The word sacrifice literally means, "to give up something for something or someone else."

We do not sacrifice in order to be made right with God. Jesus did that. So what sacrifices are we to make? One of those sacrifices is a sacrifice of praise.

Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise - the fruit of lips that confess His name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased. (Hebrews 13:15-16)

The sacrifice of praise includes the fruit of our lips giving praise and the fruit of our lives giving to others. They go together – worship and giving – because they are both an expression of the heart. Stingy people do not make good worshippers.

Worshippers understand there is a cost in worship. Totally giving ourselves to God is an act of praise and worship.

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God - this is your spiritual act of worship. (Romans 12:1)

This is the offering which God asks us to make - to devote ourselves entirely to Him, to be set apart for His purposes, to be used by Him; in order to bring glory to Him.

When we are living sacrifices we devote our lives to the service of God. In other words, our love for God is also expressed by: OBEDIENCE.

John 14:15 *If you love Me, keep My commandments.*

True love for God involves obedience. This is not some rigid legalistic adherence to rules. This is a relationship of love. We obey God because we love Him and we know He wants only what is best for us.

For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. (1 John 5:3)

God does not burden us down with an unreachable, unattainable list of laws. His commands are not burdensome because they are things that a good God who loves us says are best for us.

We must choose to love God by putting Him first. His gift to us was to die for us. Our gift to Him is to live for Him! How can we do that? We do that by loving God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength and by loving people as ourselves.

Loving People

We touch heaven when we express our love to God through faith, obedience, prayer and worship. We change earth when we begin to love other people as much as we love ourselves. Loving others is expressed through acceptance, forgiveness, and doing what's best for them.

Many Christians have been taught that we don't need anything but Jesus. Now ultimately, it is true that God meets our needs. But he uses a variety of methods to meet those needs. One of those methods is other people.

Just as He created us with physical needs, God also created us with spiritual needs. He created us with a need for Him and a need for others. Other people cannot fill the space in our hearts only God can fill. But God chooses to meet some needs through other people.

It is biblically incorrect to say that God is all we need. We need God and food and water and sleep and many other things.

When God created the heavens and the earth, He called everything He created "good" until Genesis 2:18 when *The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."*

Think about this: Adam was created by God and lived in a perfect paradise. He possessed everything he could possibly need. He had authority over everything on the

earth. He had an intimate relationship with God where He walked and talked with God. Yet God said, "This is not good. It is not good for man to be alone." This shows us that God created us with a need for each other.

But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as He wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" (1 Corinthians 12:18-21)

No part of the body of Christ can say to another part, "I don't need you." That means we need each other.

We need an understanding of the church as the body of Christ. Yes, we are all individual believers accountable to God, but we are part of a larger body. We need the other parts of the body and the other parts need us. We really do need each other.

Why should we love others? It's an expression of our love for God. We should also love others because God commands us to.

We love because He first loved us. If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom He has not seen. And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother. (1 John 4:19-21)

Galatians 5:6 says that faith works by love. The New International Version says faith expresses itself through love. We can say we have great faith, we can do great things, operate in power and the gifts of the Spirit, but without love we are nothing and we accomplish nothing.

1 Corinthians 13 shows us how true love is defined and described:

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love. (1 Corinthians 13:4-13)

Why love others?

- Jesus commands us to.
- Jesus died for them!
- They'll know we are Christians by our love.

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another. (John 13:34-35)

- They'll know Jesus is the way.

My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in Me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as You are in Me and I am in You. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that You have sent Me. (John 17:20-22)

The mark of a Christian is not a cross lapel pin or a sign of the fish bumper sticker. Those things are okay, but the true mark is love!

Romans 5:5 says the *love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.* The KJV says *the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*

God pours His love into us and then through us. We are just the containers.

But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all - surpassing power is from God and not from us. (2 Corinthians 4:7)

One of the ways we love God is by loving others. To do that, we must believe that people are important to God. If people are important to God, then they must be important to us. That means relationships must be important to us. We cannot love others outside of a relationship with them. Because of that, we believe the word "relationship" is one of the most important words in the English language.

God placed great importance on relationships. We know this because it is a pattern throughout the Bible. Consider these relationships: Ruth and Naomi, Moses and Aaron, Jonathan and David, Paul and Timothy, Paul and Barnabas, Elijah and Elisha, Mary and Elisabeth, Jesus and His disciples.

Webster's defines relationship as, "the connection or joining of our lives together." No one can have a meaningful existence without this connection to other people.

Speaking the truth in love... grow up in all things into Him who is the head--Christ--from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love. (Ephesians 4:15-16)

Notice that joints supply something. What do joints supply? Connection. As we are connected to other parts of the body of Christ, something is supplied to us that we would not receive any other way. What are those things that relationships supply? Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 shows us what relationships supply that make them so important.

Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor.

This shows us that we can accomplish more when we are in relationships than we can alone. Leadership expert John Maxwell says one is too small a number to accomplish anything great.

For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up.

This shows us that we need each other when we fall. It's hard to get back up when you are alone.

Furthermore, if two lie down together they keep warm, but how can one be warm alone?

There is a warmth that comes from a relationship that does not exist when we are alone.

And if one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him. A cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart.

There is safety in numbers. When we are alone we are easily overpowered, but together there is power and protection.

The truth is WE REALLY DO NEED EACH OTHER. I need you and you need me. To meet each other's needs we must be in relationship with one another.

Loving others is not optional! God commands us to love each other.

Love initiates, builds and maintains relationships. Don't sit around waiting on others to initiate a relationship with you. Since God says we will reap what we sow, if you do that you will reap a harvest of other people waiting on you to initiate. Step out and begin to love those around you and you will reap a harvest of others reaching out in love to you.

We really do need each other. Let's fulfill our vision to Touch Heaven and Change Earth by loving God and loving people.



OUR DOCTRINE

WHAT WE BELIEVE

The Importance of Doctrine

Doctrine in its simplest definition means, “something that is taught.” Doctrine is composed of the principles that we believe to be truth.

We believe doctrine is vitally important and that it should be based on the Word of God.

*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for **doctrine**, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)*

We believe doctrine is something to pay close attention to.

*Watch your life and **doctrine** closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers. (1 Timothy 4:16)*

We believe that if we don't get grounded in sound doctrine, we will be susceptible to false doctrine and deception.

Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. (Ephesians 4:14-15)

*For the time will come when men will not put up with sound **doctrine**. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. (2 Timothy 4:3-4)*

Since doctrine is so important, we want to be sure to teach the important truths and principles in the Bible.

We will give greater attention to doctrine in the second class of the Grace Journey series: Christianity 201. This class will only briefly cover the basic truths we believe.

What We Believe About God

We believe that:

- 1- There is **one true and living God** who created and sustains all things.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. (Genesis 1:1)

God is **eternally** existent in three Persons who are one in nature, purpose and attributes and who are worthy of the same worship and obedience.

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28:19)

- 2- **God the Father** is infinite and perfect in holiness, wisdom, power and love. He saves all who come to Him through Jesus Christ.

The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. (2 Peter 3:9).

- 3- God, the Son – **Jesus Christ** – became a man, was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, died for the sins of all people, rose from the dead, and is now seated in Heaven where He intercedes for the saints. One day, He will come back for His church and to judge all mankind.

At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other. (Matthew 24:30-31)

- 4- God, the **Holy Spirit**, convicts of sin, regenerates, sanctifies and gives power to all who believe in Christ. The Holy Spirit lives in every believer. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is an experience after salvation that imparts power and spiritual gifts to each believer (Acts 2 - Pentecost).

- 5- God is all-powerful, all-knowing, omnipresent and eternal. God is unchanging. He is holy, righteous, just and merciful. God is spirit. God is love (1 John 4:16).

- 6- God loves us more than we can imagine and desires to have a personal relationship with us. Sin broke fellowship between us and God, but He loves us so much that He gave His only begotten Son in order to restore our relationship with Him (John 3:16).

What We Believe About People

We believe that:

- 1- Humanity was created in the **image and likeness of God** by a direct act of God.

So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. (Genesis 1:27).

- 2- Since the original fall of man into sin, all people are **born in sin**, separated from God, and in need of salvation. We cannot save ourselves by works; we need a Savior.

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9).

- 3- To be **born again**, we must repent of our sins, place our faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ and confess Jesus as Lord (Romans 10:9-13). Salvation is by the grace of God, not by our good works. We could never do enough good to have a relationship with God. There is no other way to be saved apart from the grace of God through Jesus Christ.

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. (John 14:6)

- 4- Our **main purpose** in life is to glorify God. This is done through the fruit of our lips giving thanks and praise to Him and by the fruit of our lives lived for Him (Hebrews 13:15-16).

- 5- All Christians are in the process of **being conformed** to the image of Jesus Christ. God uses different methods with different people to accomplish this eternal purpose.

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to His purpose. For those God foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brothers. (Romans 8:28-29).

- 6- God desires for us to be whole – **spirit, soul and body**.

May God Himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

Other Beliefs

We believe that:

- 1- **The Bible** is the perfect guidebook for living. It is the infallible, inspired Word of God, without error in the original manuscripts.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

- 2- **The Church** is God's family and is composed of all born again believers in Jesus Christ. The Church is God's main instrument to further His work on the earth. We do this by preaching the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ and by living like Jesus in a way that demonstrates God's character and power.

And God placed all things under His feet and appointed Him to be head over everything for the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills everything in every way (Ephesians 1:22-23).

- 3- **The Bible** teaches **several baptisms**. Baptism into the Body of Christ occurs at salvation. Water baptism is by immersion. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is subsequent to salvation. The baptism of fire is the ongoing purification process of believers.

I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire (Matthew 3:11).

Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off - for all whom the Lord our God will call (Acts 2:38-39).

- 4- All Christians are **called to minister** – to the Lord, to the Church and to the world. In addition, God calls and commissions apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers to equip the saints for this ministry. The purpose of this **five-fold ministry** is to equip the saints for the work of the ministry.

*And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the **work of ministry**, for the edifying of the body of Christ. (Ephesians 4:11-12)*

Distinctive Doctrines

Some of our beliefs are very distinctive and we want to point them out.

- **We believe all healing is from God and He can heal anyway He chooses.**

We believe that God is the source of true change and healing, yet He uses many different methods to heal. He uses miracles, the laying on of hands, anointing with oil, medicine, physicians, support groups, counselors, sermons, books, music and many other ways of healing. So, we pray in faith for God to heal and trust Him with the timing and results. Sometimes healing is instantaneous; sometimes it takes time.

- **We believe in God's power and God's process.**

Sometimes change is instantaneous and miraculous; sometimes it takes time and effort.

We believe in instant healing and deliverance (which could be called 1 Step to Recovery), but sometimes it's progressive (like the 12 Steps to Recovery). We want to support people whether God's power instantly changes them (1 Step) or God's process progressively changes them (12 Steps).

- **We believe God can use counseling as part of the change process.**

In some churches, there is a stigma attached to anyone who goes to a counselor. Not at Grace Fellowship Church. We believe there is safety in counsel and there are times we all need an unbiased party to hear us and help us. Our only caution is that counsel should never go against the teachings of the Word of God, so we should be wise in choosing a counselor.

- **We believe that women are capable of ministering in the church, and we release them to minister wherever they are called and equipped.**

Every church has its belief about what women can and can't do in the church. We are aware of the different interpretations of Scripture that some churches use to limit the role of women in the church. We understand those beliefs and respectfully disagree.

We believe that man and woman were created to rule and reign in life and ministry together. Women are free to minister in our church - including in leadership positions - wherever they are called and equipped. There are many verses in the Bible about women praying, prophesying, teaching, and leading. There are even instances in the Bible where women taught men. This has been true throughout church history, and it is true today.

Our Church Government

There are three main forms of church government:

Congregational – the congregation of the church makes decisions by voting

Episcopal – the church is governed by bishops

Eldership – the church is governed by a group of elders

GFC practices an elder form of church government. There are many biblical passages supporting elder-based government. Here are a few:

Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust. (Acts 14:23)

Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you. (1 Timothy 4:14)

The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. (1 Timothy 5:17)

Appoint elders in every town, as I directed you. (Titus 1:5)

To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers — not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be. (1 Peter 5:1-2)

There are several main functions of elders:

- To lead the church by determining the vision of the church
- To shepherd the flock of God by feeding them and leading them
- To uphold biblical standards of behavior among church members. (This includes enforcing church discipline for divisive behavior, unrepentant sin, and doctrinal error.)
- To be examples to the church of how to live a godly life

The elders of our church are submitted to the apostolic oversight of the elders of The Revive Network, a network of Spirit-filled churches led by Pastor Kerry Kirkwood. We look to their guidance in cases of pastoral discipline and in times when our elders are deadlocked in reaching a decision. They would also be involved in helping us find a new pastor in case our pastor retires, dies, moves or is removed from ministry.

Being submitted to apostolic leadership provides safety for our elders and our congregation. It gives you someone to contact if you ever think that our elders are preaching heresy, mishandling finances or have moral failings. They can be contacted at info@therevivenetwork.org

Why Join a Church?

Some people question why they should join a church. Isn't attending one enough? Does the Bible really command us to join a church? Aren't I a part of the church when I get saved and give my life to the Lord?

Yes, when you become a Christian, you become part of the body of Christ, the universal church composed of all believers in Jesus Christ. But we believe that the Bible teaches believers to be a part of a local church.

Hebrews 10:25 tells us to *not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some*. We believe that this assembling is more than just going to church but joining a church.

Ephesians 2:21-22 compares the church to a building and says *We are carefully joined together in Him, becoming a holy temple for the Lord*.

Ephesians 4:16 compares the church to a body and says *From Him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work*.

Buildings are built of individual bricks, but they are joined together. Bodies are made of individual parts, but they are joined together. Likewise, churches are made up of individual people who are joined together. 1 Corinthians 12:27 says *Now you are the body of Christ, and **members individually***.

This is important because as we saw in Ephesians 4:16, growth as individuals and as a church happens when we join and do our part.

Here are some other important Bible verses about joining a church:

*Those who are **planted in the house** of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God.* (Psalm 92:13)

*Keep watch over yourselves and all **the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers**. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.* (Acts 20:28)

*The apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders among the people. And all the believers used to meet together in Solomon's Colonnade. No one else dared **join them**, even though they were highly regarded by the people. Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were **added to their number**.* (Acts 5:12-14)

Notice that people did not just decide on their own to join the church in Jerusalem. Rather, they were led by God to join the church.

Transitioning from one Church to Another

We all face many transitions in our lives. One of the most important transitions is when we leave one church for another. How we leave is important. How we leave can affect:

- God's blessings on our lives.
- The hearts of those we leave behind.
- Our ability to find the right church to join.

Here are some important keys to determine if you are leaving a church correctly:

1- We believe the only reason to leave a church is because God said to.

There are many reasons people leave churches. Studies show that the most common reasons are:

- 1- Job change (either relocation or changed of schedule)
- 2- A change in church leadership
- 3- The church is not meeting some need in an individual or family
- 4- Backsliding / church discipline
- 5- Offended by the pastor or another member
- 6- Heresy is being preached
- 7- Opportunity for use of gifts is denied
- 8- Burn out
- 9- Getting married and choosing the partner's church
- 10- Friends going elsewhere
- 11- Upset about decisions the church made
- 12- Immorality of leaders, or mishandling funds
- 13- Not feeling appreciated
- 14- Size of the church – too big or too small
- 15- Heard of a better church

All of these are legitimate concerns and should cause us to seek the Lord as to whether or not we should be in a certain church. However, in the final analysis **only one reason is sufficient: God moved me.**

Many times we cheat ourselves out of something God wants to do in us by getting ourselves out of a situation God wants us in. That means we will only face the same issues in a new church unless we choose to get it right.

Disagreements or being offended are not reasons to leave. You should not leave because you're mad or hurt. Rather, you should try to work through those issues in a godly way. We need to stay where God places us – even if it's hard. We should not leave unless God tells us it's time to move on. That means we should spend much time in prayer and getting godly counsel before changing churches.

2- How you leave a church will determine how you enter another church.

If you leave a church in the right way, you will probably enter the next church in a righteous manner. If you leave a church because God leads you to leave, then He will lead you to another church and the transition will be smooth.

If you leave in peace, you will find peace in your new church.

If you leave with love, you will find love in your new church.

If you leave with a submitted spirit to leadership, you will find godly leadership in your new church.

However, if you leave hurt or offended, you will be easily hurt or offended in a new church. You may find some temporary joy in your new church, but chances are you'll soon be mad, judgmental, or critical.

It is important to leave a church in the right way with the right attitude, because it will determine how you enter your next church.

3- Your previous church leaders should know you are leaving and why.

Your main goal should be to leave with a right relationship and attitude toward the authorities in the church you're leaving. This is difficult sometimes, but we should follow the principle of Romans 12:18 –

If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

Also, leaving a church should not happen in secret; it should be properly communicated to church leaders. They should not have to wonder what happened to you or have to track you down to find out. Give them the common courtesy of letting them know you are leaving and why. Do your best to bless them on the way out. Some churches turn on you when you leave, but they will give an account to God for that; you are only responsible for you.

4- Speak well of the church you are leaving.

There is life and death in the power of the tongue, so we should speak life and blessings on the church you are leaving. If you can't say anything good, don't say anything at all!

Here are some questions to help you determine if you are leaving a church in the right way:

- Are you sure God is leading you to leave?
- Are you at peace with this decision?
- Can you bless the church you are leaving?
- Are you carrying any unforgiveness toward the former church?
- Could you ever return to that church without guilt or embarrassment?

Dos and Don'ts in Finding a New Church

1- Don't look for the "perfect church" – there are none!

Do look for God's "perfect choice for you."

2- Don't constantly compare your new church with the old – whether good or bad.

Do speak well of both churches.

3- Do decide in advance what is important to you.

This can keep you from wasting time visiting churches that are not for you.

Here are some questions to consider:

Do you want a worship style that is traditional or contemporary?

GFC's worship is contemporary, with some songs that have a gospel feel.

Do you want church services that are more structured or more spontaneous?

GFC is a Spirit-filled, or charismatic, church. There is a structure to our services, but we always allow for the spontaneous move of the Holy Spirit.

What form of church government is important to you?

GFC is led by elders.

Do you want Sunday School or small groups?

GFC has small groups that meet throughout the week.

Do you want a denominational church (like Baptist, Methodist or Assembly of God) or do you want a non-denominational church?

GFC is an independent, non-denominational church, but we are a part of The Revive Network of churches.

What size of church is important to you?

Currently, GFC is a medium-sized church. However, we do have a vision to grow to thousands of people.

Do your beliefs and values line up with the church?

GFC's beliefs and values are explained in this manual.

What are your expectations of the pastors?

GFC is a growing church, and it is no longer possible for the pastors to know every single member on a personal level. That is why we share the ministry among our pastoral staff, small group pastors and other leaders. We have many qualified people who can minister to you, pray with you, counsel you or visit you in the hospital. We ask our members to be willing to receive ministry from different leaders in the church.

Getting Planted in Church

As we saw earlier, Psalm 92:13 says- *Those who are **planted in the house** of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God.*

Getting planted in a church means more than occasional church attendance; it means letting your roots go down deep. To have deep roots requires several things on our part. We find those things in Acts 2:42-47

All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer. A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.

1- Commitment

The early church was committed to the Word, to prayer, to their leaders and to each other. Getting planted in a church involves more than just attending church, but regular church attendance is vitally important. In fact, the early church actually met together every day!

The Bible says that Jesus had the habit of regular church attendance (Luke 4:16) and the Apostle Paul had the habit of regular church attendance (Acts 17:2). Likewise, we should find the church God wants us to be a member of and then put down roots of commitment.

2- Connection

The early church members were connected to each other because they not only attended church, but they met together in small groups. They met in each other's homes and built relationships. Relationships are not built during Sunday church services, but through small groups and individual interaction. We encourage you to get into a small group and begin to meet people and build relationships.

3- Contribution

The early church members gave unselfishly to the Lord and to meet each other's needs. We put down roots by giving. Matthew 6:21 says that *where your treasure is, there your heart will be also*. In other words, your heart follows your giving! In addition to giving our tithes and offerings, we can give our time, our talents and our skills. We believe you have something to offer, and you are needed at GFC!



Covenant of Care

Creating a Culture of Care

We are thrilled to welcome you to Grace Fellowship Church! As new members, you are now part of a loving and supportive community that is dedicated to nurturing faith and fostering deep, meaningful connections.

One of the unique benefits of being a member of Grace Fellowship Church is our Culture of Care, a Pastoral Care Ministry designed to ensure that every member feels connected, supported, and cared for consistently. We want to share some important information about this ministry, as it is a cornerstone of our church family.

Creating a Culture of Care

In recent years, we recognized that the busyness of the world often led to our members feeling disconnected, only seeing each other briefly on Sundays. This lack of consistent connection was something we wanted to change. We aspire to be a family where love abounds and where each member feels seen and valued.

Traditionally, pastoral care in many churches, including ours, focused primarily on crisis situations—such as times of loss, divorce, or illness. While this crisis care is vital, we understood that true pastoral care should extend beyond these moments.

A Biblical Approach to Care

We concluded that our pastors cannot—and should not—carry this responsibility alone. The Bible teaches that all who belong to Christ should participate in the ministry. As stated in Acts 6:1-4, the Apostles appointed lay people within the church to assist with pastoral care, ensuring that everyone received the support they needed.

Introducing Culture of Care

Our Culture of Care is built on this Biblical foundation. This ministry encourages church members to partner with our pastors to provide ongoing care and support to one another. By doing so, we ensure that every member's needs are met, and no one feels overlooked or isolated.

The Benefit to You

As a new member, you will immediately benefit from this intentional approach to care. Our church family is committed to:

- Regularly checking in on one another
- Providing support during both joyful and challenging times
- Building lasting relationships that extend beyond Sunday services

We believe that this approach not only strengthens our community but also aligns with God's vision for His church.



Volunteering

Changing Earth Through Serving

Make an Impact

A vital aspect of our community is the opportunity to get involved through serving. Volunteering at Grace Fellowship Church is a wonderful way to connect with others, establish friendships, and build a strong sense of community with like-minded believers.

Through serving, you can make a significant impact, not only within our church but also in the wider community and beyond. We'll help you find the ministry that best fits your gifts and passions.

Explore Opportunities

We encourage you to explore the various serving opportunities available at Grace Fellowship Church. You can find a complete list of positions, descriptions, serving criteria, and a volunteer application in the Church Center App and on the serving page of our website at gfc.cc/serve.

Thank you for being a part of our family. We look forward to seeing the incredible things we can achieve together for the glory of our Heavenly Father!

Together Everyone Achieves More!