



PUTTING IT **simply**

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WHAT WE PRACTICE

FBC's Statement of Faith is a three-part document that includes our core doctrinal beliefs (We Believe), our biblical values and practices (We Practice), and an overview of the theological distinctions that make us unique as a church family (We Teach: Theological Particulars and Clarifications).

*Putting It Simply* is a study of the second part of our statement of faith, "We Practice."

# We Practice

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**Baptism and Communion:** We are called to remember Jesus through communion and identify with Him in baptism.

**Fellowship:** We are called to worship and instruct in both small and large groups, submit to one another, and come alongside others in their needs.

**Spiritual Devotion:** We are called to pray to God and study the Bible as God transforms our lives.

**Discipleship:** We are called to strengthen others by investing in their personal relationship with Christ.

**Stewardship:** We are called to serve others by sharing our time, talents, and resources.

**Outreach:** We are called to share the good news of the gospel locally and globally by words and service.

**God's Design for Sexuality:** We are called to honor God's framework for gender and the family.

**Membership:** We are individual members of one local body and members of the universal Body of Christ.

## Baptism and Communion: We are called to remember Jesus through communion and identify with Him in baptism.

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- We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ committed two ordinances to the local church: baptism and communion (the Lord's Supper).
- We believe that baptism is a sign of salvation, not a condition of it. It is an act of obedience associated with repentance from sin, belief in the gospel message, and spiritual membership in Christ's Body, the Church. It is the appropriate response soon following an individual's belief in the gospel, and can therefore be undertaken by children or adults alike who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ alone for salvation. Baptism (from the Greek baptizo, which literally means to immerse) is best depicted by the act of immersion in water in the name of the triune God; this is a confirming sign of a) the believer's fellowship with the death and resurrection of Christ, b) of remission of sins, and c) surrendering oneself to God to walk in newness of life (See Matt 28.19-20; Mark 16.15-16; Acts 2.38; 8.36-39; Rom 6.3-5).

- We believe that communion (the Lord's Supper) is to be regularly administered as a symbolic commemoration and proclamation of Jesus' death "until he comes" (1 Cor 11.26). Any professing believer in Jesus Christ may participate, regardless of formal ties to Fellowship Bible Church. Communion utilizes the common elements of bread and wine/juice to represent the body and blood of the Lord, and is best practiced as a corporate remembrance involving repentance from sin and joyful giving of thanks. It is not to be taken lightly or without first examining oneself for any broken relationships between other believers and any unrepentant sins (See Matt 26.26; Luke 24.30; Acts 2.42; 1 Cor 11.23-29).

**Notes:**

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**Fellowship: We are called to worship and instruct in both small and large groups, submit to one another, and come alongside others in their needs.**

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- We believe in the necessity of fellowship for the local church as an expression of shared spiritual community with other believers in Jesus Christ. Fellowship is not simply exercising social relationships, but rather practicing mutual encouragement and accountability, as well as seeking opportunities to meet the spiritual and physical needs of one another (Acts 2.44-47).
- We believe in the importance of serving and preferring one another as a community of believers who belong to one another (Rom 12.5; Phil 2.3-4; see STEWARDSHIP below).
- In addition to meeting corporately, we believe in the necessity of small group fellowship and instruction for the purpose of developing meaningful relationships with other believers, centered on the instruction of God's Word (Acts 2.46-47).
- We believe in the importance of mutual submission to one another, intentionally surrendering our preferences for the good of others (Eph 5.21; Phil 2.5-7).

**Notes:**

## Spiritual Devotion: We are called to pray to God and study the Bible as God transforms our lives.

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- We believe in the necessity of personal worship through regularly reading the Bible (2 Tim 3.15-16; 2 Pet 1.19-21; 3.14-18).
- We believe in the necessity of internalizing Scripture through memorization for the purpose of overcoming temptation (Deut 6.6-9; 1 Cor 10.13; 1 Tim 6.11).
- We believe in the necessity of deepening our devotion to God through prayer (Rom 12.12; 1 Thess 16-18; 1 Tim 2.1-4, 8; 1 Pet 5.6-7).

**Notes:**

## Discipleship: We are called to strengthen others by investing in their personal relationship with Christ.

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- We believe that it is the responsibility of all believers to share their faith (see OUTREACH below; Matt 28.19-20) and to encourage other believers in their personal walks with God (Col 3.16; Eph 4.15-16).
- We believe that Christianity is not an individualist exercise of self-improvement and private devotion, but rather a relational faith that requires believers to be invested in other members of their local body (see MEMBERSHIP below; Heb 10.24-25).
- We believe in the importance of older, more mature believers investing in younger believers (Titus 2.2-6).
- We believe the local church is called to come alongside and shepherd people who are actively struggling with temptation find victory and refuge in their growing relationship with Christ and His Body (Gal 6.1-2; Jas 5.19-20).

**Notes:**

## Stewardship: We are called to serve others by sharing our time, talents, and resources.

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- We believe that individual members must give of their time (Eph 5.15-16; 2 Thess 3.6-13). This is a responsibility to serve both their local church body as well as the geographic community in which God has placed them.
- We believe that individual members must give of their God-given skills and abilities. This is a responsibility to understand and utilize one's own spiritual gifting (see Rom 12.3-6; 1 Cor 12; Eph 4.11-16; 1 Pet 4.10-11) as well as one's natural gifting and professional training in service to the mission of the Church (Ex 35.10).
- We believe that believers must contribute to the physical needs of the church via the finances and resources with which God has blessed them. While the Old Testament concept of the tenth (tithe) bears consideration for a standard of giving (see Lev 27.30), The New Testament gives no specific amount that believers must contribute, but it does insist on the heart of Christians being generous and cheerful in giving, giving out of the convictions of their hearts, and practicing gracious hospitality (Acts 4.32-34; Rom 12.13; 2 Cor 9.6-15).

**Notes:**

## Outreach: We are called to share the good news of the gospel locally and globally by words and service.

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- We believe that the Great Commission is the fundamental mandate given by Jesus to His disciples that must inform the vision and Bible teaching of local churches (Matt 28.18-19).
- We believe that it is necessary for every believer in Jesus Christ to publicly testify to the good news of salvation (1 Pet 3.15; Rev 12.11), and that it is equally necessary for believers to be humble servants in their workplaces and communities and so demonstrate the transforming love of Jesus through their commitment to serve others (1 Thess 4.9-12; 1 Pet 2.13-17).
- We believe that it is a responsibility of a church to consider how they are individually and corporately reaching both local and global communities with the gospel of Jesus Christ (Acts 1.8). To be obedient to the Great Commission, each believer must be prayerfully and/or financially supporting missionaries who serve in various parts of the world, or themselves participating in short- or long-term missions.

**Notes:**

## God's design for sexuality: We are called to honor God's framework for gender and the family.

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- We believe that the Scriptures refer systematically to God as male (i.e. 1 Cor 8.6), and that He ordained two human genders (sexes) as unique expressions of His own image (Gen 1.27). Gender is therefore not primarily a social construct and is declared good by God along with the rest of His creation (Gen 1.31).
- We believe that God established marriage as a lifelong, exclusive relationship between one biological man and one biological woman, without exception (Gen 2.24-25; Ex 20.14, 17; Matt 19.4-6). God intends the unique differences of gender to shape each spouse, as the relationship between the man and the woman is a symbol and reflection of Christ's sanctifying relationship with the Church (Eph 5.25-33; 1 Cor 7.12-16; 1 Pet 3.7). Marital intimacy is sacred and exclusive, and must be both guarded and nurtured (Heb 13.4). Any and all sexual activity outside the marriage relationship - whether heterosexual, homosexual, emotional, consensual, or otherwise - is sin (Ex 22.19; Lev 18.22-23; 20.13, 15-16; Rom 1.18-31; 1 Cor 6.9-11, 15-20; 1 Tim 1.8-11; Jude 7).

- We believe that God’s plan does not include marriage for every individual. In and of itself, marriage cannot bring the completion or fulfillment that only a relationship with Christ and His Church may provide (contrast Ecc 9.9, Eph 5.31-32, and Rev 21.2-4). Therefore, marriage should not be seen or presented as the next step to maturity, as celibacy may be fully pleasing and honoring to the Lord. Believers who choose celibacy, or default to this category (whether due to personal convictions, an ongoing struggle with sexual orientation, or gender dysphoria – see Matt 19.11-12), should have the full compassionate support of their local church community. The church’s role is to aid and surround believers who actively resist sexual temptation in their pursuit of honoring Christ. The church must not affirm those choosing to live in sin, and is called to maintain a consistent posture of truth, grace, and honesty toward those who claim to be Christians but embrace an LGBTQ+ lifestyle.

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## Membership: We are individual members of one local body and members of the universal Body of Christ.

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- We believe that membership, at the local church level, is a public expression of the desire to be a part of a local body of believers (1 Pet 4.10-11), a commitment to serve that local body in unity and solidarity with the other declared members (Eph 5.21), and voluntary submission to the leadership and accountability of that local body (1 Thess 5.12-13; Heb 13.17). While there is no singular biblical proof-text for membership, the elders at FBC have chosen to adopt the practice as a matter of wisdom for the protection, accountability, and care of the flock.
- Pastor-elders are tasked with training, equipping, and protecting the members of their church for the work of ministry (Eph 4.11-13). This stewardship responsibility involves knowing and being committed to the flock that God has entrusted to them for shepherding. While the elders of a local church are responsible at various levels for every person who participates in the gathered worship of their fellowship, they must especially give an account for those who have chosen to identify themselves as members of that local church (Heb 13.17).
- We believe that local churches do well to maintain a balance of independence from and interdependence upon one another, in keeping with the New Testament examples of distinct but connected churches mutually invested in the cause of the gospel and one another's spiritual growth and well-being (see Acts 14.23; 1 Cor 16.19-20; 2 Cor 8.1-6; Col 4.15-16; Rev 1.20; 2.29; 3.6, 13, 22). Fellowship Bible Church is but one local expression of the universal Body of Christ.

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