

STATEMENT OF FAITH

FELLOWSHIP BIBLE CHURCH

OF MULLICA HILL, NEW JERSEY, INC.

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Updated September 6, 2025

Table of Contents

WE BELIEVE

THE TRINITY.....	4
JESUS CHRIST, THE ETERNAL AND ONLY SON OF GOD.....	5
MAN CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF GOD.....	5
SALVATION BY GOD’S GRACE, NOT BY MAN’S WORKS.....	6
ABSOLUTE AUTHORITY AND ACCURACTY OF THE BIBLE AS GOD’S WORD.....	6
THE CHURCH AS A GROUP OF BELIEVERS IN JESUS CHRIST.....	6
THE ETERNAL DESTINATION OF ALL BELIEVERS.....	7

WE PRACTICE

BAPTISM AND COMMUNION.....	8
FELLOWSHIP.....	9
SPIRITUAL DEVOTION.....	9
DISCIPLESHIP.....	9
STEWARDSHIP.....	10
OUTREACH.....	10
GOD’S DESIGN FOR SEXUALITY.....	11
MEMBERSHIP.....	11

THEOLOGICAL PARTICULARS & CLARIFICATIONS

ESCHATOLOGY.....	14
ECCLESIOLOGY AND CHURCH GOVERNANCE.....	14
SPIRITUAL GIFTS.....	14
GENDER ROLES IN MARRIAGE AND MINISTRY.....	16
THE LAW OF GOD.....	16
BAPTISM.....	17

WE BELIEVE

We believe there is one God who reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

- We believe that there is one God (Deut 6.4) who is the Creator (Neh 9.6), Preserver, and Ruler of all things (1 Chr 29.11-12); who is eternal, all-powerful, all-knowing, and always present (omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent); perfect in holiness (1 Sam 2.2; Isa 6.4) and in love (1 John 4.8); and who reveals himself in three co-equal and co-eternal Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matt 28.19).
- We believe that God the Father orders and places all things according to His own purpose and grace (Psa 145.8-9; Rom 11.36; 1 Cor 8.6). He is sovereign in His creation, providence, redemption, decrees, choosing, and adopting (Psalm 103.19; John 1.12; Rom 8.15; Gal 4.5; Eph 1.4-6). His fatherhood involves His designation with the Son, the Spirit, and His relationship with mankind (1 Pet 1.17). He is neither the author nor approver of sin, nor does He diminish the accountability of moral, conscientious creatures (Hab 1.13; John 8.38-47; Heb 12.5-9).
- We believe that the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity, co-eternal with the Father and the Son, and that He participated in the act of creation (Gen 1.2; Matt 28.19). He authored Scripture by inspiring the Apostles (2 Pet 1.20-21). His ministry is to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16.7-14). He regenerates the unbelieving upon their conversion by faith (John 3.3, 7-8; 1 Pet 1.2). He testifies to the truth of the gospel (1 John 5.6-12). He baptizes, seals, indwells, sanctifies, and teaches those who believe in Jesus Christ (John 14.26; 16.7-14; 1 Cor 6.19-20; 12.12-13; Eph 1.13).
- For THE SON, see JESUS CHRIST below.

We believe that Jesus Christ is the eternal and only Son of God, both fully God and fully man.

- We believe that Jesus Christ is God's only begotten Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin (Matt 1.20; Luke 1.35). He was not a mere prophet, but God incarnate: true God and true man, one Person with two natures (John 1.1, 2, 14; 3.16; Rom 9.5; Heb 1.2-3). His miraculous acts and divine teachings confirm His identity (John 10.30; 10.45; 20.30-31). He is the only and sufficient Mediator, able to affect reconciliation between God and man (1 Tim 2.5). He perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities, identifying Himself completely with mankind, yet without sin (Rom 8.32; 2 Cor 5.21; Eph 1.4). Jesus honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary death on the cross made provision for the redemption of men from sin (Rom 5.6-8; 2 Cor 5.21; 1 Pet 2.22-24). He truly died and was raised from the dead with a glorified body, and He appeared to His disciples, the same person He was with them before His crucifixion (Rom 6.9-10; 1 Cor 15.3-4; Tim 3.16). He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God, eternally interceding for His elect (Acts 1.11; 1 Tim 3.16; Heb 1.3-4; Heb 7.25). He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission (Acts 1.11; 1 Thess 4.13-18; Heb 9.28).
- We believe that Jesus' example of humble, sacrificial servitude and His imminent return have vital bearing on every believer's personal life, service, and mission (Acts 1:8; 2 Cor 5.16-6.2; Phil 2.1-11; Thess 4:13-18).

We believe that man was created in the image of God and that he sinned, separating himself from God, and is destined for eternal separation from God.

- We believe that God created mankind in his own image, male and female, equal in value and free of sin, to glorify Himself and enjoy His fellowship (Gen 1.26-31; Psa 8).
- We believe that mankind sinned, incurring both spiritual and physical death, and therefore each of us is a sinner by nature and by choice, deserving of the wrath of God and desperately needing salvation (Rom 5.12-21; Eph 2.1-3).

We believe that salvation is by God’s grace, not by man’s works. This salvation was accomplished by Jesus’ death on the cross and resurrection from the grave and is available to all who believe.

- We believe that salvation is by grace through faith alone, that man’s works cannot save him, and that all who receive the Lord Jesus Christ by faith are born again of the Holy Spirit, thereby becoming children of God (John 1.12-13; 3.3; Eph 2.8-9; 4.30).
- We believe that God, in grace, has eternally elected those whom He would save, and therefore that those who are saved have eternal security (John 6.37-40; 10.27-30; 1 Pet 1.5).
- We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished the work of salvation by living a sinless life, dying for our sins, and rising from the grave (1 Cor 15.3-4; Rev 1.5). All who believe in Him as Lord and Savior are justified on the ground of His shed blood and finished work on the cross (Rom 5.6-11).

We believe in the absolute authority and accuracy of the Bible as God’s Word to us and its relevance to our lives today; and that every Christian is called to live according to its instruction.

- We believe that the Scripture is trustworthy as our final and only sufficient authority for all of life (Psa 119.9, 105; 2 Tim 3.16-17).
- We believe that the Old and New Testaments were completely verbally inspired by the Holy Spirit, without error in the original writings (2 Pet 1.19-21).
- We believe that all believers have the responsibility to both study and obey God’s Word (See WE PRACTICE: SPIRITUAL DEVOTION below).

We believe that the church is a group of believers in Jesus Christ who serve and worship together for the cause of the gospel.

- We believe that the Church is a living, universal body of called-out believers, the spiritual Body and Bride of Christ, of which the Lord Jesus Christ is the head (1 Cor 12.12, 27; Eph 5.25-33; Col 1.18, 24; 2.19; Rev 19.7; 21.2).
- We believe that Fellowship Bible Church is a local expression of that global Body, and that we intentionally gather with one another to strengthen one another through worship, prayer, teaching, and fellowship (Acts 2.42-47).

- We believe that local church governance is best understood as the shepherding care of a plurality of elders (1 Tim 3.1-7; 1 Pet 5.1-5).
- We believe that each of us bear the responsibility of working together in love and unity, intent on the purpose of glorifying Christ (Eph 4.3, 15-16; Phil 2.1-2).

We believe the eternal destination of all believers is with God in Heaven.

- We believe in the everlasting, conscious, and embodied joy of the saved in heaven (1 Cor 15.20-24; 2 Cor 5.8; 1 Thess 4.17). Fullness of life in heaven is wholly sustained by God (Isa 55.1; Rev 2.7; 21.22-23; 22.1-2)
- We believe in the everlasting conscious punishment of the unrepentant in a literal hell (Rev 20.12-15).
 - Hell is the consequence of rejecting God (Matt 13.40-42; Heb 10.26-29; 2 Pet 3.7)
 - Satan is not the lord of hell; rather, hell was created to punish the angelic adversaries of God and all who follow them (Matt 25.41; 2 Pet 2.4)
 - Jesus Christ possesses authority over hell (Matt 16.18; John 5.27; Acts 10.42; Rev 1.18)

WE PRACTICE

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

- 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).

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.

- 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 above).
- 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)

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

- 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).

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

- 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).

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

- 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 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).

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

- 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.

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

- 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.

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

- 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 prooftext 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.

THEOLOGICAL PARTICULARS & CLARIFICATIONS

Fellowship Bible Church is a nondenominational church, which means that we are not held to any theological tradition or creed, and our membership is composed of believers from a wide variety of spiritual backgrounds. It must therefore be the goal of each member of this local body to exercise mutual and joyful submission to one another on matters of secondary and tertiary doctrine. We must strive not to be primarily identified by our systems of interpretation, schools of thought, or theological traditions, but rather by our shared commitment to be faithful students of the Bible. The elders at FBC appreciate the complexity of the topics that follow, and have chosen to teach, uphold, and submit themselves to the following perspectives in our studies on God's Word, while still appreciating the wide diversity of opinion and interpretation that exists. In fact, understanding the varying ideologies pertaining to these topics can help each believer sharpen his or her own beliefs. We choose to submit ourselves to these theological particulars for the purpose of maintaining clarity and unity within the flock, as well as avoiding confusion or the appearance of inconsistency in our teaching and practices.

The purpose of articulating the following views is not to discourage believers who hold other perspectives from participating in worship with the church family at FBC, or to discourage them from pursuing membership. We recognize that not all who attend or join Fellowship Bible Church will hold all of the following viewpoints. However, those who would desire to formally join with us in membership (and, in so doing, perhaps eventually participate in teaching/leadership roles) must also be willing to voluntarily submit to these same theological particulars, as modeled by the eldership.

We take the following passages as our precedent for committing ourselves to unity and preferring one another on matters of doctrinal preference:

- **Philippians 2.1:** So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, ² complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³ Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.
- **Ephesians 5.15:** "Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶ making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷ Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸ And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹ addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, ²⁰ giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ."

Eschatology

We teach the premillennial return of Christ and His literal thousand-year kingdom on earth, followed by the final judgment and the creation of new heavens and a new earth (Rev 19-22; Dan 9.24-27). Even as we articulate this perspective on eschatology, we maintain a healthy appreciation and respect for the diverse schools of thought on this topic. Our predominantly premillennial leaning is driven by our hermeneutical commitment to study the Word of God, wherever practical and sensible, through a literal interpretive lens.

Ecclesiology and Church Governance

We teach that the Scriptures present a plurality of elders for local churches, using a variety of interchangeable terms to describe those leaders: elders (presbuteros; Titus 1.5-6), bishops/overseers (episkopos; 1 Tim 4.16; 1 Pet 2.25), and pastors/shepherds (poiman; 1 Pet 5.3). Those who hold this office may do so vocationally or as a volunteer, but none is qualified by lineage or succession. Rather, they are recognized as being marked by the Holy Spirit with a call to ministry and demonstrate their qualification to serve/lead according to the principles of 1 Timothy 3.1-7. This leadership structure is distinct from a congregationalist or “lead pastor” style of governance, as each pastor/elder at FBC (vocational or volunteer) is considered an equal.

The Bible also identifies the important role of deacon (diakonos; Rom 16.1; Phil 1.1; 1 Tim 3.8). Deacons and deaconesses are those who lead the unique service initiatives and operational matters for the church family. At FBC, we have termed this role “Ministry Leaders,” understanding it to be a responsibility for exemplary men and women to uphold (as per 1 Tim 3.8-13), upon appointment by the elders. The ministry leaders do not exist to check or balance the power of the elder council, but rather to reflect the balance of responsibility articulated in Acts 6.1-6: the elders must remain devoted to prayerful shepherding and teaching of God’s people, and the ministry leaders must be devoted to exercising the vision of the church.

At FBC, we also teach that the Church is a distinct group from the ethnic nation of Israel as seen in the Scriptures. While the eternal destiny is the same for Old Testament Jewish believers, modern-day believing Jews, and Christians alike, the Church is the unique expression of God’s plan for the communication of the gospel to bring in the “fullness of the Gentiles” during this temporary period of spiritual hardening that has persisted among the Jews since their heritage rejected Jesus as the Messiah, but which will one day be reversed by God’s own intervention (see Rom 11).

Spiritual Gifts

We teach that believers in Jesus Christ are given spiritual gifts by the Holy Spirit for the purpose of building up the Church and sharing the gospel. These gifts differ from natural gifting and

skills or talents (i.e. musical ability, predilection toward a specific trade or skill, personality traits, etc) and directly concern the ministry of the Word.

We teach a partial cessationist view on the spiritual gifts: while most of the roles and gifts listed in Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4, and 1 Peter 4 are still active and essential in the life of the modern Church, we believe that the “sign gifts” of tongues and healing, the gift of prophetic foretelling, and the role of apostle all served specific purposes for the New Testament church – namely, the authoritative verification of the gospel message to unbelievers prior to the establishment of the Church and the written gospel records. However, with the final authority of the Word in hand and the Church established, the sign gifts are no longer essential for the purpose of evangelism.

We teach that the manifestation of tongues in the book of Acts was a miracle of speaking, not a miracle of hearing, and involved known and understood human languages. This is distinct from the “angelic tongue” described by Paul in 1 Corinthians 14, which is best understood as an expression of personal worship that does not benefit any hearer without an interpreter; again, in the time period before the written and authoritative New Testament, direct messages from God would have served a much more viable purpose. Similarly, regarding the gift of healing, the apostle James – one of the earliest epistle writers – counseled those who were sick to go to the elders of the church to receive from them prayers for healing (Jas 5.14-15), as opposed to seeking out someone who possessed the gift of healing.

The New Testament gift of prophecy is both a foretelling (Acts 11.27-28; 21.10-14) as well as a forth-telling or truth-telling (Acts 5.3; 15.32; 1 Cor 12.10), both supernaturally enabled by the Holy Spirit. Because the canon of Scripture is complete and sufficient (Rev 22.18-19; Prov 30.5-6), we would regard any foretelling acts of prophecy in the present with deep reserve and careful scrutiny. However, where individual believers are uniquely adept at speaking biblical truth into the lives of others, we would understand this giftedness as an aspect of prophetic forth-telling, provided that their counsel is anchored in the authoritative Word of God and weighed by the local church. Anyone claiming to have a prophetic word of any sort from God must submit that message to the Scriptures because the authority of the Word always surpasses that of any individual’s claim of private revelation.

Lastly, we teach that the role of an apostle hinged on three qualifications found in Acts 1.21-26. To be considered an apostle, the individual must have 1) accompanied Jesus during His earthly ministry, 2) been an eyewitness to the resurrection, and 3) been specifically marked and chosen by God. The apostolic witness was critical in testifying to the legitimacy of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ during the era of the early church. By this testimony, the Scriptures were written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and the identity of the Church was established.

In conclusion, while we would not deny the power of God to work miracles of healing and special manifestations of power in the modern era, we believe He has tasked the Church to pursue the “more excellent way” of Christlike love (1 Cor 12.31-13.1ff) for the purpose of

building up the Body and manifesting the gospel to the lost, and has established eldership in local churches for the purpose of ministering from the complete and authoritative Word of God (1 Tim 3.14-17; 2 Pet 1.16-21). Therefore, any and all prophetic revelations received in the Spirit must be carefully submitted to the Word of God, which is the standard of truth, and weighed by the local church, in order to determine veracity

Gender Roles in Marriage and Ministry

We teach that God purposed male spiritual headship in marriage, based on His unique gendered design for human beings, which also creates a template for the structure of the local church. This view is commonly called complementarianism and is based on 1 Timothy 2.11-37; Titus 2.2-6, 13; and other passages. It is important to understand that this view does not disregard the essential equality and value of each gender, as men and women alike are image-bearers of God (Gen 1.26-27), but rather seeks to understand male and female roles as being distinct and unique. The parallel structures of Christ/Church, Head/Body, husband/wife are articulated in 1 Corinthians 11.3-16, Ephesians 5.22-33, and 1 Peter 3.1-6. Headship does not imply priority, status, or privilege, but rather the responsibility to lead from a servant's posture, as per the example of Jesus, our Spiritual Head (Phil 2.5-8; Eph 5.25). Based on this model and other New Testament precedents (i.e. while we do see female deacons and church leaders, we never see any female elders or pastors), we teach that the specific role of pastor/elder of the local church is to be an exclusively male office, but would fully affirm the necessity and responsibility of women to hold leadership, administrative, and teaching roles in local church contexts where they have been empowered and commissioned by the elders of that church. Furthermore, all decisions made by the eldership must consider the wisdom and perspective of the whole membership, including married and single women formally joined to the local body, and the elders must also strive to partner with all ministry leaders, male and female, who are serving the flock and leading from their positions of delegated authority.

The Law of God

We teach that there is clear continuity between the Old and New Testaments, both in terms of the plan of God to save mankind and also in the moral/ethical expectations placed on God's people. Those who have been invited into God's covenant community are both transformed from their old life and also called to pursue holiness and obedience, which are marks of individuals who have experienced and understood God's unmerited grace. While salvation is free and undeserved, its fruit is devotion and piety (see Jas 2.14-26), some of which is brought about by the spontaneous, regenerating influence of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5.5, 16-24), and some of which is the result of willingly molding our hearts and wills to be more in line with God's by self-discipline and humble submission (Phil 2.12-13). Many Old Testament ceremonial laws found their fulfillment in the atoning work of Jesus Christ (Matt 5.17-20), who in Himself purified our uncleanness and rendered us eternally able to approach a Holy God because of the Son's eternal intercession (Heb 4.14-16; 7.25), but other ethical obligations for God's people clearly carry relevance for Church-Age believers (see Matthew 5-7; Gal 6.2; Jas 1.25; 2.12).

However, while we are called to lives of devoted and faithful obedience, observance of God's Law is not a preventative obligation to the believer (1 John 5.3), but rather the freedom to live as a New Creation no longer enslaved to sinful passions (2 Cor 5.17; Titus 3.3; Eph 2.1-3).

Baptism

We teach that baptism is one of the two ordinances given by God for the local church to observe (see above under WE PRACTICE for fuller theological treatment). At Fellowship Bible Church, we require individuals who desire to formally join our flock in membership to be baptized by immersion, either affirming that they have undergone that process as part of another church family or conducting that baptism ourselves. While we acknowledge that many churches practice the ancient tradition of paedobaptism, and others utilize varying modes of believer's baptism by pouring or sprinkling, we would teach that the biblical writers' clear intent in utilizing the Greek word baptizo (to submerge or immerse) to describe this process was to envision complete submersion in water, because the symbolic picture of baptism represents total and complete spiritual death and resurrection. Because Christ commanded that His followers make disciples; baptize (baptizo) them in the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit; and instruct them to obey His teachings (Matt 28.19-20), we therefore teach that baptism by full immersion following a testimony of faith in Christ is the best practice for obediently keeping and understanding the intended symbol. We have chosen to include baptism by immersion as a requirement for membership (see above under WE PRACTICE for fuller theological treatment) at FBC because 1) it is a testimony to the legitimacy of the individual's salvation, 2) it is a visible acknowledgement of the individual's willingness to be obedient to the commands of Scripture, and 3) it is an act of submitting oneself to the authority of the eldership at the local church level.



Together,
strengthening you
to change your world
for Christ

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