



HOPE CHURCH

MEMBERSHIP

BOOKLET

Table of Contents

THE MISSION & VALUES OF HOPE CHURCH

Section 1: BIBLICAL CHRISTIANITY

Section 2: CHRIST-CENTERED COMMUNITY

Section 3: KINGDOM-MULTIPLYING MISSION

THE MISSION & VALUES OF HOPE CHURCH

MISSION & VISION

Hope Church exists to bring glory to God and joy to his people through the good news of Jesus Christ whose life, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and reign are the foundation of our eternal hope. Hope Church desires to see the good news of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection renew lives as we make Jesus known in the church and the world. We recognize the importance of *revelation*, the idea that God has graciously and freely made himself known to us most fully in the gospel which shows Jesus' person and work. As those who have, by God's grace, seen and believed in Jesus, it is our privilege and responsibility to disperse that revelation wherever we go: to make Jesus known. Where the true Jesus is truly known, God is glorified by making dead people alive and through the ongoing transformation of their hearts, minds, affections, desires, and relationships. Where the true Jesus is known, disciples of Jesus are made and strengthened and the mission of the church of God is joyfully carried out.

CORE VALUES

As a spiritual family who Makes Jesus Known, we are committed wholeheartedly to developing the following values together:

BIBLICAL CHRISTIANITY

Our goal as a congregation is *not* to be new and innovative, but to be rooted in the deep tradition of the Christian faith revealed in God's perfect Word. We treasure the Scriptures as they reveal the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; we worship through rhythms that anchor us in Christian tradition and saturate us with God's Word; and we embrace the centrality of the gospel of God's grace in Christ preached by the apostles, defended by the early church, renewed by the Protestant Reformers, and carried forward by God's faithful people until Jesus returns.

CHRIST-CENTERED COMMUNITY

Our community is humbly dependent on God together in all of life. We want to be marked by a desire for holiness, repentance, and confession of sin. We aim to cultivate a culture where self-righteousness and pride are replaced by an eagerness to acknowledge our

weakness and reliance on the person and work of Christ and rejoice in the assurance of gospel forgiveness. We are committed to building intergenerational and intercultural relationships that are centered on union with Christ, not on personal preference or comfort. Following the “one-another's” of the New Testament, we are growing into a spiritual family of joyful disciples that are always ready to sacrifice for the sake of bearing one another’s burdens.

KINGDOM-MULTIPLYING MISSION

Jesus has commissioned us to make disciples of all nations, and we are committed to see the multiplication of Christ’s kingdom. We are witnesses to the gospel: the good news of Jesus’ life, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and reign that calls all people to turn from sin, receive new life in Christ, and join Him on mission. We value the hard work of planting churches who plant churches and commissioning one another as sent-out missionaries to renew the world and make disciples in our homes, workplaces, communities, and the ends of the earth.

Section 1: Biblical Christianity

Who is Hope Church?

OUR HISTORY

Hope Church is the daughter of Grace Church Waco. After several years of envisioning a church in Robinson, the elders at Grace Waco set in motion a plan to plant Hope Church Robinson in the summer of 2023 in three phases. Two Grace pastors, Bracken Arnhart and Phil Barnes, were selected by the Grace elders to be sent out by Grace to plant Hope Church.

The first phase of the church plant consisted of four months of meeting monthly for corporate worship. This happened in May, June, July, and August 2023. The second phase began when Hope Church started weekly corporate gatherings and three community groups on the week of September 3, 2023. The third phase of Hope Church started when it officially constituted and covenanted as a new autonomous church body on December 10, 2023.

LITURGY AND WORSHIP

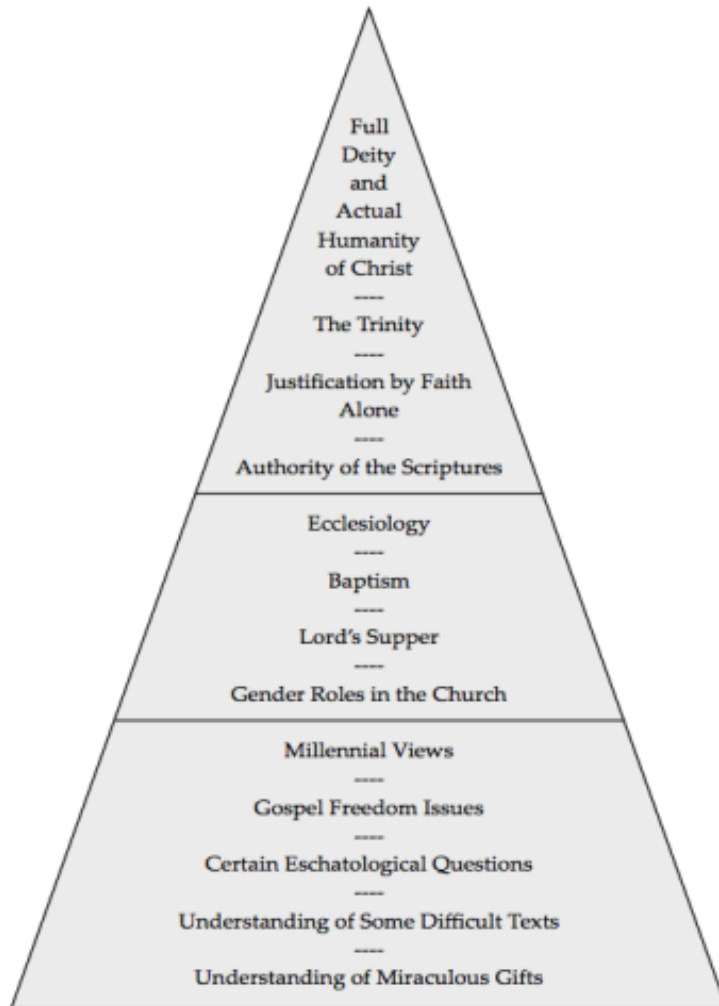
The Sunday worship gathering is one of the most important rhythms in the Christian life. Hope Church is committed to robust Biblical worship that follows a pattern of revelation and response. We see Jesus made known through the written Word of God, the Bible, and then we respond. We acknowledge that the main way God reveals himself in his Word is through the good news of the gospel. In this way, our worship should be a “feast” of the gospel.

In order to feast well we follow an order of worship that includes singing, Scripture reading, and prayer. We preach to show Christ from the Biblical text by drawing out meaning and application from the verses themselves, acknowledging that all of Scripture points to Jesus. Finally, every week we celebrate and remember the life and work of Christ by taking part in Communion together.

What does Hope Church believe?

TIERS OF THEOLOGICAL BELIEFS

Al Mohler's Theological Triage



First-tier doctrines are also called “gospel doctrines”. These are the beliefs that are central to orthodox Christianity. To get one of these beliefs wrong is to get the gospel wrong and risk damnation.

The **second-tier** of doctrine protects the church and the people of God, promoting unity among specific practices. Christians can disagree on these doctrines and maintain strong bonds of unity, but most of the time these doctrines break fellowship in a local church because of their distinct nature. Most churches require from their members the affirmation of and submission to these doctrines, but not total unity.

Third-tier doctrines are the doctrines that like-minded Christians in the fellowship of the

same church can disagree on healthily. They may impact ministry values or interpretive methods, but they do not directly impact the unity of the church.

Hope Church locates both our first and second tier doctrines in our Statement of Faith. This statement must be fully affirmed by all members of Hope Church. While this statement might maintain language on some “second-tier” doctrines that members may disagree on and still maintain gospel unity, submission to these doctrines helps promote health in the church. You will notice that the Statement of Faith is very clear on “first-tier” issues, broad enough not to exclude all differences in “second-tier” issues, but narrow enough to require unity on the ones that bring health and clarity to the church, and very broad on “third-tier issues.”

STATEMENT OF FAITH

THE SCRIPTURES We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the verbally inspired Word of God, the final authority for faith and life, inerrant in the original writings, infallible, and God-breathed (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Matthew 5:18; John 16:12-13).

THE GODHEAD We believe in one Triune God, eternally existing in three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—co-eternal in being, co-eternal in nature, co-equal in power and glory, having the same attributes and perfections (Deuteronomy 6:4; 2 Corinthians 13:14).

THE PERSON AND WORK OF CHRIST We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man without ceasing to be God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful man (John 1:1-2, 14; Luke 1:35). We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross as a representative, vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice, and that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead (Romans 3:24; 1 Peter 2:24; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:3-5). We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where, as our High Priest, He fulfills the ministry as Representative, Intercessor, and Advocate (Acts 1:9, 10; Hebrews 7:25; Hebrews 9:24; Romans 8:34; 1 John 2:1-2). We believe Jesus is coming again to judge the living and the dead (1 Peter 4:5; Romans 14:9; 2 Timothy 4:1).

THE PERSON AND WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT We believe that the Holy Spirit is a person who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; He is the Supernatural Agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the body of Christ,

indwelling and sealing them unto the day of redemption (John 16:8–11; 2 Corinthians 3:6; 1 Corinthians 12:12–14; Romans 8:9; Ephesians 5:18).

THE TOTAL DEPRAVITY OF MAN We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God, but through Adam’s sin the race fell, inherited a sinful nature, and became alienated from God; man is totally depraved and of himself utterly unable to remedy his lost condition (Genesis 1:26, 27; Romans 3:22, 23; 5:12; Ephesians 2:1–3, 12).

MARRIAGE AND SEXUALITY We believe that God created human beings in his image in two embodied sexual kinds—male and female (Genesis 1:26–27). We believe that God designed marriage to consist of a union between man and a woman, which is complementary, involving one of each sexual gender, exclusive, and permanent (Genesis 2:18, 24; Matthew 19:4–6; 1 Corinthians 7:39; Hebrews 13:4). Christian singleness is not a state of insufficiency but rather, like marriage, is a gift bestowed by God (1 Corinthians 7:7; Matthew 19:11).

SALVATION We believe salvation is by faith alone in Christ Jesus whose precious blood was shed on Calvary for the forgiveness of our sins, and that faith is a gift of God’s free and sovereign grace which He gives according to His will. (Ephesians 2:8–10; John 1:12; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:18–19).

ETERNAL SECURITY AND ASSURANCE OF BELIEVERS We believe that all the redeemed, once saved, are kept by God’s power and are thus secure in Christ forever (John 6:37–40; 10:27–30; Romans 8:1, 38, 39; 1 Corinthians 1:4–8; 1 Peter 1:5). We believe that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God’s Word, which clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion for the flesh (Romans 13:13, 14; Galatians 5:13; Titus 2:11–15).

THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND SPIRITUAL GIFTS We believe that God is sovereign in the bestowing of spiritual gifts. It is, however, the believer’s responsibility to attempt to develop their sovereignly given spiritual gift(s). The baptism of the Holy Spirit occurs at conversion and is the placing of the believer into the Body of Christ. We also believe that particular spiritual gift(s) are neither essential, nor prove the presence of the Holy Spirit, nor are an indication of deep spiritual experience (1 Corinthians 12:7, 11, 13; Ephesians 4:7–8). We believe that God does hear and answer the prayer of faith, in accordance with His own will, for the sick and afflicted (John 15:7; 1 John 5:14, 15). We believe that it is the privilege and responsibility of every believer to minister according to the gift(s) and grace of God that is given to him (Romans 12:1–8; 1 Corinthians 13; 1 Peter 4:10–11).

THE CHURCH We believe that the church, which is the body and espoused bride of Christ, is a spiritual organism made up of all born-again persons and that all Christians are

commanded by Scripture to take part in the regular teaching, fellowship, and accountability of a congregation of fellow disciples led by biblically qualified pastors organized as a Gospel Church (Ephesians 1:22, 23; 5:25–27; 1 Corinthians 12:12–14; 2 Corinthians 11:2). We believe that the establishment and continuance of local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament Scriptures (Acts 14:27; 18:22; 20:17; 1 Timothy 3:1–3; Titus 1:5–11). We believe in the autonomy of the local churches, free of any external authority and control (Acts 13:1–4; 15:19–31; 20:28; Romans 16:1,4; 1 Corinthians 3:9, 16; 1 Corinthians 5:4–7, 13; 1 Peter 5:1–4). We believe baptism is a sign of our covenant relationship with God and is a part of our act of spiritual worship and Biblical obedience. We believe the Lord’s Supper is a Scriptural means of testimony for the church (Matthew 28:19, 20; Acts 2:41, 42; Acts 16:31; Acts 18:8; 1 Corinthians 11:23–26).

TEACHING POSITIONS

We want to be clear on the biblical and theological convictions that shape the teaching of our church. These positions are not part of our Statement of Faith, and therefore total unity on them is not required for membership at Hope Church, but they represent what will be taught and practiced at Hope Church under the authority of our pastor/elders.

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD IN SALVATION

God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, not on the basis of foreseen faith but unconditionally, according to his sovereign good pleasure and will. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, God will draw the elect to faith in his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, graciously and effectually overcoming their stubborn resistance to the gospel so that they will most assuredly and willingly believe. The elect of God whom he gave to the Son, will persevere in belief and godly behavior and be kept secure in their salvation by grace through faith. God’s sovereignty in this salvation neither diminishes the responsibility of people to believe in Christ nor marginalizes the necessity and power of prayer and evangelism, but rather reinforces and establishes them as the ordained means by which God accomplishes his ordained ends.

(John 1:12-13; 6:37-44; 10:25-30; Acts 13:48; 16:30-31; Romans 3:1-4:25; 8:1-17,31-39; 9:1-23; 10:8-10; Ephesians 1:4-5; 2:8-10; Philippians 2:12-13; Titus 3:3-7; 1 John 1:7,9)

BAPTISM AND THE LORD’S SUPPER

Baptism is a biblically ordained act of obedience to Christ in which the church, through immersion in water, is meant to publicly affirm and portray a believer’s union with Christ through faith and his or her commitment to Christ and his church.

The Lord's Supper is a biblically ordained act of obedience to Christ in which the church, through the regular taking of bread and wine, spiritually commune together with Christ in a covenant meal by remembering Christ's work and renewing their commitment to Christ and his church.

CHURCH GOVERNMENT

Jesus Christ is the head of and Lord of Hope Church. In attempting to define how the authority in the universal church is passed on from Jesus Christ to individual local churches, the New Testament nowhere prescribes a fully exhaustive form of church government, but instead prescribes certain practices, offices, and responsibilities. As these practices, offices, and responsibilities relate to functional authority in the church, the Biblical witness is clear on at least two realities:

1) it is the prescribed authority of the local church to exercise the practice of church discipline (Mt 16:13-20; 18:15) on both members and elders (1 Cor 5:9-13; 2 Cor 2:5-8; 1 Tim 5:19), and to keep watch over their collective doctrine and to look out for false teachers (Phil 3:2; 1 Jn 4:1-6);

2) it is the prescribed reality that the New Testament teaches elders are to have genuine authority that the church is to submit to—authority that the New Testament deems appropriate to describe as “ruling” (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; Hebrews 13:17).

In light of these realities, the Scriptures are clear that both the congregation and the elders have a shared authority, underneath the authority of Christ the head. The congregation's authority is to be the binding and loosing in church discipline (Mt 16:13-20; 18:15) and to keep watch over the doctrine of the church and who teaches there; the elders' authority is to be that of “ruling” authority in all other matters of church governance and in equipping the saints for the mission of the church. This shared authority, for the purposes of Hope Church, will be called “Elder-Led Congregationalism”. This language maintains the Biblical language of the elders' authority to rule the Church of God well, but grants the congregation rightful authority in specific areas prescribed by Scripture. In practice, Elder-Led Congregationalism, as maintained by Hope Church, means all authority in church governance, except for the authority granted to the congregation as prescribed in Scripture, resides with the elders.

GENDER DISTINCTIONS

God created human beings, **male and female**, in his own image. Adam and Eve belonged to the created order that God himself declared to be very good, serving as God's agents to care for, manage, and govern creation, living in holy and devoted fellowship with their Maker. Men and women, equally made in the image of God, enjoy equal access to God by faith in Christ Jesus and are both called to move beyond passive self-indulgence to significant

private and public engagement in family, church, and civic life.

Adam and Eve were made to **complement** each other in a one-flesh union that establishes the only normative pattern of sexual relations for men and women, such that marriage ultimately serves as a type of the union between Christ and his church. In God's wise purposes, men and women are not simply interchangeable, but rather they complement each other in mutually enriching ways. God ordains that they assume distinctive roles which reflect the loving relationship between Christ and the church, the husband exercising headship in a way that displays the caring, sacrificial love of Christ, and the wife submitting to her husband in a way that models the love of the church for her Lord.

In the ministry of the church, both men and women are encouraged to **serve Christ** and to be developed to their full potential in the manifold ministries of the people of God. The distinctive leadership role of pastor/elder within the church given to qualified men is grounded in creation, fall, and redemption and must not be sidelined by appeals to cultural developments.

(Genesis 1:26-31; 2:15-25; Acts 2:17-18; 21:9; Romans 16:1-16; 1 Timothy 2:12–3:13; Galatians 3:23-29; Ephesians 5:22-33; 1 Peter 4:10-11)

Taken from the Gospel Coalition Confessional Statement.

MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

Marriage has been established by God as the first human institution. The Scriptures teach that a man should leave his father and mother, be united to his wife, and the two will become "one flesh." When this "one flesh" design has been violated and broken by marital unfaithfulness (extramarital sexual intercourse) or the abandonment/neglect/abuse of the Christian by the non-Christian spouse, reconciliation is the aim, but repentance is necessary. Where there is no repentance and possibility of reconciliation, divorce is allowable (but not mandated). Remarriage, consequently, is allowable (but not mandated) when it becomes evident that the "one flesh" relationship cannot be restored. Divorce and remarriage, when following these biblical guidelines, does not necessarily disqualify an individual from church membership and its privileges, including the offices of deacon and pastor/elder. Even when divorce and remarriage occur outside biblical boundaries, they are not unpardonable offenses but, because of the gospel, can and must be forgiven.

(Genesis 2:24; Matthew 5:31-32; 19:3-12; Mark 10:1-12; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 7:8-16)

BYLAWS

A copy of the church bylaws are available online at www.hoperobinson.com or by request. The bylaws help shape the policies of our church and orient us towards biblical faithfulness.

Who leads Hope Church?

OUR ELDERS

QUALIFICATIONS AND APPOINTMENT OF ELDERS

It is the position of Hope Church that the New Testament terms for pastor (*poimen*), elder (*presbuteros*) and likewise the term overseer (*episkopos*) speak to the same office in the church, with the same authority and responsibilities. A survey of appropriate passages includes: Acts 20:17-28; 1 Timothy 3:1-7, 5:17; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-2; and Ephesians 4:1-11. The elders of Hope Church exist in a team normally comprised of no less than two men.

The biblical expectations and qualifications for pastor/elders, can be separated into three categories: **character, calling, and competency**. Pastor/elders should exhibit **character** in strict alignment with the qualifications for elders listed in 1 Tim 3:2-7, 2 Tim 2:24-25, and Titus 1:6-9. Since pastors/elders are to be examples to the flock (1 Pet 5:3), they should likewise exhibit healthy rhythms of life and godliness that all Christians are called to, setting an example “in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity” (1 Tim 4:12).

Pastors/elders should also exhibit a clear **calling** to the office (1 Tim 3:1). That calling should be affirmed by others and personally discerned through patience and prayer. Calling also speaks to specific fit in a particular local church. A pastor/elder may feel called to the office generally, but not be a good fit (because of gifting, personality, or other outside circumstances) to shepherd and lead as a pastor/elder at Hope Church. In the expectation of calling, differences in doctrine of candidates with the agreed upon doctrine of Hope Church will be examined and assessed to make sure that the candidate is a good fit for pastoral ministry in Hope Church and does not differ theologically or doctrinally on issues that would prevent them from serving faithfully and submitting humbly to the other pastors/elders.

Finally, pastor/elders should exhibit a biblical ability and **competency** for the task at hand. Pastors/elders are called to shepherd, care, and pray for the flock. They are also called clearly to be “able to teach” (1 Timothy 3:4; 2 Timothy 2:24) and to “give instruction in sound doctrine” (Titus 1:9). This means that pastors/elders must exhibit appropriate ability and competency in public teaching and preaching, as well as a robust and

appropriate grasp and understanding of sound biblical doctrine and diverse theological categories.

The elder team is responsible for nominating elder candidates. A unanimous vote of the elders will be required for the elder team to nominate an elder candidate. For every candidate put forward by the elders, whether from within the congregation or outside of the congregation, an assessment and training period of at least three months will take place. After the allotted assessment and training period has passed, candidates will be brought before the members of the congregation for a vote. The vote to ordain a candidate into pastoral office will require an 80% majority in order to pass. After confirmation by a vote of the membership of Hope Church, the elder candidate will be ordained/installed before the gathered congregation into the pastoral office.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF ELDERS

Hope Church may have elders who serve vocationally as elders, employed by the church, as well as elders who serve while working vocationally in another field. Both vocational pastors and non-vocational pastors share equal authority in all the duties and responsibilities of their office. Biblically and functionally there is no difference among the elders.

The fundamental responsibility of the pastors/elders is to devote themselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word. The elders are responsible for ruling and governing the church within the authority given to them, for teaching the Word of God, and for tending to the flock of God in his church via intentional pastoral care. Pastors may designate certain specific responsibilities to members of the elder team by assigning them specific titles or roles. Assignment of specific responsibility or title to specific elders does not designate a resignation of the duty of all elders collectively, but rather represents a desire to allocate specific responsibility for vision in ministry according to gifts, time, vocation, desire, and conviction. These titles or specific responsibilities should be held loosely in favor of the general duties and Biblical responsibilities given to every pastor/elder (to pray, to teach, to guard doctrine, to care/shepherd, to rule well, etc.).

OUR DEACONS

QUALIFICATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF DEACONS

The qualifications for the office of deacon are described in 1 Tim 3:8-13. Deacons are the selfless servants of the church. Every deacon must be a member of Hope Church in good standing. Hope Church recognizes both men and women who are giving of themselves in

service to the church, and who possess particular gifts of service as eligible for the office of deacon. Deacons are chosen and affirmed by the elders, but may be nominated from the congregation.

Deacons serve by caring for the members of the congregation, assisting and visiting those in need, and supporting new and existing ministries of the church. The elder team may designate specific roles of service to the deacons per need. The deacons are organized in the most fitting way to accomplish the mission of the church.

Section 2: CHRIST-CENTERED COMMUNITY

What is the church?

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth.¹

THE LOCAL CHURCH IS...

A CONGREGATION

Matthew 18:19-20; Hebrews 12:22-24

Of BAPTIZED BELIEVERS

Matthew 28:18-20

Who regularly gather for BIBLICAL WORSHIP

To sing, pray, read Scripture, observe the ordinances, and hear the preached Word

Ephesians 5:19; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; 1 Timothy 4:13; 1 Corinthians 11:17-32; 1 Timothy 4:13;
2 Timothy 4:1-2

And are **COVENANTED TOGETHER** as a sign of their union.

Bound together by union with Christ and shared mission

Matthew 16:19, 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5; Phillipians 1:5-7

¹Taken from the definition of a local church from the *Baptist Faith and Message 2000*

Is Church membership Biblical?

Matthew 18:15-17: *“If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault...if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you...If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.”*

The ability to exclude someone from “the church” presupposes that it’s known who belongs to “the church” as a member in the first place.

Acts 5:12-13: *“Now many signs and wonders were regularly done among the people by the hands of the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon’s Portico. None of the rest dared join them, but the people held them in high esteem.”*

So, people faced the decision of whether or not they would join the church in Jerusalem. This joining is more public and definite than an informal association.

In **1 Timothy 5:9-12**, Paul gives Timothy instructions for enrolling widows on the list of those receiving support from the church. He writes, *“Let a widow be enrolled if she is not less than sixty years of age, having been the wife of one husband, and having a reputation for good works...”*

While this isn’t conclusive evidence for formal church membership, it’s tough to imagine that the church in Ephesus would have kept a list of widows but not have any formal means of identifying everyone who belonged to the church.

1 Corinthians 5:12-13: *“For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? God judges those outside.”*

Paul called upon the Corinthian church to judge those who were inside the church, not those who were outside. They were responsible for the testimony of those who belonged to the church, not those who didn’t. This passage makes no sense if the Corinthian church didn’t have some public, formal means by which people identified themselves with the church.

2 Corinthians 2:6: Paul writes concerning a man the Corinthian church had excommunicated, *“For such a one, this punishment by the majority is enough, so you should rather turn to forgive and comfort him, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow.”*

This man's exclusion from the church was a punishment by the majority. You can't have a majority unless you have a definite set of people from which a majority is constituted.

What are the benefits of church membership?

From 9Marks of a Healthy Church

It commits you, the Christian It's good to commit yourself to love and serve others. You will grow as a Christian as you commit to encourage, build up, strengthen, serve, rebuke, and pray for other Christians.

Others are committed to you Becoming a member of a church means joining with an entire group of Christians who have now covenanted to watch over you spiritually. If you're a member of a church, you have an entire church full of people who are publicly committed to love you and serve you and watch over you. Additionally, you are now part of a family that will help you through life's burdens, struggles, and sufferings. You're free to make your needs known to the church and the church committed to helping meet them.

Elder Protection If you're a member of a church, that church's elders should know you, care for you, pray for you, and personally counsel and teach you. As a member of their church, they are accountable to God for how they lead you.

Safety net Being a church member means that a whole church full of people are committed to helping you live a life that is pleasing to God, even to the point of excluding you from the church if you stop repenting of sin. While this sounds harsh to some, to those of us who know the deceitfulness of sin, this is an immensely comforting and encouraging reality.

Assurance Membership is the church's affirmation of the validity of someone's profession of faith. The church looks at a person's life, hears their explanation of the gospel and how they came to believe it, and says, "You look like a Christian to us. So join us. Watch over our lives and we'll watch over yours." So while membership in a church doesn't guarantee that someone is a Christian, it should assure believers of the genuineness of their faith.

What is the responsibility of a church member?

Church membership is both an office and a job. Once you join a church, you have something to do! Church members are responsible to see the **kingdom of God advanced** through discipleship and service, to see the **doctrine of the church guarded** by the affirming of the right profession of faith, and to see the **purity of the church maintained** by the giving and withholding of the assurance of salvation.

ADVANCING THE KINGDOM

Jesus makes it clear that the gospel-unified, Spirit-empowered local church is to be his primary mission force in seeing the kingdom of God go out into the world (Matt. 28:18–20; 2 Cor. 5:19; Eph. 2:12; 1 Pet 2:9). The primary way this happens is through the fulfillment of the great commission. A church member is a Christian who has taken seriously his job to be a part of the church in the mission of making disciples. The church member also takes part in advancing the kingdom through serving the church. Every church member has a part to play in seeing the gospel go forward (1 Cor. 12:12-27).

GUARDING DOCTRINE

Church members are called collectively to watch out for false teachers and to test doctrines to determine what is true and false (Phil 3:2; 1 Jn 4:1-6). The members, not just the pastors or teachers, are responsible broadly for the doctrine of the church.

In Matthew 16:13-20, Jesus confesses Peter as the rock because he makes the right profession of faith. The apostles are given the authority to judge the right profession of faith: to hold onto as true what is bound in heaven (the truth of the gospel) and to let go of and condemn what is loosed in heaven (the false confession). Jesus is saying the authority is given here to the apostles to dismiss someone as not a Christian if they fail to provide the true gospel profession: Jesus is the Christ. Just a few chapters later, Jesus gives the instructions to the church as a whole. Jonathan Leeman calls this guarding the “what” of the gospel.

At Hope Church, we help to guard the doctrine of the church by giving the members the authority to affirm elders, to watch their doctrine, and by making the members the final arbiters of the Statement of Faith.

MAINTAINING PURITY

In Matthew 18:15-20 Jesus flips the script from chapter 16. Again, he talks of the keys of binding and loosing, of the authority to render a judgment in Heaven's name. Except this time the focus is more on who is confessing, not what they are confessing. There are times when someone might confess the right thing, and yet their life denies it. This is the proof text for the practice of Church Discipline. Look who Jesus gives this authority to: the whole church.

The guarding of the “who” of the gospel is the responsibility and authority of the church member to practice church discipline. They are to make sure they give and withhold assurance rightly. The last thing you want to give someone is false assurance. Church discipline is the means by which church members lovingly and gently call an unrepentant member to repentance, in order to restore them to the right giving of assurance of salvation and affirmation of faith within the church. At Hope Church, we help maintain our purity together by giving our members the responsibility to vote to affirm new members and by giving the ultimate responsibility of church discipline to the members.

COMMUNITY GROUPS

Community Groups exist to lead the people of Hope Church into **gospel-centered belonging** and **missional discipleship** through confession and repentance, shared life, the study of Scripture, prayer, and accountability to mission. Our groups are co-ed and strive to be intergenerational. They meet every week in the homes of our members. This is the **primary way** we exist in community outside of our gathering on Sunday morning and every one of our members is expected to be **actively** involved in the life of a community group.

DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

Discipleship Groups exist to lead the people of Hope Church into **gospel-centered belonging** and **missional discipleship** through confession and repentance, shared life, the study of Scripture, prayer, and accountability to mission in a deeper and more intentional scope than Community Groups. These groups are same-gendered groups and consist of no more than five members meeting regularly.

OUR MEMBERSHIP COVENANT

Having received union with Christ by faith and been baptized as our profession of that union, and being in agreement with Hope Church's Statement of Faith and bylaws, we now are led by the Holy Spirit to unite with the Hope Church church family. In doing so, we commit by the aid of the Holy Spirit:

To protect the unity and purity of our church,

We will live together in Christian love; bear one another's burdens with patience; confess our sins to each other and pray for one another; avoid gossip, slander, and division; we will be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation; and we will submit to the discipline and leaders of the church (Romans 12:3-21, 4:19; 1 Peter 1:22; Ephesians 4:1-3, 29; Hebrews 13:17).

To share the responsibility and mission of our church,

We will continue to meet together weekly for worship and the observance of the ordinances; to not neglect the practice of communal life together; participate in the discipline and accountability of fellow church members; and commit to mutually guard our doctrine and to hold accountable our church leaders; we will use our gifts for the service of the church; regularly give of our financial resources for the mission of the church; commit to make and mature disciples of Jesus; and to seek the salvation of the lost as ambassadors of Christ (Matt. 5:13-16, 28:18-20; John 17:15-21, 1 Peter 2:12, 4:10; Hebrews 10:24-25; 2 Cor. 5:20).

And to support the testimony of the church.

We will seek Christian maturity through the practice of spiritual disciplines; we will educate our children in the Christian faith; we will live carefully in the world, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts; and we will, when we move from this place, as soon as possible, unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word (Phil. 1:27; Acts 2:42, Col. 3:16).

Non-Resident Status

Hope Church recognizes that there will be some individuals who do not reside in Robinson/Waco full-time. These individuals might be students, military personnel, etc. As such, these individuals may be Providentially hindered from attending Sunday services,

community groups, and otherwise participating in the life of the church. These interruptions may be regular (e.g. students will often be away during school breaks) and/or lengthy (e.g. military personnel who are sent on a long-term assignment outside of the area). In such circumstances, Hope Church shall treat these individuals as being in “non-resident status” (NRS).

During the duration of their NRS, these individuals will be exempted from attendance expectations and will also not be eligible to vote at Hope Church. These individuals will be expected to be involved in a church in their other place of residence. They should communicate with one of the pastors or their community group leader as to what church they are attending during their time away from Hope Church. Hope Church will make every effort to conduct pastoral care by proxy through those churches and their pastors.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.

Section 3:

KINGDOM-MULTIPLYING MISSION

MISSION & VISION

Hope Church exists to bring glory to God and joy to his people through the good news of Jesus Christ whose life, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and reign are the foundation of our eternal hope. Hope Church desires to see the good news of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection renew lives as we make Jesus known in the church and the world. We recognize the importance of revelation, the idea that God has graciously and freely made himself known to us most fully in the gospel which shows Jesus' person and work. As those who have, by God's Hope, seen and believed in Jesus, it is our privilege and responsibility to disperse that revelation wherever we go: to make Jesus known. Where the true Jesus is truly known, God is glorified by making dead people alive and through the ongoing transformation of their hearts, minds, and affections, desires, and relationships. Where the true Jesus is known, disciples of Jesus are made and strengthened and the mission of the church of God is joyfully carried out.

MINISTRIES & SERVING

(Active and Aspiring)

Hope Kids and Youth

Serves our children and families through resources, equipping, and care.

Young Adults

Serves our college-aged students through discipleship, connection, and sending (in partnership with Grace Church).

Men's and Women's Ministry

Serves our men and women through discipleship and connection.

Equipping Hour

Serves our church through theological and Biblical equipping.

For Robinson

Serves our city through focus on education and supporting Hope Church families who participate in foster care.

For The World

Serves all peoples through focus on international missions and church planting, including prayer, giving, support trips, and sending short, medium, and long-term missionaries..

MINISTRY & PASTORAL RESIDENCY

Hope church offers two residency programs via the Grace Network. Our **ministry residency** is open to men and women, is focused on more generalized ministry, and is ideal for recent college graduates or those developing and discerning a call to ministry. The **pastoral residency** is designed for mature Christian men who sense a call to pastoral ministry and desire quipping and training.

*The **Ministry Residency** at Hope Church exists to make Jesus known by raising up men and women who are trained and equipped to strengthen local churches, make disciples, and fulfill the great commission.*

Our ministry residency is a one to two year ministry training that is meant to develop future church leaders, pastors, counselors, and missionaries. Our residents take part in ministry rhythms that fill their week throughout the year. These rhythms consist of reading, writing, preaching, ministering, learning, and discipleship. The goal of year one is to help residents determine calling and gifting, as well as provide general theological, personal, and practical training in broad categories. The goal of year two, should the resident continue, is to provide more intentional ministry experience and coaching in ways tailored to the desires and gifting of the ministry resident.

*The **Pastoral Residency** at Hope Church exists to make Jesus known by equipping men who have experienced the call to pastoral ministry to faithfully minister the gospel through the planting and strengthening of churches.*

Besides a more general ministry residency, we have found the need to develop a new program of training for men of character who feel the specific call to pastoral ministry. Our pastoral residency training is focused intently on theological and character development that is aimed at preparing residents for a future as vocational pastors, lay pastors, church planters, or church revitalizers. The pastoral residency is a part-time program that begins

each January and lasts for one year. Besides formal training, pastoral residents will be required to take part in certain church leadership roles and develop their pastoral heart by shadowing pastors in specific tasks and ministry during their time as a resident.

OUR PARTNERSHIPS

Acts 29 is a diverse, global family of church-planting churches. They exist to encourage, resource, facilitate, support, and equip churches to plant churches that will plant more churches, all for the goal of seeing the gospel of Jesus proclaimed where it isn't. We affirm the Acts 29 theological distinctives and are honored to be a part of this growing network.

The Southern Baptist Convention is a network of like-minded churches who cooperate together to reach the world for Christ. The SBC focuses its cooperation on evangelism, church planting, international missions, and seminary training for future pastors and missionaries. In partnering with the SBC, we affirm their core set of beliefs, the Baptist Faith and Message (2000). Hope Church is involved with the SBC through its involvement with the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention (SBTC).

What is the missional future of Hope Church?

CHURCH PLANTING PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORK

The local church is God's primary means of accomplishing his mission on earth. Hope Church desires to see churches planted and strengthened so that the gospel of Jesus could be proclaimed and the true Jesus might be known in Waco and beyond. To that end, we want to be a church-planting church and one that supports the work of church planting and revitalization in the world. In addition to seeking to plant more churches, we are committed to developing specific relationships and partnerships throughout the world. We are a part of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention and Acts 29 and are involved in both North American and international missions through those partnerships.

NEXT STEPS

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION & INTERVIEW

After you take part in the membership class, you will need to fill out a membership application online, which you can find at hoperobinson.com/membership. Then a pastor will schedule a meeting with you and your family to get to know you better and further answer any questions you might have. The goal is that one of our pastors has heard your story of life and faith, can affirm that you are a follower of Jesus, and can affirm your readiness to enter into a covenant with Hope Church. Once we receive your application and meet with you, we release your bio (sections from your application) to the church members so they can know you better and prepare to affirm you into church membership.

COVENANT SIGNING & AFFIRMATION

After you have completed the application and met with a pastor, if both you and the pastors believe that you are ready to move forward with church membership, you will come before the church and publicly recite our membership covenant at a members meeting, committing yourself to us and us to you. This is a time of celebration as we welcome new brothers and sisters into the visible family of God together. At this meeting, church members will vote to affirm and officially accept new members into our church.