

GRACE CHURCH:

HANDBOOK

SECTION 2

GRACE'S GOVERNANCE



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What Do We Believe?

Our Confession of Faith

The following beliefs are at the heart of all we say and do at Grace Church. We believe in the historic Christian faith, reflected in these statements:

1. We believe in the one living and true God, perfect, infinite and eternal, existing in three persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28:19; John 10:30; John 15:26; II Corinthians 13:14)
2. We believe in the deity of Jesus Christ, the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, born of the Virgin Mary, in His perfect humanity, His atoning death, His bodily resurrection from the dead and His personal triumphant return. (Matthew 16:16; Luke 1:31-33; I Peter 3:18; Luke 24:6, 39; Acts 1:11)
3. We believe that the Bible was given by divine inspiration and, in the original manuscripts, is the infallible Word of God. As such, it constitutes the only trustworthy guide in all matters pertaining to Christian faith and conduct. II Peter 1:20, 21
4. We believe in the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the dead, and a future state determined by divine judgment. (I Corinthians 15:54-57; I Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 20:12)
5. We believe a Christian is one saved by grace, whose life is transformed into the likeness of Christ by His atoning death and the power of His resurrection, and who will seek to obey the Biblical admonition of non-conformity to the world. (Ephesians 2:8-10; II Corinthians 5:17; I John 1:6, 7; Romans 12:1, 2) Further, we believe that there is “salvation in no one else for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved”. (Acts 4:12)
6. We believe in the Holy Spirit who is one with the Father and the Son and who by means of the Word applies to our hearts the things of God. (John 14:16, 17, 26; John 15:26; John 16 7-14)
7. We believe in the scriptural teaching of peace, love and non-resistance as it applies not only to carnal warfare, but to every area of the Christian's social life. (Romans 12:18, 14:19; Matthew 5:9; James 3:16-18)
8. We believe in the church as the body of Jesus Christ, a community of believers, gifted by the Holy Spirit, responsible to God and to each other. (Ephesians 4: 11-16)
9. We believe in the practice of Scriptural Church discipline. (Matthew 18:15-18; Galatians 6:1)

Who Makes Up Grace?

Covenant Community

You might wonder, "What is the point of joining the Covenant Community? Here are some reasons we feel membership in the Covenant Community can help us achieve what we desire most as followers of Jesus:

1. **Membership counts me in on a great mission.** We exist to love God, love others and make disciples. It's a life changing and therefore world changing cause. You are welcomed into a dynamic Christian community where you can connect— with God, with one another, and with opportunities to make a difference in changing our world. Membership is a way of saying, "Count me in. I'm not just a spectator; I'm on the team now. I want to work with the rest of you by making this mission my mission."
2. **Membership commits me to a community of committed people.** Without a high level of care and commitment to God and others, we don't experience community, because shallow commitments lead to superficial relationships. The depth and expression of our relationships as members impacts seeking people around us. They observe and experience our care for God and each other. Membership is a way of committing to a deeper level of care and involvement.
3. **Membership helps us keep expectations clear.** A clearly defined membership enables clarity on what we expect of members. On the one hand we realize that we exist to lead seeking people to experience an authentic relationship with Jesus. On the other hand, as disciples of Jesus we want to live our lives as a reflection of Jesus, imperfect to be sure, but genuine, honest and growing.
4. **Membership affirms that we hold to common values and beliefs.** It ensures that we build on a strong, shared foundation of faith, creating a church that lives out our mission of making disciples of Jesus. Without defining our core beliefs and values, we could find ourselves playing from different sheets of music," or building on different foundations with differing blueprints.
5. **Membership helps us deal with financial issues directly, discreetly, and up front.** At Grace, we ask our members to be committed financially so that the needs of ministry are met without having to pressure people or barrage them with emergency appeals. We believe God can do great things with us when we are learning how to sacrifice and generously give.

6. **Members understand their calling and use their gifts and abilities collectively.** In many churches, the members are the customers and the pastors are the staff. At Grace, we have a completely different understanding of what it means to be a member. Here the pastors develop us so we can reach out and lead others to be disciples of Jesus. By having a defined membership, we know who is on the team, and we can be sure they find their best "position" on the team.
7. **Membership counts you in as a host to newcomers.** Grace is a representation of Jesus Christ in this earth. Therefore, as a member, you are one of the faces of Jesus to your co-workers, neighbours, everyone you meet. You are also the face of Jesus to every first-time visitor and newcomer to Grace. Any guest to our church is your guest too. You will want to consider questions like these:
 - When your guests drive into the parking lot, do they find a convenient space easily, and do you greet them with smiles and hellos even before they reach the building?
 - Do your guests need help getting settled or finding where their children go?
 - Are your guests having a good time and meeting others?
 - Are there aisle seats available for your guests?
 - Do your guests need a smile, a warm hello, some information, or an invitation to join you for lunch to get better acquainted?
 - Would your guest appreciate an invitation to your Small Group, or help in finding a Group convenient to where they live?
8. **Membership allows for ownership.** Members can participate in the internal affairs and decisions regularly made in the operations of our community. As a member, you have the right to influence key decisions of the church, most importantly the selection of the Lead Team. From time to time, meetings or other functions are held which are for "members only." These events are usually called to either inform the core of the church of a major concern or to gather needed input.
9. **Membership opens the door for different leadership roles.** Most of the leadership positions in the church require membership as a prerequisite. It is important that our leaders are committed to God and us in this community of faith. It is also important that they know where we are going and why.

Steps to Membership in the Covenant Community:

There are three steps to becoming a member of the Covenant Community at Grace:

1. Connection and Investigation:
 - a. Complete Grace 101
 - b. Read "Community Basics" (Grace's guide to Covenant Community membership).
 - c. Complete the Bible Study in the guide
 - d. Complete a membership application.
2. Affirmation:
 - a. Turn in membership application
 - b. Meet with appropriate leadership to clarify and confirm decision.
3. Celebration:
 - a. Share your personal story and celebrate your membership with the Grace Covenant Community at a Sunday Celebration.

Commitments of Covenant Community Membership

There are three key commitments each of us at Grace makes:

1. We are committed to the **beliefs, values and mission** this community of faith holds to. This means we have personally accepted God's grace and surrendered our lives to Jesus, demonstrating our willingness to follow Him in believer's baptism.
2. We are committed to following Jesus as described in our **Church Covenant**
3. We accept the **leadership** structure of Grace and willingly participate as we can to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

These commitments are critical for us. Therefore, membership in Grace's Covenant Community is not just your name on a roll or roster. It is our way of saying, "Count me in. I'm not just a spectator; I'm on the team now. I identify with the cause of Grace."

How Is Grace Led?

Church Governance

The leader of Grace Church is Jesus Christ. We long as a church to hear his voice and live out His mission in our community and world.

On a human level, two groups of people lead the ministries of Grace. These groups are The Lead Team and The Ministry Management Team. The Lead Pastor is a key member of the Lead Team. Those who lead specific Ministries are Ministry Team Leaders.

LEAD TEAM:

We understand that the church is to be led by a plurality of men and women under the oversight and watch care of godly leaders. Their authority is expressed in servant leadership. The leaders are members of Grace who have been commissioned to give this leadership, oversight and care.

Role of the Lead Team

They are to use their wisdom, discernment and shepherding gifts to ensure the church remains on “true north” biblically. They are the “keepers of the vision” and as such lead the church in major decision-making and strategic initiatives. In this regard they will:

- Set the overall philosophy, vision, and direction for the church in a context of prayer and Scripture. (Acts 6:4)
- Oversee the shepherding to be sure that we are effectively achieving our purpose of leading people to be authentic followers of Jesus – always helping them take the next step with Him. (Acts 20:28).
- Ensure that the body is being fed through insightful and accurate biblical teaching. They determine what are the major issues or essentials for Grace to uphold, while avoiding needless controversy over minor issues (Titus 1:9).
- Ensure that the church is protected from harmful influences by confronting those who are contradicting biblical truth or who are continuing in patterns of sinful behavior so that the truth of Christ will remain credible to both the congregation and the community. (Matthew 18:15-17)
- Ensure that the life of the church is being well managed with the assistance of other competent and godly leaders. As legal directors for the church, they oversee legal and financial matters, and set the church management policy. Our legal documents (Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws) detail their governance duties.

Qualifications of Lead Team Members (1Timothy 3:2-7 and Titus 1:6-9):

- Above reproach – they must lead by example and demonstrate a lifestyle free of patterns of sin.
- A devoted spouse.
- Temperate – self-controlled, enslaved to nothing, free from excesses.
- Wise – sober, sensible, balanced in judgment, not given to quick, superficial decisions based on immature thinking
- Respectable – demonstrate a well-ordered life
- Hospitable – unselfish with their personal resources.
- Able to teach – able to communicate truth in a non-argumentative way
- Manages own household – a healthy family life
- Not a new convert – not new believers. They must have been Christians long enough to demonstrate the reality of their conversion and depth of their spirituality
- Good reputation with outsiders – well respected by all and free from hypocrisy
- Not self-willed – not stubborn, prone to force opinions on others, or abuse authority. They must be servants
- Devout – devoted Christ followers seeking to be conformed to His image. Committed to prayer, worship, the study of Scripture, and the guarding of their own walk.
- A member of Grace

Lead Team Selection

Scripture gives evidence of the first leaders being appointed by the founders of the church. By this example it is implied that the existing spiritual leaders be intimately involved in the process of selecting leaders to ensure selection based on spiritual rather than superficial qualifications.

Process for Selection

- The existing leaders shall appoint a discernment team consisting of three participating members. One will be from the Lead Team, and two from the congregation at large. For the purpose of order, one member of the nominating team shall be chosen by the team as chairman.
- The nominating team will meet with the Lead Team to review qualifications for such leaders and determine questions that should be posed to the candidates.
- The congregation shall be provided with teaching regarding the biblical qualifications and their scriptural role.
- With the biblical qualifications in mind, members of the congregation will be given 30 days to submit prayerfully the names of participating members for consideration as a Lead Team member.
- Men or women whose names are submitted shall be so informed, and they shall be urged to attend a “Lead Team Orientation Process” and then to engage in self-appraisal and personal evaluation in light of the scriptural qualifications. Any person may withdraw their name at that

- point if they do not aspire to the position (1 Tim.3: 1) or if they do not believe they adequately meet the qualifications.
- The nominating team shall review the names of the nominees and shall conduct interviews with each nominee.
 - After prayerfully considering each nominee, the nomination team shall make final recommendations to the Lead Team. Those nominees who have not been recommended shall be sensitively informed by the nominating team as to the reason.
 - The Lead Team shall review the nominees and make a final selection.
 - The names of the prospective Lead Team members shall be presented to the participating members of the church, who will be given two weeks to show cause why any one of the prospective individuals would not be qualified to serve. Consistent with Matt. 18:15 and Matt. 5:24, any members with such "cause" must first express his or her concern to the prospective leader and then must also express his or her concern to the Lead Team for consideration.
 - At the end of the 14-day period, the prospective leaders will be presented to the participating members of the church for affirmation by an 80% ballot vote of the participating members present. Prayer and the laying on of hands will follow.

Term of Lead Team Members:

Each leader, upon appointment, shall be asked for a three-year commitment, subject to review, recommitment, and reaffirmation by the participating church members each term. During the period of annual review, both the individual and the other Lead Team members shall evaluate his or her continued service, again considering the biblical qualifications as well as any personal factor that might affect his or her service. An individual's service as a leader may be discontinued by his or her own decision or by a consensus decision by the other leaders.

Those leaders renewing their commitment would again be presented to the participating members of the congregation for affirmation and dedication. A person's leaving the Lead Team would not preclude his/her service as a future Lead Team member, subject to the regular Lead Team selection process.

MINISTRY TEAM:

The Ministry Team oversees the day-to-day ministries of the church under the Lead Pastor or his designate.

Role of the Ministry Team:

The Lead Team will establish, empower and encourage new and existing ministries as necessary to carry out the purpose and vision of the church. Those who lead these ministries are Ministry Team Leaders. They are responsible for leading their ministry and are empowered and coached by a pastor for their own personal development and effectiveness.

Appointment and Term of Team Leaders

Ministry Team Leaders are identified by the Pastors and affirmed by the Lead Team for a two-year term.

Ministry Team Composition:

Members of the Ministry Management Team are:

- Lead Pastor
- First Associate
- Administrative Manager
- Ministry Team Leaders

LEAD PASTOR:*Role of the Lead Pastor:*

Consistent with the New Testament concept of spiritual gifts, the lead pastor, like any member of the body, is uniquely gifted and should seek to minister primarily within his gift area. In addition to his pastoring role as a member of the Lead Team, the lead pastor is primarily responsible to be a teacher of the Word of God and to provide strategic leadership and vision to the body. He must strive to teach and lead by word and example, and he must stress both the understanding and the application of God's truth.

The lead pastor should not be responsible to consistently minister in areas unrelated to his primary function and giftedness. To burden him with other roles (administration, counselling, visitation, etc.) is to rob him of planning time, study time, and devotion to the Word. This can lead to watered down, inaccurate teaching or ineffective leadership, both of which in turn weaken the body. As shepherds of the Church, the Lead Team, in consultation with the Lead Pastor, is responsible to appoint other leaders with complementary gifts to undertake areas and aspects of the ministry that cannot be filled by the lead pastor.

Teaching within the body should not be limited to the lead pastor. The New Testament emphasizes the need for teaching leaders and or the utilization of other members who are gifted in this area, thereby providing a variety of input and role models.

Selection of the Lead Pastor:

In the event of vacancy in the office of lead pastor, the Lead Team shall be responsible to conduct a search for candidates to fill the position. They will appoint a Search Team to find a suitable candidate for the Lead Pastor. Once the Lead Team has affirmed a candidate, that candidate shall be presented to the staff for consideration and ultimately to the participating members of the church for ratification by 80% majority vote.