

The Fellowship

An Evangelical Cell Church

We purpose, under the Lord's leadership, to help believers mature into a lifestyle of worship and servanthood and equip them to personally fulfill the task given by Jesus Christ to "*make disciples.*"

Fellowship

The Greek word *koinonia* is the word used to express the sense of community experienced as people share in a common task.

Acts 2:42-47

Evangelical

A theology which affirms the doctrines of orthodox Christianity taught by the Scripture (the inspiration and authority of the Bible, the Trinity, the deity of Jesus, salvation by grace through faith alone in Jesus Christ and His substitutionary death) with an emphasis upon the need for a personal relationship with Jesus Christ through faith.

Jude 1:3
Matthew 7:21-23

Cell

A cell is the smallest unit of the body. In the church it is the small unit of believers who meet around the presence of the Lord. Through the members of the cell the Lord ministers to the needs in the lives of other believers and reaches out to share His grace and love to the world.

Matthew 18:20
Hebrews 10:24-25
John 13:35

Church

Jesus said He would build His Church which is also called the Body of Christ where He is the head. The Greek word for church, *ekklesia*, means "the called out ones." Believers are called out of the world and its disillusionment, from being citizens of the earth to being citizens of Heaven, called out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of the Son and called out of death in trespasses and sins to new life in Christ.

Matthew 16:24
Ephesians 2:1-7
Colossians 1:13

Servanthood

That aspect of the Christian lifestyle, modeled after Jesus, that seeks to serve rather than be served.

Matthew 20:25-28
Philippians 2:5-8

Make Disciples

This is the task of the church. To accomplish it we must evangelize and then teach people the things Jesus taught, and in turn, equip them to continue the same task with others.

Matthew 28:18-20
Ephesians 4:12

Equipping

To outfit with totally integrated life-knowledge for service to the Lord Jesus Christ. It involves modeling, encouraging and teaching an individual. Our goal is to help a person grow from a child who has many needs to a mature servant of the Lord who gives of the Lord's resources to meet the needs of others.

Luke 12:42
Ephesians 4:11-16

Evangelize

Allowing the Lord to use a believer as the human vessel to escort another individual to Himself.

John 20:21
Acts 1:8

The Focus of The Fellowship

A Pattern For Implementation

The Fellowship seeks to follow the pattern of the church set forth in the New Testament. We deliberately have chosen to move from the 16TH Century Reformation pattern of a strong centralized program based design back to the New Testament pattern of developing believers through equipping to accomplish the work of the ministry. In Jesus' earthly ministry, as well as the time that immediately followed, Pentecost believers gathered for formal teaching in public places, then joined in homes for support and informal teaching through the modeling of the Christian life by mature believers for younger believers. As the church matured over several decades it continued in the same structure of having teaching in large public settings and times of ministry and modeling in smaller groups in homes. As he was leaving Ephesus, Paul reminded the people who had gathered to witness his departure *"how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house. . . ."*

Acts 20:20

Points Of The Pattern

In order to implement this pattern we have chosen to establish three main segments for equipping and nourishing people in the faith. Along with these segments there will also be periodical 6 hour seminars for instruction in Christian living as well as 2 hour workshops to help believers in understanding practical matters of making disciples.

1. Congregational Worship and Instruction

These are times when the different cells of the congregation meet together for joint worship and to receive the instruction from one of the teachers of The Fellowship at large.



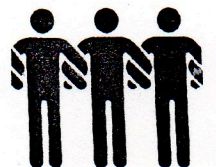
2. Cell Groups

In these groups of up to fifteen adults, members join together around the presence of the Lord Jesus to share in worship, seeking His direction as they work through matters of their lives, and where they share together in the on-going task of reaching out to people who do not walk with Him.



3. Discipling

These times are set for older believers to help newer believers in the process of their development to maturity in the Christian faith.



The Fellowship Statement of Faith

The Bible

The soul basis of our belief is the Bible, composed of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testament. We believe that the Scriptures in their entirety originated with God, and that they were given through the instrumentality of chosen men. The Scriptures therefore at one and the same time speak with the authority of God and reflect the backgrounds, styles and vocabularies of the human authors. We hold that the Scriptures are infallible and inerrant in the original manuscripts. They are the unique, full and final authority on all matters of faith and practice and there are no other writings similarly inspired by God.

2 Peter 2:20-21
2 Timothy 3:16

God

We believe that there is only one true, holy God, eternally existing in three persons; Father, Son and Holy Spirit, each of Whom possesses equally all the attributes of deity and the characteristics of personality. In the beginning God created out of nothing the universe and all the things created therein; thus manifesting the glory of His power, and wisdom. By His sovereign power He continues to sustain His creation and is operating throughout history to fulfill His redemptive purposes. Through the written revelation of His Word, the Scriptures, He has revealed His character as holy, just and righteous, but also full of compassion, longsuffering, mercy and love.

Deuteronomy 6:4
Isaiah 44:8
Isaiah 48:16
Matthew 3:16-17
Matthew 28:18-20
2 Corinthians 13:14

Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ is the eternal second Person of the Tri-Unity, or Trinity, who was united forever with a true human nature by a miraculous conception and virgin birth. He lived a life of perfect obedience to the Father and voluntarily atoned for the sins of people by dying on the cross as their substitute, thus satisfying divine justice and accomplishing salvation for all who trust in Him alone. He rose from the dead in the same body, though glorified, in which He had lived and died. After His resurrection, He ascended into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of the Father, where He, the only Mediator between God and man, continually makes intercession for His own, He shall come again to earth, personally and visibly, to consummate history and the eternal plan of God.

John 1:1, 14-18
Matthew 1:18-25
Philippians 2:6-8
Hebrews 4:15
John 3:16
John 1:29
Acts 1:9
Hebrews 7:25

The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity. He was sent into the world by the Father and the Son to apply to mankind the saving work of Christ Jesus. He enlightens the minds of sinners, awakens in them a recognition of their need of a Savior and regenerates them. At the point of salvation He permanently indwells every believer to become the source of assurance, strength, wisdom and guidance. The essential accompaniment of a genuine saving relationship with Jesus Christ is a life of holiness and obedience, attained as believers as they submit to the Holy Spirit. He uniquely endows each believer with gifts for the upbuilding of the church. The Holy Spirit illumines believers in understanding and applying the Scripture. His power and control are appropriated by faith, making it possible for the believer to live a life of Christlike character and to bear fruit to the glory of the Father.

2 Corinthians 13:14
John 16:8
John 14:26
Titus 3:5
John 14:16
Acts 1:8
1 Corinthians 12:11

Humanity

People are sinners against the holiness of God by nature and are therefore under a sentence of condemnation. Redemption from that condemnation is secured by repentance of sin and personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord. Death seals the eternal destiny of each person. For all mankind, there will be a resurrection of the body into the future world, and a judgement that will determine the fate of each individual. Unbelievers will be separated from God into condemnation. God's judgement will reveal His justice in consigning them to perpetuate in eternal retribution their own rejection of God. Believers will be received into eternal communion with God and will be rewarded for activities done in this life for Him.

The Church

All who personally acknowledge Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior become members of His body, the church universal. The Scriptures command believers to gather together to devote themselves to worship, prayer, instruction in the Word, the observance of baptism and communion as ordinances established by Jesus Christ, fellowship, ministry to each other of edifying and equipping and outreach to the world. When God's people meet regularly in obedience to this command, there is the local expression of the church. Under the watchcare of elders and supportive leadership of deacons (servants), its members are to work together in love and unity, intent on the purposes of glorifying Jesus Christ and obeying His command to "make disciples."

Faith and Lifestyle

The Scriptures are the final authority in all matters of faith and lifestyle. This church cannot bind the conscience of individual members in areas where the Scripture is silent. Rather, each believer is to be led in those areas by the Lord, to whom he or she alone is ultimately responsible.

Jeremiah 17:9
Romans 5:12, 19
Ephesians 2:8-10
1 Thessalonians 5:14-18
Revelation 20:10-15
1 Corinthians 3:9-15
1 Corinthians 9:25

Colossians 1:18
Hebrews 10:24-25
Acts 2:40-47
Acts 20:20
1 Thessalonians 5:14
1 Peter 5:1-7

2 Timothy 3:16-17

Biblical Principles of the Church Government for The Fellowship

The Head of The Fellowship

The Lord Jesus Christ is the head of the church. He is the true source of all the church is and does in the world. His glory is to be the objective of every act, function and motive of the body. It is His responsibility to give direction for how He desires to build His church. *"And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence."*

Colossians 1:18

Guidance for The Fellowship

The Scriptures provide the Lord's thoughts and directions for His body. His Word reflects and contains His commands, His counsel and His purpose for the church as well as every believer. *"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."* We understand that the Lord Jesus Christ will also provide directions for His Body through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

Acts 8:29,39; 10:19-20;
11:12; 13:1-4; 15:28;16:6-
18:5; 19:21;

Appointment of Elders in The Fellowship

In the New Testament, as believers gathered together and more people came to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, elders were appointed to continue the pastor-teaching ministry in each local church. *"So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed."* One of the tasks which Paul gave to Titus was the appointing of elders among the believers in Crete, *"For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you"* More elders may be appointed by the elders as a whole to serve as needs grow in the congregation(s) of The Fellowship.

Acts 14:23

Titus 1:5

Qualifications For Elders Of The Fellowship

A Plurality in Number

"So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed."

Acts 14:23

An Integrity in Life

"This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a elder, he desires a good work. A elder then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?); not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil."

1 Timothy 3:1-7

A Servant in Heart

"But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, 'You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all.'"

Mark 10:42-44

The Role of Elders in The Fellowship

Elders were given the ultimate responsibility for the oversight and shepherding of that particular body of believers. *"The elders who are among you I exhort . . . Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away."*

1 Peter 5:1-4

1. Shepherd the Flock:

Serving in humility, elders are to maintain an attitude of seeking the Lord's will for The Fellowship. Under His direction they will guide and protect the servants and members of the body, seeking to meet their needs, warning against harmful influences, guarding against false teachers contradict the truth. In doing so they are to keep closing potential entrances for Satan, so that the truth of the Word of God will remain credible to both believers and unbelievers.

Acts 20:28-32
1 Peter 5:1-5

2. Lead through Example:

Elders are to provide a Scriptural role model and are to set a pattern before the flock of a rightly ordered life with the single purpose to serve and glorify God.

1 Peter 5:3

3. Teach, Exhort and Pray for the Sick:

Elders are to see that the flock is fed through insightful and accurate instruction and admonition from God's written Word.

1 Timothy 3:2
2 Timothy 2:23-26; 4:2
Titus 1:9
James 5:14

4. Manage the Church of God:

Elders are overseers of the life of the church. They have the responsibility for the legal, as well as the spiritual leadership and management of The Fellowship.

1 Timothy 3:5
1 Timothy 5:8

Elders Who Are Pastors in The Fellowship

Some elders would give more time to the spiritual leadership than others and would be called to fill more demanding responsibilities. These elders would be placed on our staff and considered pastors of the congregation. They therefore would be worthy of "double honor" which is usually understood as monetary compensation. *"Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. For the Scripture says, 'You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain,' and, 'The laborer is worthy of his wages.'"*

1 Timothy 5:17-18

Serving Deacons in The Fellowship

Deacons (the Greek word for servants) are also appointed to serve the believers in undertaking a servant role in The Fellowship Cell Groups. There they encourage the members of the cells in their spiritual growth from being new believers to the role of becoming believers who mentor those who are younger. Servants are those designated in The Fellowship as the ones responsible to the elders for the ministry, growth and development of the cell group they serve.

1 John 2:12-14

Leadership Roles in The Fellowship

These leaders, along with all members of each congregation form a unique organism, a visible and functioning expression of the universal church. The Fellowship recognizes this Biblical pattern for the plurality of Godly leadership, under the oversight and watchcare of elders with the supportive leadership of the servants (deacons) of each cell group. In response to this pattern, members of the Body of Christ are taught in Scripture to lovingly support their leaders and to submit to their leadership as they submit themselves to the Head of the Church, Jesus Christ. *"I urge you, brethren; you know the household of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints; that you also submit to such, and to everyone who works and labors with us."*

1 Corinthians 16:15-16

"And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake."

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

"Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you."

Hebrews 13:17