

HOPE CHURCH

MEMBERSHIP

There are 3 membership sections, with time for question and answer at the end of each

Section #1:

WHY Become a Member? CENTERING ON THE GOSPEL, HOPE CHURCH'S HISTORY, STRUCTURE, MISSION & VISION

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Section #2:

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WHY become a member at HOPE CHURCH?

Church membership is about **committing yourself to a people** and similarly **those people committing to you**. As Christians we are called to set ourselves under the care and authority of a local church. This happens at Hope through membership. Membership is a commitment to live out our new identity as followers of Jesus in community with other members of God's family. Membership moves us from consumers to participants where we stop just doing church and "become the church." It is an acknowledgment that **our salvation is not just a private relationship, but one to which we are to publicly identify** with other believers and **set ourselves under the authority and care of a local expression of God's global church**. Membership is a commitment to serve and partner with other members in the church and the leadership to grow in grace and love towards God and each other. We commit to encourage one another in seeing the gospel transform our lives, church, city, and world.

In our culture the word membership means different things to different people, at Hope **membership is not about trapping people or forcing them to give**, it's about a commitment we make to one another to follow Jesus together. Membership at Hope is not like a country club or a gym. In those situations members are waited on by staff and needs are expected to be met quickly. In **1 Corinthians 12:27** Paul used the analogy of a body and said that each of us play a crucial role in how the body functions. "Now you are the body of Christ, and individual members of it." The Biblical idea is more about how we each serve the greater whole – with the greater focus on the body as a whole. There are benefits to this kind of membership: **you truly are part of the body**, fulfilling the role God has gifted you for, **we identify together as God's people**, participation in accountability and encouragement from other members and leaders, **gaining a greater sense of responsibility** and each member is entrusted with a sense of responsibility with a voice in leadership and ability to vote on church wide issues.

- Committing yourself to a group of people as they commit to you. (**1 Thes 5:15, Eph 4:2, James 5:16**)
- We are called to set ourselves under the care and authority of a church. (**Heb 13:17; 1 Thes 5:12-13**)
- Followers of Jesus commit to living out their faith in community (**Col 3:16, Matt. 16:18-19, 18:15-20**)
- Acknowledging our salvation is not JUST a private relationship (**Gal 6:2, Rom 12:6, 1 Thes 4:18**)
- A commitment to serve and partner with other members in the church to grow in grace and love towards God and each other. (**Heb 10:24-25, 1 Thes 5:11, Gal 5:13, Phil 2:3**)

MEMBERSHIP PROCESS

- Attend membership classes
- Be a committed follower and disciple of Jesus Christ
- Read Member Agreement and interview with Elder(s)
- Share your testimony at a congregational meeting and get voted in as a member
- Jump in! Be involved – connect and participate in the life of Hope Church!

The GOOD NEWS! (THE GOSPEL)

GOD | Creator and Ruler of the world, holy and righteous. God created this world and is the rightful king. (**Genesis 1**) He is the giver and sustainer of life, everything and everyone owes their life to Him. God is worthy of our unending worship. (**Rev 4:8**)

MAN | Created in God's image to reflect His glory and submit to Him. God 'created man in His image' for His glory (**Is 43:7, Gen 1:26**) so we would live in joyful obedience to Him. We were made to fellowship with God and others.

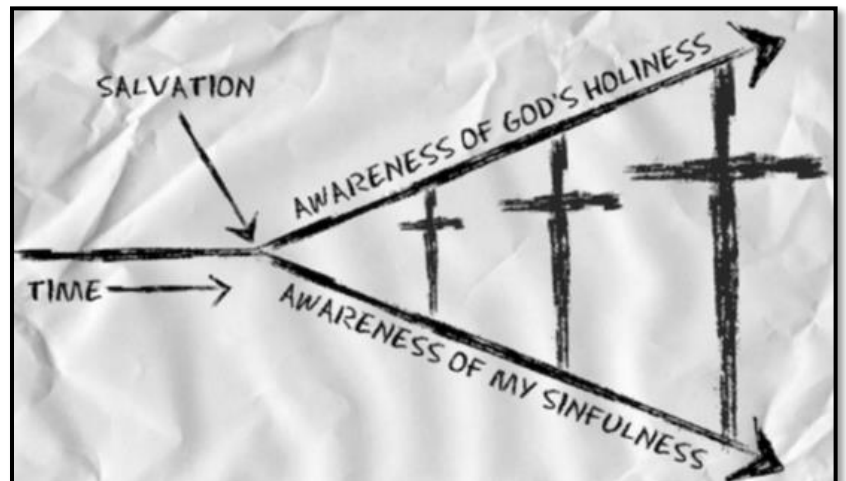
SIN | Breaking God's commands and rejecting His rule. Adam & Eve doubted God, didn't trust Him and desired to be like Him (**Genesis 3**), sin entered our world and all are now stained by it (**Rom 3:23**). Sin is not JUST breaking God's commands; sin is an inclination of the heart that rejects God as king – living 'my way' instead of 'God's way.'

CHRIST | Our atoning sacrifice for sin and obedience to God's law. God's love is shown by dying for us 'while we were still sinners' (**Rom 5:8**). While we were in our pathetic state; dead, blind and in darkness, God sent Jesus (**Eph 2:4**) who died to take the punishment we deserve. Jesus obeyed God and graciously offers His perfection and forgiveness of all our sins!

RESPONSE | Knowing these facts isn't enough – God calls us to respond to His offer of salvation. God calls us to repentance and faith; turning from sin and turning to God (**Acts 3:19**). When we agree with God that our sins are hideous, turn from them to God and trust (believe) in Jesus Christ – our sins are forgiven and we enjoy a loving relationship with God (**1 Jn 1:9**)

The Gospel: CENTRAL TO LIFE

The gospel isn't just the entry point to relationship with God; it is the essential framework by which we relate to Him every day. Not only do we need His grace to be in relationship with God, it's the gospel that causes us to grow in Christlikeness and love for God. **As we journey in life with God our awareness of His greatness and holiness increases.** Simultaneously, as we attempt to obey Him we become more and more aware of our brokenness, failure and inability to do so perfectly. This creates a growing awareness of just how big the "gap" is between sinful humanity and a Holy God. **As that happens, we see with greater clarity all Jesus did for us and a deep, more heartfelt love for God develops.** The cross becomes more and more central to everyday life, and we are driven to **worship** rather than: **pride** (*in our own goodness*) or **despair** (*for not meeting expectations*). Our lives can then be lived in response to what God has already done for us, not as people working to make God happy with us, but as His children who genuinely love Him. As this happens we will gradually see growth in our desire to know Him, live for Him, obey Him and worship Him.



Some people, painfully aware of how fickle they are and how often they fail – wonder if God truly accepts them just the way they are. He does! The Bible assures us our fickleness does not deter His love! (**Is 43:25, Jer 31:34, Rom 8:1, Heb 8:12, 1 Jn 1:9**) We are made right with God only because of Jesus's perfection, not ours (**Gal 2:20**). **Romans 5** assures us we have peace with God! Our problem, as Jerry Bridges says, is *"most believers don't live as though their justification is their permanent, abiding state... (yet) in our standing before God, we will never be more righteous, even in heaven, than we were the day we trusted Christ, or we are now."* Because of Jesus we are assured on our 'best' and our 'worst' days that God's posture towards us is acceptance, love and welcome!

Law: "You Should Not" | Gospel: "You Need Not!"

The law **shoulds** on us... It demands stuff: *"You should not sleep with your boyfriend; You should read your Bible more; You should not get drunk; You should witness to your friends; You should not lose your temper."* That may sound like what Churches tell people, but that isn't good news. Especially not to someone struggling with any of those things. That comes across as condemnation, which is what the law brings. But the gospel is good news! *"There is therefore now NO condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus!" (Rom 8:1)* So, how can we live by the gospel and not by the law? By remembering what the gospel promises! The gospel says: "You need not ... "You need not get drunk, because Jesus offers a better refuge" "You need not lose your temper, because God is in control of the situation." It is as Tim Chester says: *"Sin makes promises. The gospel exposes those promises as false promises and points to a God who is bigger and better than anything sin offers."*

The Gospel Leads to REPENTANCE and FAITH

The good news doesn't just give us rest – it also spurs us toward Christlikeness! The gospel compels us towards ongoing repentance and faith; not for salvation, but for continued growth. Because of indwelling sin and our bent toward self-rule, following Jesus must pulsate with this rhythm similar to how our lungs breathe in fresh oxygen and exhale carbon dioxide. **This 'gospel breathing' happens best in community and serving God because in isolation and comfort many of our sinful tendencies and desires can hide without being exposed.** When we live in community our lives bump against each other and the resulting friction makes us aware of sinful attitudes, when we sacrifice to serve others our selfishness gets exposed. Whenever we encounter a thought, desire or attitude in us contrary to the fruit of the Spirit (**Gal 5:22-23**), God is alerting us to an area of possible idolatry or unbelief.

Saint Augustine believed our strongest emotions function like 'smoke from a fire' to help us understand what is going on in our hearts. **The way to put out a fire is not to deal with the smoke, but to remove the cause of it.** Idolatry and unbelief are fires inside us; our thoughts, desires and attitudes are the smoke. Idolatry is worship of a god replacement, unbelief is believing a lie about God or ourselves. Both idolatry and unbelief are fires in our hearts that need our attention. **When we can discern the lie we are believing or the thing that has replaced God; we have an opportunity to repent,** turning to God and putting out the fire. Repentance is a change of what we worship – faith is worshipping Jesus.

THE GOSPEL BEGINNING TO END

The gospel is our hope every day! (**Gal 2:20**) Because we are dependent on His perfection (*not our own*) to be accepted by God – we will never get to a point when we become 'good enough.' We need the gospel every day! Our spiritual position and continued growth is by faith alone and the work of God alone from beginning to end! (**Gal 3:3**) The gospel assures us of our standing with God, that means we are free to admit our failure, unbelief and idolatry. Knowing Jesus can forgive the worst sins assures us of God's love! **The gospel also frees us to be authentic because we no longer need to impress anyone.** In that freedom the ugliness of sin can be exposed and dealt with. That freedom opens a window into our hearts and we can help each other towards repentance and faith. Truth enters that open window to replace lies and our hard hearts become like soft clay.

The VISION and MISSION of HOPE CHURCH

The vision: to magnify the inviting and compelling work of God

What it means: Our desire is to be a church excited about following God and wanting to show God to others! The work of God is inviting: welcoming and drawing you closer to God. The work of God is compelling: grabbing your attention and focusing on God. The gospel transforms ordinary people because of Jesus' love and we strive to live out the change God works in us so others see Him. We want our lives to have the aroma of invitation, welcoming others into relationship with God.

The mission: Hope Church exists to draw people to God – together we develop, encourage and deploy each other to live out what God is working in us so others can see genuine faith in action.

'In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.' (Matthew 5:16)

What it means: We want to be captivated by God as we follow Him and display God's greatness to those around us. The role God gives us is to show and display what He is doing in and through us so others see what He is like. We view our faith in Christ not as a static, forgotten doctrine – but as today's opportunity to love and live out what God is working in us. When we are focused on God and submitting to Him, we increasingly display God's work, making it evident to others.

WHO we LOVE

We are growing in love for **God**, striving to live for Him

We are growing in love for **each other**, sharing life together

We are growing in love for **neighbor**, serving in the Spirit's power

We are maturing as disciples by working to make disciples

WHAT we BELIEVE

Jesus is **our greatest treasure** – He alone can rescue us and bring us near

Church **isn't a building** – we're a people committed to God and one another

Worship is **enjoying God's beauty** – which we do every day, not just Sunday

Prayer is **God's invitation** – to intimate fellowship, asking Him to work



HOPE CHURCH CORE MINISTRIES

CORPORATE PRAYER

We can do nothing of lasting value apart from God, so we pray. Unless God builds His church, those who labor do so in vain, so we gather to seek God's face and His work in and amongst us. Prayer must be the heartbeat of all we do as we seek Him first as God's people on God's mission.

HOPE GROUPS

God's design for His people is to live life together in community for two main purposes: 1- we would lovingly challenge one another to greater holiness and intimacy as we seek God together 2- that we would be a light to our city, reaching out together and being a place where they can witness the powerful effects of the gospel amongst us.

WORSHIP GATHERINGS

The entire church gathers weekly to worship God by; reading His Word, prayer, singing, offering, preaching that exalts Christ and communion. Our worship gatherings glorify God and are opportunities for others to see, hear and experience the gospel at work through us as we exalt Jesus.

Sundays are an opportunity for the whole church to gather to worship God, build each other up and then sent to our city to proclaim the gospel: **instead of** church becoming a buffet of 'services' people consume.

Worship gatherings are instructive and encouraging so God's people will be reminded of the gospel and built up to serve throughout the week: **instead of** it being a 'show' or entertainment we come to observe.

Sunday worship is a regular response of God's people to God's grace and mercy displayed at the cross where we declare how worthy God is: **instead of** a spiritual high each week that wears off and needs regular refilling.

Preaching is intended to reach our head, hands AND hearts. To teach and instruct our minds to think rightly about God. To train our hands to obey God. And to motivate our hearts with the self-sacrificing love of Jesus: **instead of** it being merely an intellectual event that only increases our knowledge.

OUTREACH

We want to develop an attitude that says 'we'll come to you!' **We want to imitate Jesus by reaching out, loving, getting to know and inviting those far from God into relationship with Him!** Evangelism isn't dependent on 'special forces', instead individuals at Hope are missionaries learning about others and sharing Christ, **going to** others and inviting them to **come see** Jesus!

"GO TO" Jesus did not isolate Himself in heaven away from people; He became a man and lived here. We want to engage the culture as we live everyday life looking for ways to proclaim Jesus (**1 Pet. 2:12, Matt. 5:16**).

"COME SEE" God's people are a window for the world to see Him. The individual and corporate lives of the members of the church are the physical representation of who God is and what He's like. As we develop relationships we consistently invite them to **"COME SEE"** life in God's family. (**John 1:46**)

GROUPS

To make disciples through a welcoming small group setting that focuses on living life together on mission for Jesus

GATHERINGS

To make disciples through a welcoming and powerful experience of worship and God's presence when the church gathers

OUTREACH

To make disciples through intentional engagement of our community through service, caring and welcoming others

KIDS/FAMILY

To make disciples by partnering with parents and guiding children toward a personal trust in Jesus as we build better families

HOW SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP IS EXPERIENCED DIFFERENTLY

—by Steve Gorghuber

How the church member approaches Sunday mornings...

- The church member is already thinking of serving when they arrive by parking further from the entrance or on the street, leaving parking spots available near the entrance for guests and families with small children.
- The church member arrives early to pray, welcome guests and help with last minute details.
- The church member engages with guests who are invited by other members, supporting each other in introducing unbelievers to the gospel community of Jesus Christ.
- The church member sits near the front, leaving seats in back for guests and late-comers.
- The church member fully participates in musical worship, singing loudly in praise to God.
- The church member regularly brings a tithe out of cheerful obedience to God.
- The church member connects with guests during the greeting time, rather than only seeking out good friends they see often – knowing they will have time later to say hello.
- The church member is humble and teachable during the preaching of God’s word, actively seeking to apply what God has to say to their life on mission.
- The church member invites guests they’ve met to a meal or their small group, to more fully experience the community and mission of Jesus’ church.

How the church guest (or visitor) approaches Sunday mornings...

- The guest arrives and is able to park without hassle. Difficulty parking or having to walk a long way would have been a frustrating start to their visit.
- The first time guest (*who typically arrives early*) is welcomed well and doesn’t see an empty or sparsely populated church building, they don’t feel awkward for arriving early.
- The guest experiences a small taste of the gospel relationships shared within the church. They may recognize friends of friends and appreciate seeing other familiar faces.
- The guest who may arrive late will easily find an open seat near the back of the church without feeling awkward or like they are a distraction.
- The guest witnesses a large group of people emotionally worshipping Jesus. This might be foreign or awkward, yet is a powerful witness to the captivating love of Jesus.
- The guest is under no compulsion to give, yet observes many people demonstrating simple obedience in treasuring Jesus over money.
- The guest doesn’t have to initiate awkward conversations because church attenders are eager to meet them, genuinely interested in them and thank them for coming.
- The guest, though unfamiliar with the Bible, appreciates that they are able to understand the sermon, and that theological terms are unpacked in every-day language.
- The guest appreciates a personal invitation from someone they’ve met. Though they may decline the invite right away, connections like this make them more likely to come back.