

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

Why become a member?	.....
Membership Process	.....
The centrality and application of the gospel	.....
Mission and Vision of Hope Church	.....
Hope Church Core Ministries	.....
How Sunday Worship is viewed differently	.....

Section #2:

THE BIBLE, STATEMENT OF FAITH, DISTINCTIVES HOPE'S STRUCTURE AND HISTORY

Redemptive History	.....
Hope Church Statement of Faith	.....
Evangelical Free Church Distinctives	.....
Hope Church Structure	.....
Hope Church History	.....

Section #3:

MATURE DISCIPLESHIP, OUR COMMITMENTS, FINDING OUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS AND MEMBER AGREEMENT

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HOPE CHURCH RELATIONAL COMMITMENTS

(adapted from Peacemaker Ministry's Relational Commitments)

1. COMMITMENT TO GOD'S WORD and TO PROCLAIM JESUS AS OUR ONLY HOPE | 1 Tim 3:16-17, 1 Cor 15:3-4
The Word of God is our final authority on all matters. We will not bend or compromise or stray from the Word of God in all that we do, and the Word of God will inform our decisions, direction and the vision of Hope.

2. COMMITMENT TO LOVE, CARE FOR, SERVE AND HELP YOU | John 13:34-35, 2 Cor 1:4-7
We have been adopted into God's family and now are children of the living God (Galatians 4:4-7). That understanding changes how we view everything, including how we view each other and our purpose. We are committed to love and care for the people of Hope like family and to fostering authentic Biblical community by modeling and celebrating it.

3. COMMITMENT TO PEACEMAKING AND RECONCILIATION | Matt 5:9, Eph 4:29-32, Col 3:12-14
We are committed to building a "culture of peace" that reflects God's peace and the power of the gospel. In light of the cross, bitterness, unforgiveness and broken relationships are not appropriate as God's people. We follow these principles:

- When faced with conflict, our primary goal will be to glorify God with all we do and say (1 Cor 10:31).
- We will try to get the "logs" out of our eyes before focusing on what others have done wrong (Matt 7:3-5).
- We will refrain from gossip & slander (Eph 4:29), when we have a problem with others, we will talk to, not about them.
- We will make charitable judgments toward one another by believing the best about each other (1 Cor 13:7).
- If an offense cannot be overlooked, or if someone has something against us, we will seek reconciliation (Matt 5:23-24; 18:15)
- When we offer a word of correction, we will do so gently, with the goal of serving & restoring them (Prov 12:18; Eph 4:29)
- When others repent, we will ask God to give us grace to forgive them as he has forgiven us (Eph 4:32).

4. COMMITMENT TO PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN | Prov 27:12
Children are a blessing from God, and he calls the church to support parents in their responsibility to train children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Therefore, the church should be a safe and blessed place for children, where they can grow, play, form friendships, and learn to experience and share the love of Christ.

5. COMMITMENT TO HONESTY AND TRANSPARENCY | Rom 12:15, 1 John 1:7-8
A genuine relationship is based on being open and honest with one another. God calls us as His family to live in the most genuine relationships possible and therefore we need honesty and transparency with one another.

6. COMMITMENT TO BIBLICAL COUNSELING | Eph 4:15
All Christians struggle with sin and the effect it has on our lives and our relationships. Hope encourages and enjoins its people to seek counsel from and confess sins to each other and to our leaders. We believe that the Bible provides thorough guidance and instruction for faith and life and that the gospel is the framework for fruitful and helpful counsel.

7. COMMITMENT TO ACCOUNTABILITY AND CHURCH DISCIPLINE | Heb 10:24 | Mark 12:30-31
A. Accountability and Discipline Are Signs of God's Love B. Most Corrective Discipline Is Private, Personal and Informal
C. Formal Discipline May Involve the Entire Church

God does not expect the church to be made up of only perfect people, even the best churches are still a group of sinners. Therefore, it would be unbiblical for us to expect church members to live perfectly. What we can do, however, is confess our common struggles and mutual need for grace. We can spur one another on toward maturity by encouraging and holding each other accountable to love, seek after, obey God and love others as we love ourselves. The Bible doesn't present church discipline as negative, legalistic or harsh. True discipline originates from God and is always presented as a sign of genuine love. God's discipline in the church involves preaching, teaching, prayer, personal Bible study, Group life and countless other enjoyable activities that challenge and encourage us to love and serve God. On rare occasions God's discipline, like the discipline in a family with growing children, also may have a corrective purpose. When we forget or disobey what God has taught us, he corrects us. One way he does this is to call the church to seek after us and lead us back onto the right track. This process, which is sometimes called "corrective" or "restorative" discipline, is likened in Scripture to a shepherd seeking after a lost sheep.

(adapted from Peacemaker Ministry's Relational Commitments)

http://www.peacemaker.net/site/c.aqKFLTOB1pH/b.958161/k.6E48/Relational_Commitments.htm

A MATURE DISCIPLE IS GROWING IN LOVE FOR GOD, GOD'S PEOPLE and GOD'S MISSION, INTENTIONAL ABOUT MAKING DISCIPLES

Discipleship is the process of increasingly conforming your life to become more and more like Jesus while striving to see God reproduce that change in others

LOVING GOD Jesus' love compels us to grow in relationship with Him

- God is becoming the all-encompassing center of all things in their life.
- Displays teachability; open to input from others and a willingness to change his/her life to become more like Jesus.
- Regularly makes time in their schedule for the things of God.
- Displays growth in relationship with & knowledge of God, His ways and Word.
- Understands why and how to: read the Bible, pray and other disciplines; does so regularly out of a desire to follow God.
- Gladly and regularly gathers for worship and initiates with the church.
- Can articulate how the gospel produces a deep abiding love for God in their life and able to apply the gospel to real life.
- Evidence of growth in love for God with all their heart (*increasingly impassioned worship*), soul (*is deeply moved by the truths of the gospel*), mind (*initiates increasing study of God's Word*) and strength (*gains energy and enthusiasm to serve out of the overflow of a growing walk with God*).
- Increasing displays the fruit of the spirit in their life (*fruit shows itself as genuine in the context of community*)
- Displays an eagerness to hear God's Word and apply it to their daily life
- Displays an increasing Biblical worldview (*able to interpret life in light of God's Word, not following the winds of culture, and able to accurately apply the concepts of Scripture to everyday life*)

LOVING GOD'S PEOPLE Developing meaningful relationships with others

- Initiates personal ministry within the church (*seeks out a discipler, actively loves, serves and cares for attenders*).
- Displays a willingness to engage in deep relationships at Hope (*gets to know and allows themselves to be known*).
- Understands and lives out the role of the church in their life and their role in the church to serve, help and welcome.
- Is able to handle conflict in a healthy way within the body – graciously overlooking minor offenses and addressing the hurtful actions of others against them in a loving, understanding way.
- Is receptive to the input of others in the church and increasingly seeks out others input in their lives.
- Regularly displays sacrifice in their personal life for the sake of someone in the church.

LOVING GOD'S MISSION Serving in the power of His Spirit in word & action

- Can articulate how the gospel sends people out to proclaim Jesus.
- Has a genuine love for those around them who don't yet know Jesus Christ.
- Personal ownership of the mission as a way of life in their relationships.
- Regularly initiates and builds relationships to know, love and serve others.
- Initiates gospel conversation with sensitivity, understands the culture.
- Regularly 'goes to' & 'invites' others into their life, Hope Group & worship.
- Lives with intentionality in his/her neighborhood and workplace.
- Earns the respect of coworkers and neighbors by a life that honors God.

MAKING DISCIPLES Intentionally working to reproduce God's Work in others

- Are not content to simply see God do a work of grace and change in their own life – seeks out relationships and opportunities to help develop others.
- Humbly shares the ups and downs of life with a small group of people, giving glory to God and encouraging them to more and more obey Him.
- Develops a personal plan for another person to follow in order to learn and grow towards increasing Christlikeness.
- Opens their life to those who know God and those who do not know God, praying for them and developing Christlikeness in those people.

HOPE CHURCH COMMITMENTS

As a growing part of Hope, I make the following commitments in order to increasingly magnify the inviting and compelling work of God

LOVE GOD

KNOW GOD: I commit to growing in relationship with God, pursuing Him in daily Bible study, regular prayer and gathered worship. Eternal life is 'knowing God' and He promises to be found when we seek Him. (John 17:3, Jer. 29:13)

GOSPEL IMMERSSED: I commit to continued focus on the gospel as I apply it to daily life, reminding myself and others of God's love and the hope that we have. I commit to spurring others on with the hope that springs from Jesus' life, death, resurrection and future return. (1 Corinthians 11:23-25)

OBEY GOD: I commit to growing in obedience to God's commands in every area of life, motivated by God's love and the gospel. I commit to seeking out accountability within God's people towards that end. I recognize that obedience isn't empty duty; but born out of increasing love for God and dependence on His Spirit as I grasp the gospel. (John 14:15)

LOVE GODS PEOPLE

BE AUTHENTIC: I commit to having authentic and meaningful relationships with those around me, striving to be transparent, open and honest; truly knowing others and willing to be known. This authenticity is built on the gospel, which frees me to be real about my struggles and failures. (Acts 2:42-47)

SERVE: I commit to imitating Jesus by serving others as a regular part of everyday life, enabled by the power of God's Spirit inside me, eager to bless those God chooses to place in my life. (John 13, Genesis 12:2)

LOVE GODS MISSION

PROCLAIM: I commit to being a faithful witness of Jesus, telling those around me about His love and His call for all to follow Him. I am dependent on God's Spirit to lead and direct me, and I commit to being eager to share with those I encounter in my workplace and neighborhood. (Acts 1:8, 2 Corinthians 5:20)

INVITE: I commit to regularly inviting others into my life, my home, my Hope Group and to our Sunday worship gatherings – so I can better know others and I can be increasingly known by others. (John 1:46)

SHARING YOUR STORY:

In John 4 a Samaritan woman encounters Jesus at the well outside of town and her life is never the same again. She comes to see Him as the Messiah who offers her living water. After encountering Jesus her immediate response was to go back to town and tell the people in her life; *“He told me all that I ever did!”* In response to her story the people of that town came to see Jesus and believed in Him. **(John 4:1-42)** In Mark 5 a man who was broken and desperate encountered Jesus and his life was never the same. Jesus freed him and healed him. When Jesus began to depart to another town he begged to come with, but Jesus’ response was *“Go home to your friends and tell them how much I have done for you, and how I have had mercy on you.”* He obeyed Jesus and went to tell how much Jesus had done for him and everyone marveled. **(Mark 5:1-20)**

There are countless stories of people both in Jesus’ day and millions since who have encountered Him and have never been the same again. As we are changed by Jesus; forgiven, healed, set free and made new, we have a story to tell others so they can hear about a Man who can change them too! It is a story that you know well because you are living it, and it is a story no one can disprove because it happened to you. It is a story that has power and gives glory to God. At this point a lot of questions may come to mind: How do I begin? And what do I say? And who do I tell? How much should I tell? Who would want to hear my story? The most basic outline (*but not the only outline*) to follow is the outline of God’s story. Another way to think about it is with 3 questions:

- 1- What was life like before you met Jesus? (*Creation, Fall*)
- 2- How did you encounter Jesus and how did He change you? (*Redemption*)
- 3- What has your life been like since? (*Restoration*).

Below is the outline of God’s story with questions to help in sharing yours. One last thought: it is common to fill your story with ‘spiritual’ sounding talk and ‘inspirational’ overtones. But talking in these ways actually distances the people you are talking to from God because they reason that in order to follow Jesus they would have to talk like that. Instead of over-spiritualizing – talk in normal language and describe the things God did for you in plain terms that others can understand and relate to. You should be able to share your story in 3-5 minutes.

Creation: God created this world and everything in it and declared it “very good.”

What are some specific ways that God made you that are right and good? What was your answer to the reason for creation? What were some ways that you saw God even before you knew Him? How was life ‘good’?

Fall / Futility: Brokenness entered our world, brokenness with God, each other & creation.

Futility is the emptiness of rejecting God’s voice and listening to others, apart from God.

What were some specific ways you were broken? What were specific ways you rejected God? What were some ways you encountered futility or emptiness? What did you experience in that time? Why were you empty?

Redemption: Through Jesus’ life, death & resurrection we see God’s Kingdom breaking through and experience Jesus’ authority over sickness, disease, nature, demons, Satan, sin, and death.

What were some specifics about your encounter with Jesus? (was it over a long time, when did it start, how long did you talk to others, when did you start reading your Bible, going to Church, praying? Etc...) In what specific ways did Jesus heal you? Free you? Make you new? How did Jesus redeem your life and circumstances?

Restoration: Called to be witnesses of the gospel and to make disciples of all nations, teaching them to obey Him and waiting with anticipation for His return when He will right all wrongs.

How is your life different now after encountering Jesus? How are you specifically obeying Him? What are some struggles you still have in life? What specific things has God been working on in your life recently?

GIVING AT HOPE:

God commands His disciples to give cheerfully, joyfully, and sacrificially out of response to His generous sacrificial gift to us: Jesus. Jesus is our ultimate treasure, who left His throne in heaven and became flesh, lived a sinless life in our place, died the death we deserve thereby satisfying the wrath of God, and rose in victory and power! This good news has real life implications for us – one of which is spoken directly about in the Bible in regards to riches:

“...though [Jesus] was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you by His poverty might become rich” 2 Corinthians 8:9

Because of His gift of grace and our experience of it, we are moved to give. Not only do our resources come from God’s abundance – we are motivated to give them away because of Jesus. Even more, our giving can be a billboard for the greatness of Jesus as we display the gospel. Giving generously is simply imitating God. Giving is a chance to communicate that our resources, time and money are not ours, but they are ultimately God's. Giving reminds us we do not trust the world or what it offers, but God alone sustains us. If you consider Hope your church family - giving to Hope is one other act of worship.

Giving to God through the local Church should increasingly grow in these 3 areas:

- 1- **Joyful** – giving should be a response to Jesus’ great love for us and we should be joyful to participate and give back to God out of what He entrusts to us.
- 2- **Sacrificial** – giving should imitate the sacrifice of Jesus as a reminder that money is not our savior, money is not our safety net, money does not ultimately satisfy – but only Jesus is all those things.
- 3- **Regular** – giving should be ongoing and regular as worship, knowing our hearts are deceitful and we are prone to hoarding and guarding jealously what we have, giving regularly helps defeat greed.

HOW DO I DISCOVER MY SPIRITUAL GIFT?

JUAN SANCHEZ

The question about discerning particular spiritual gifts is probably a primary question on many Christian’s minds. However, I want to propose it is the wrong question. It is the wrong question at least because of these 6 reasons:

1. The lists of gifts are not exhaustive; they are representative!

No list is the same: 1 Cor. 12:4-6, 8-10, 28; Rom. 12:3-8; Eph. 4:11; 1 Pet. 4:10-11.

Not all are included in the various lists: for example, marriage and celibacy (1 Cor. 7:7).

There is great variety of gifts, ministries and workings which manifest the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:4-7).

Therefore, it is not helpful to try to discern spiritual gifts from inventories of lists.

2. The order of the lists varies, so we cannot conclude anything as to importance of one gift

over another. Except that Paul is deliberately downplaying the more spectacular gifts in 1 Corinthians 12-14.

3. The purpose of spiritual gifts is the common good – building up the body (1 Cor 12:7, 14:12)

Gifts, ministries, workings of the Spirit are NOT for self-promoting, self-profiting.

4. Some gifts may be temporary (1 Cor. 12:7, 11). Because the Spirit gifts individuals as He wills, we have to be open to the reality that He may gift individuals for particular needs of the body (i.e., Exodus 31:1-11).

5. No one person possesses all the gifts; we all have differing gifts (1 Cor. 12:8-11, 30)! It is not wrong to desire a gift, but we should long for those that build up the body most (12:30; 14:1).

BUT, the Spirit gives gift(s), ministries, activities as He desires, not as we want (12:11b)!

6. Paul has broadened the understanding of gifts to include the ordinary with extra-ordinary.

(1 Cor. 12:4-6, 11) Paul has demolished the idea that the Spirit is manifested only in the spectacular gifts. All gifts (ordinary and extra-ordinary) are given and empowered by the Spirit.

Consequently, any spiritual gifts inventory will be limiting. Another reason this is the wrong question is because once we believe we have found the answer ("I have the gift of _____."), it will limit how, where and when we serve. For example, I may have the gift of teaching (so it has been affirmed by others), but that is not the limits of my service. Can you imagine if we were breaking down after a church-wide meal and other brothers were moving tables and chairs, then they looked at me to assist them, but I said, "Oh, I'm sorry. I'm THE teacher! That's my spiritual gift; I don't do tables and chairs." That would not be Christian; it would not be helpful; and I would not blame the guys throwing a few chairs in my direction.

The Right, Better Question: How can I serve the body?

We tend to get hung up on particular gifts. In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul broadens the categories of gifts under the umbrella the manifestation of the Spirit and argues that we manifest the Spirit when we serve one another in faith and in love ([1 Corinthians 12:7;13:1-3](#)). Therefore, let us serve one another in faith and in love. How?

First, find out what help the body needs. What are the biblical needs of any body? There are, of course, word ministry needs (preaching, teaching, etc. -[Ephesians 4:11](#)). There are also serving needs: widows, orphans, elderly, parents, children, single mothers, etc. ([1 Peter 4:10-11](#)). Ask the leadership of your church to find out what specific needs exist.

Once you see and begin to understand the needs of the body, PRAY! Pray for the particular needs of the body (Ask the leadership how you can join them in praying for the needs of the body). Pray that the Lord of the harvest would raise up laborers. Pray that the leadership of the body would have wisdom in guiding these ministries. Then, ASK the Lord if He is calling you to serve in one of those areas.

Ask yourself, "What do I enjoy doing?" Why do we think that doing the Lord's will has to be miserable? If the Spirit has gifted us, and if we are growing in grace, then we will enjoy serving the Lord and the body with these particular gifts. However, there may be areas of need that you may not be thrilled about (i.e., nursery) but that are important needs. The Lord may also have equipped you with certain capacities (i.e., accounting) that would serve the body well but which you may be reluctant to use because that is what you do all day, every day. Serve the body! Normally, it will be a delight!

Seek godly counsel - from elders (leaders), mentors, small group leaders, etc. Mature Christians with whom you spend much time will be observing you and caring for you. They will be a valuable asset in either confirming or denying whether or not you have particular gifts in certain areas. Listen to them wisely.

Serve! Don't just sit there, do something! Each of us is gifted for the common good; therefore, let us use our gifts (1 Peter 4:10-11). We don't have to wait until we have discovered our gifts to serve. Serve the church! As you are serving, you may even discover that you really enjoy it; the leaders in your church may confirm what they see; and you will have discovered one of the areas where the Spirit has equipped you to build up the body in love. Imagine that! You discovered your gift(s) while serving. Don't just sit there, do something! May the Lord deliver us from consumerism!

<http://theqospelcoalition.org/blogs/tqc/2010/05/06/how-do-i-discover-my-spiritual-gift/>

HOPE CHURCH MEMBER AGREEMENT

COV-E-NANT (n): *a formal and serious agreement or promise.*

Membership in a church is a covenant between a person (*or family*) and the church as a whole. In the most basic terms, a covenant is a commitment to act certain ways within a relationship. The closest parallel is the covenant found in marriage, a husband and wife make promises to each other to live and act a certain way for a lifetime. A covenant with a church is similar; as a member you agree to live and act certain ways and at the same time other members of the church and the leadership of the church commit to live and act in certain ways towards you. At Hope we do not mandate any commitments to become a member. We think everyone should seriously consider the covenant they are agreeing to in membership and the 7 Commitments. Being part of Hope Church includes participating in the relational commitments of the church towards other members of Hope, as well as striving to live as disciples motivated by love of God, love of God's family and love of God's mission.

The By-Laws of Hope instruct members of Hope, from a loving response to God's grace will:

Aspire to a sincere, heartfelt and tangible standard of love that encourages other Christians and declares to others that we are disciples of Jesus Christ (**John 13:35**).

Discover and use their unique gifts and talents to help "prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up" (**Ephesians 4:12**).

Voluntarily, cheerfully and generously support Hope's ministry financially (**2 Corinthians 9:6-15**).

Live such good lives... "[that others] may see [our] good deeds and glorify God..." (**1 Peter 2:12**).

HOPE CHURCH COMMITMENTS

OBEY GOD: Committed to growing in obedience to God's commands in all areas of life.

GOSPEL IMMERSED: Committed to immersing myself in the gospel as it is applied specifically to situations throughout life and spurring others on with the hope that springs from it.

KNOW GOD: Committed to growing in relationship w/God, pursuing Him in study, prayer and worship.

BE AUTHENTIC: Committed to authentic and meaningful relationships with those around me.

SERVE: Committed to imitating Jesus by serving others as a regular part of life, enabled by God's Spirit.

PROCLAIM: Committed to being a witness of Jesus, telling those around me about His love.

INVITE: Committed to a lifestyle of regularly inviting others to know me and to get to know Jesus.

A Biblical understanding of church means membership is not a one sided commitment, it is also a commitment Hope makes to members. Hope is committed to loving each member and family, helping when others are in need and continually pointing everyone to Jesus as our only hope in life and death. The leadership of Hope Church is invested in every member's continued growth in Christlikeness, lovingly committed to shepherding their souls. **Hope makes the following relational commitments to members:**

Commitment to **God's Word** and to **proclaim Jesus** as our hope: *2 Timothy 3:16-17, 1 Corinthians 15:3-4*

Commitment to **love, care for, serve** and **help** the church body: *John 13:34-35*

Commitment to **peacemaking** and **reconciliation**: *Matthew 5:9*

Commitment to **protecting** our children: *Proverbs 27:12*

Commitment to **honesty** and **transparency**: *1 John 1:7-8*

Commitment to **Biblical counseling**: *Ephesians 4:15*

Commitment to **accountability** and **church discipline**: *Hebrews 10:24*