



# Beyond Membership

Getting Out of the Pew and into the World

An overview of First Baptist Church Chiefland

# Beyond Membership

## Getting Out of the Pew and into the World

August 2005

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# Our Purpose

Suppose a new health club opened near your home and being health-conscious, you decide to become a member. When you arrive at the club, the person at the counter hands you a contract to read and sign. In the midst of several paragraphs (in very, very small print), you read that you agree to:

- Pay your monthly dues on time.
- Wipe off all machines after using them.
- Limit your time on the cardio equipment when other members are waiting.
- Use a spotter when using free weights for certain exercises.
- Bring in no outside food or beverages except water.

Before signing the contract, you would have to decide whether these requirements are reasonable or not. If you agree to the conditions, you would sign and become a member. If you disagree with them (or fail to honor them), you wouldn't become a member. It's that simple right?

Now, consider something a little different. What about joining a church? Are there any conditions that you have to meet to become a church member? Who decides what they should be? And what does it really mean to become a member of a church anyway? Does it simply mean that you can vote during business meetings? Is it the only way for you to participate in certain church activities?

These are certainly great questions. And if you are fuzzy on the answers, that's ok – you're not alone! Our goal during the next four sessions is to help you answer these questions and more as we look at going **Beyond Membership** to being much more than another pew sitter.

**Our Purpose**

**Our Beliefs**

**Our Strategy**

**Our Structure**

## JUST WHAT HAS JESUS CALLED ME TO DO?

If you have just joined FBC Chiefland, that means that at some point in your life God called you into a relationship with Him. It may have happened last week, last year or 20 years ago. It may have taken place in a church, in a sports stadium or in your home. You may have had a powerful emotional draw to Christ or it may have been more intellectual. Whatever the case, the one thing that you and everyone else in this room has in common is that Christ called you into relationship with Him. And just like the contract for joining a health club, we each need to understand exactly what is in store for us as a follower of Jesus Christ.

To begin understanding what Christ has called us to, let's look at **Matthew 4:18-20** and see how Christ initially called two of His disciples to follow Him.

**What were Christ's exact words of calling?**

**What does His calling to them imply?**

## Our Purpose

We can see that from the very beginning, Christ was upfront about what He was calling His followers to do. In fact, at times He went to great lengths to stress that being His follower would not be easy. Read **Luke 14:25-32** to see what advice He gave those who were following Him.

**How many people in the 'great multitudes' (v. 25) do you think were truly committed followers of Christ?**

**What do you think that Jesus meant when He said we must hate our family and ourselves to be His disciple (v. 26)?**

**What do you think that Jesus meant when He said that we have to carry our cross (v. 27)?**

**What is the point of the two illustrations Jesus shares (v. 28-30 and v. 31-32).**

In short, Jesus was pretty clear that if a person wants to genuinely follow Him, he must be willing to sacrifice everything for Him. Nothing can be held back. Being a follower of Jesus requires you to be completely 'sold out' for Him. This is what Paul had in mind when he penned **2 Corinthians 5:14-17**:

For the love of Christ **controls** us,  
having concluded this,  
that one died for all, therefore **all died**; and He died for all,  
that they who live should **no longer live for themselves**,  
but  
for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.

Therefore, from now on we **recognize no man according to the flesh**;  
even though we have known Christ according to the flesh,  
yet now we know Him thus no longer.

Therefore, if any man is in Christ,  
he is a **new creature**;  
the old things passed away;  
behold, new things have come.

# SO WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH BECOMING A MEMBER OF THIS CHURCH?

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Understanding that to be a follower of Christ requires each of us to be completely committed to Him is one of the basic building blocks of our church. We believe that the church is God's chosen tool to glorify Him by reaching people for Christ. To fulfill this vitally important mission requires a group of men, women, teenagers and children who are true followers of Jesus, not superficial multitudes. As such, we don't believe it is possible for a church member simply to attend church – that makes the church a building or a separate group of people. Instead, each church member has been called by God to make a vital difference for eternity.

This is not a new concept. Actually the idea of living a life focused on impacting others can be found all the way back in the book of Genesis. Read **Genesis 12:1-3** and notice the call God gave to Abram.

**How does God say that Abram would make a difference for eternity (v. 2-3)?**

**What do you think the 'ultimate blessing' would be?**

But we don't have to go that far back to see this principle. According to **1 Corinthians 3:9**, **how did Paul view himself?**

It is tempting for some people to consider only pastors, deacons or other church leaders as the ones who God has called to work. However, that's far from the case. Read **Matthew 9:36-39**.

**What does Jesus instruct his disciples to do?**

**Who do you think the 'workers' in the 'harvest field' are today?**

If you still have some doubts about who the workers are, read the following verses and notice if there are any qualifications placed on the instructions.

**Matthew 28:18-20**

**John 20:21**

**Mark 16:15**

**Acts 1:8**

**Luke 24:46-47**

## Our Purpose

These passages are sometimes referred to as the ‘five-fold commission.’ As each of the gospels close and as Acts opens, we see a command for all of Jesus’ followers to make a difference for eternity. No believer is excluded from this calling. We all have the responsibility - and the privilege - of seeing lives transformed through the power of the Holy Spirit. We can only accomplish this if we live completely committed to Jesus Christ.

God’s desire is clear. Read **1 Timothy 2:3-4** to find out what that is. The question is “do our hearts beat with His?” Do we have the same desire to see people come into relationship with God through His Son, Jesus Christ? That is what we are striving for as a church. We hope and pray that it is your goal as well. If it is, then you are ready to join us on one of the most amazing adventures you’ll ever be part of!

## Our Mission Statement

The mission and purpose of our congregation is clearly defined by the words of Jesus to His disciples, “And Jesus came up to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’”

Matthew 28:18-20

## SUGGESTED VERSES FOR FURTHER STUDY

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Romans 10:13-15; Romans 12:1-2; Galatians 2:20; Philipians 1:21; Philipians 3:8; Colossians 3:17; 2 Peter 3:9; James 1:22

# Our Beliefs

Paul let out a heavy sigh as he sat down at his writing desk. Taking a deep breath, he took a pen in his hand and began to write, “Paul, called as an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, to the church of God which is at Corinth”. The apostle paused after finishing these words and wondered how things had gotten to this point.

About three years before writing this letter (which we now know as 1 Corinthians), Paul had established the church in Corinth. Soon after he left and went to Ephesus. At some point after his departure, it seems that the church in Corinth began to stray off course. They had fallen into strife, accepted sexual immorality in the church, abused Spiritual gifts and some even denied resurrection of the dead. Paul’s heart was burdened - not necessarily because the church had veered from his teachings - but instead because they had abandoned God’s truth. The one-time persecutor of Christ had come full circle and was now a zealous defender of Christ.

By the time Paul reached chapter 15, he was ready to begin his defense of perhaps the most important issue Corinth was struggling with - resurrection of the dead. Apparently, some false teachers had begun declaring that a person resurrecting was a foolish idea. Paul’s response is clear and firm. Read **1 Corinthians 15:3-8** and note how Paul begins to tackle this issue.

Our Purpose

**Our Beliefs**

Our Strategy

Our Structure

**According to Paul, what role does Christ’s resurrection play in the believer’s faith?**

Paul would continue to argue that if one denies our future resurrection, then one must deny Christ’s resurrection as well. And if one denies Christ’s resurrection, our faith is meaningless. He presents a persuasive and firm defense of this teaching. Look back now at **1 Corinthians 15:1-2** and see why Paul was so concerned with this issue.

**According to these verses, what does he call Christ’s resurrection (v. 1)?**

While Paul taught on a variety of issues and is widely considered to be one of the greatest theologians of all time, it is important for us to realize that he was still able to keep the main thing the main thing. He never strayed from the power of the Gospel to chase ‘pet doctrines’. He never allowed a relatively ‘minor doctrine’ to surpass the major one – the Gospel. These verses remind us of that.

This church, like all others, is full of people who don’t always see eye-to-eye on everything. From the color of the carpet, to the temperature in the rooms, to doctrine, there are areas of disagreement. And that’s ok – as long as we each humbly work through these differences and, like Paul, keep the main thing the main thing.

This is actually one of the ways that we bring glory to God. It isn’t normal for a group of people to work through their differences and continue to pursue a common goal in love and peace. When the world observes this, they are forced to ask how it can be done. The answer of course is the leadership of Christ Jesus.

So what is the main thing? What binds us together - differences and all? In this session we will examine some of the key doctrines of our faith which are the glue of our church fellowship. While we may prefer a different color carpet from the person sitting next to us in worship, what follows is what enables us to stand shoulder-to-shoulder as children of God.

### THREE NOTEWORTHY DOCTRINES

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It is probably helpful to first note three important doctrines that partly define us as Southern Baptists. This may be especially insightful to you if you come from a different denominational background. Then, we will peruse the *Baptist Faith and Message* – the closest thing to a Southern Baptist ‘statement of faith’ you will find.

#### Assurance of Salvation

One question that plagues many believers is “can I lose my salvation” or better put, “is it possible for me to mess up so much, that I will lose my salvation.” Some people would say ‘yes’ it is possible for you to sin so grievously that God would revoke your salvation (or possibly you could choose to reject your own salvation at some point). Others would answer ‘no’ it is impossible to lose your salvation – a doctrine often called “assurance of salvation”, “eternal security” or “security of the believer”.

Before we look more closely at this issue, we must first clearly understand what salvation really is. The term ‘salvation’ implies two things. First, in order to be saved, a person must be rescued *from* something. Second, the person must be rescued *to* something. Think of a ship sinking in the middle of the ocean. Another ship comes along and takes all of the passengers from the sinking ship. Have they been saved? It sure seems like it. But now suppose that the ship that just took them on was on fire. Now have they been saved? Not quite. In one sense, they were ‘saved’ from impending drowning, but they still aren’t saved. When it comes to spiritual salvation, people are not ‘saved’ like these ship passengers. Spiritual salvation involves a person being saved *from* spiritual death and separation from God because of sin and being saved *to* an eternal, personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

Most people have some sort of understanding of that part of salvation. The next part isn’t always as clear. The question now becomes *how* does this salvation happen? Read **Ephesians 2:8-9** to find the answer to this critical question.

**According to these verses, how has God made salvation possible?**

**How does man need to respond?**

Think of salvation as a train running along train tracks. The tracks are the pathway for the train to move. Without them, the train could go nowhere. We can think of grace as the train tracks and faith as the train. God has given us the pathway to enable salvation. He has provided the process whereby we can experience right relationship with Him. The train tracks are all laid. However, we must respond to His calling in our life and get that train car moving.

## Our Beliefs

Now that we have a basic understanding of salvation, we can turn our attention back to the longevity of salvation. Is a person saved and always saved? Read **Romans 8:10-17**.

**What difference does Christ make in a person (v. 10)?**

**What difference does the Holy Spirit make in a person (v. 11)?**

**How should we live in light of this (v. 12-14)?**

**What is our position with God as a believer (v. 14-15, 17)?**

**How can we have certainty that we are saved (v. 16)?**

Perhaps the most comforting aspect of our assurance of salvation in this passage is that we have been adopted as children of God. He has placed us into a relationship with Him. It is His work, not ours. And just as He has the authority and power to adopt us, He too has the authority and power to hold onto His children. Look a few verses later (**Romans 8:29-30**) and see how Paul emphasizes God's authority in the process of salvation.

**What chain of events do you see transpiring?**

1. (v. 29)
2. (v. 29)
3. (v. 30)
4. (v. 30)
5. (v. 30)

## Our Beliefs

When do you think God 'foreknew' and 'predestined' to adopt you?

**Predestination**  
God's planning before time began concerning the destiny of His children.

When do you think God 'called' and 'justified' you?

**Justification**  
To announce a favorable verdict.  
To declare a person righteous or right before God.

When do you think God 'glorified' you?

**Glorification**  
The fulfillment of salvation where a person enters into God's presence in new form.

What is the certainty of God completing this string of events?

Paul completes the chapter by asking the question, "if this is true (and it is) then how can a person be separated from God (lose his salvation). Read **Romans 8:31-39**.

How can a person lose his salvation?

Perhaps the key to understanding assurance of salvation is to realize that God is in complete control of things. We see this clearly communicated in Romans 8. But we also have another clear affirmation of this truth from Christ Himself. Read **John 10:27-30** and see how Jesus viewed assurance of salvation.

What does Christ give to His followers (v. 28)? Answer carefully.

Who will snatch His followers away from Him (v. 28-29)?

Why (v. 29-30)?

### SUGGESTED VERSES FOR FURTHER STUDY

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**Romans 14:4; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Philippians 1:6; Colossians 2:13-14; 2 Timothy 1:12; Titus 2:14; Hebrews 7:27; Hebrews 9:24-28; Hebrews 10:10; 1 Peter 3:18; 1 John 1:7,9; 1 John 5:13**

### Symbolic Baptism

Our name expresses the importance we place on the next doctrine. We are called Southern Baptists because we value baptism. But even though we see baptism as incredibly important, we are just as quick to acknowledge that it is quite possible to place too high an importance on it. Some denominations believe that baptism, in some way, is part of salvation. In other words, unless you are baptized, you cannot be saved. As Southern Baptists, we reject this notion and instead see baptism as an outward picture of the salvation experience that happened at some previous time. So baptism is not part of salvation, but is instead a portrait of salvation. While some denominations may place too high an emphasis on baptism, others place too little one. Some do not see the importance of baptism. Read **Matthew 28:18-20**.

**What authority does Jesus have (v. 18)?**

**What authoritative command are we given (v. 19)? Notice the order.**

Baptism is not a suggestion. It is a command. As such, we are obligated to carry it out and to do so correctly. Read **Acts 2:37-41** to see how the early church was obedient to Christ regarding baptism.

**What does Peter first instruct his audience to do (v. 38,40)?**

**What happens after that (v. 41)? What is the condition placed on those who were baptized (v. 41)?**

There is one final note worth mentioning about baptism. There is also some disagreement concerning how baptism should be done. Some choose to sprinkle water on the recipient while others prefer to submerge the person in water. While each position is often defended with Bible passages, one need go no further than the word 'baptize' to find an answer. Baptize is a strange word because there is no English equivalent for it. In Greek (the language the New Testament was written in) *baptizo* means to "immerse" or "to dip." The same word is used to describe a ship being sunk. The definition of the word, coupled with the picture being portrayed leads Southern Baptist to fully immerse the person in water.

### SUGGESTED VERSES FOR FURTHER STUDY

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**Acts 8:12; Acts 18:8; Acts 19:1-7**

### Lord's Supper as a Memorial

The third major doctrine that deserves some attention is our view of the Lord's Supper (often called 'Communion' as well). The Lord's Supper was instituted by Jesus Himself (thus the name) and is found in **Matthew 26:26-28**, **Mark 14:22-24** and **Luke 22:19-20**. Just before His arrest, trial and crucifixion, Jesus is celebrating the Passover Feast with His disciples. During the meal, Jesus instructed the disciples to eat some bread which was a symbol for His body and drink some wine which was a symbol for His blood. Just as the Passover Feast served to remind Israel of God delivering them from Egyptian slavery, the new Lord's Supper would remind Christians of our deliverance from sin's slavery through Christ's sacrifice.

1 Corinthians 11 is a foundational passage which helps us further understand the Lord's Supper. Read **1 Corinthians 11:23-26**.

**What is the first reason Jesus gives us for continuing the Lord's Supper (v. 24, 25)?**

**What is the second reason He gives (v. 26)?**

We see from this passage that we are commanded by Christ to continue the Lord's Supper (although there is no specific frequency given) and the two reasons we are to do this. Notice there is no discussion about salvation in these verses. Some denominations believe that salvation is in some way involved with the Lord's Supper. We see the Lord's Supper only as a 'memorial' to what Christ has done for us and a 'testimony' for others.

The question is sometimes asked, "who may participate in the Lord's Supper"? Because it would not be possible for a person to paint a picture of salvation through Jesus Christ who has not experienced it, the Lord's Supper is limited to only those who are in relationship with Jesus Christ. Some churches go further and only allow their own members to participate. We believe that the very name – the Lord's Supper – reveals who it belongs to and therefore we allow anyone who belongs to Him to participate.

### SUGGESTED VERSES FOR FURTHER STUDY

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**Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:17-34**

## **NOTES ON THE BAPTIST FAITH AND MESSAGE**

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Because each Southern Baptist church is completely independent (this will be discussed in session 4), there is no binding statement of faith for Southern Baptists. Instead, Baptists often turn to the *Baptist Faith and Message* to clarify what we believe. While it is not compulsory for a church to agree to this document to be considered a Southern Baptist church, it does describe what the vast majority of Southern Baptists believe. The full document is available online ([www.sbc.net/bfm/default.asp](http://www.sbc.net/bfm/default.asp)) or we can provide you with a copy as well. Here is a brief description of the 18 sections of the Baptist Faith and Message.

### **1 The Scriptures**

The Bible was given directly from God and contains His absolute truth without contradiction or error. As such, it is our standard for testing all beliefs and conduct.

### **2. God**

There is only one true God. He is perfect in all of His attributes (characteristics) and is personal (we can know Him – He is not some cosmic force). God is the eternal Creator of all and, therefore, owns all. God reveals Himself to us.

#### **2a. God the Father**

God acts over His creation with authority. He is Father in truth to those who become His children. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men.

#### **2b. God the Son**

Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God. Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. As such, He is 100% God and 100% man, however without sin. Jesus made provision for mankind's salvation with His death on the cross and resurrection from the dead. Afterward, He ascended into heaven and will physically return one day. Until then, He indwells all believers.

#### **2c. God the Holy Spirit**

Like God the Father, and God the Son, the Holy Spirit is fully divine. He inspired men to write the Scriptures and enables men to understand them. The Holy Spirit convicts people of sin, calls them to salvation, seals them in salvation, and guides and empowers them daily.

### **3. Man**

Mankind is a special and unique creation by God, made in His own image. Man was originally innocent of sin, however, the first man and woman chose to rebel against God and brought sin into all humanity. Only God's grace can restore this severed relationship. Although mankind is sinful, the sacredness of human life still exists.

### **4. Salvation**

Salvation is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ. There is no salvation apart from Him. Salvation involves changing one's heart concerning sin (repentance) and placing one's faith in Jesus Christ.

### **5. God's Purpose of Grace**

Salvation is made possible by a combination of God's grace and man's free choice. Not only does God's grace enable salvation, it also maintains all believers in relationship with God until the end. While believers may fall into sin, they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

### **6. The Church**

The local church is a group of believers in the covenant of faith and fellowship with each other with a purpose of extending the gospel to the ends of the earth. In addition, the church is also the combined body of Christ of all time and all places.

### **7. Baptism and the Lord's Supper**

Baptism is a testimony of faith in Christ Jesus and is to be done as an act of obedience to Him. The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of memorial concerning Christ's sacrifice for His church.

### **8. The Lord's Day**

Sunday is the Lord's Day and involves worship and activities commensurate with the believer's following of Jesus Christ.

### **9. The Kingdom**

God's kingdom involves His general rule over His entire creation as well as His Lordship over all believers. In addition, the Kingdom anticipates Christ's literal return at the end of the age.

### **10. Last Things**

God in His own time and way will bring judgment to the world. At this time, Jesus Christ will return to the earth, the dead will be raised and all people will be judged for their obedience or lack of obedience to Christ. Unbelievers will be consigned to hell while believers will enter into heaven.

### **11. Evangelism and Missions**

It is every believer's duty and privilege to strive to make disciples of all people everywhere. Every Christian should seek to win the lost to Christ by their verbal witness and lifestyle.

### **12. Education**

Following Christ involves faith and learning as well. All believers should seek to grow in their understanding of God's Word.

### **13. Stewardship**

God is the owner of all. As such, believers are indebted to God for everything and are under compulsion to serve Him with their time, talents and possessions. Christians should do this willingly, cheerfully and regularly.

### **14. Cooperation**

Members of the church should cooperate with one another to carry out the church's mission. In addition, churches should seek to form partnerships with other congregations and organizations without compromising the Lordship of Christ and His Word.

### **15. The Christian and the Social Order**

Believers are obligated to make Christ supreme in their own life and in society by seeking to bring principles of righteousness into the mainstream of public consciousness.

### **16. Peace and War**

Believers should seek to be at peace with all men and put an end to war. The true cure for war is Jesus Christ.

## Our Beliefs

### **17. Religious Liberty**

Church and state should be separate. The state owes to every church protection to fully exercise its beliefs. At the same time, no church or religion should be favored by government. The church should not resort to government to carry out its work.

### **18. The Family**

Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in a lifetime covenant commitment. While both husband and wife are of equal worth before God as people, God has placed the husband in a position of headship to model Christ's headship over His church. Children from the moment of conception are a gift from God.

# Our Strategy

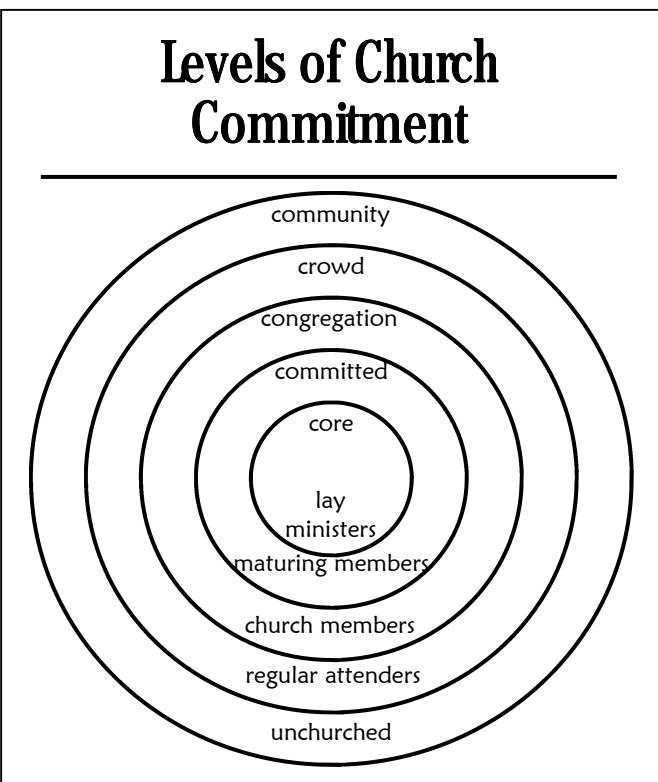
Just days after the December 7, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, United States military recruiting centers were jam-packed with men – young and not-so-young – who wanted to volunteer to fight for their country. For many of these men, volunteering to serve in the military was not enough. They went even further to volunteer for special services - the most dangerous of dangerous assignments - and became airborne troopers, bomber pilots, submarine crew members and the like.

However, volunteering to fight for your country did not automatically mean they would be given that opportunity. Many willing volunteers were rejected for a variety of reasons – a tremendous blow to some. Some of these would-be military volunteers found other ways to serve their country in its hour of need. Others went back to their homes and resumed life as they knew it. Still others struggled for the rest of their lives because they were unable to serve.

Others didn't volunteer, but still served their country courageously when they were drafted. There was one final group of men who also didn't serve because they didn't volunteer and weren't drafted.

One event, many different responses. One need, many different choices. Some recognized the need of their nation and poured themselves into the cause. Others saw the need but did not respond until they were drafted. Others didn't see the need at all. Some were deeply committed to the cause. Some were committed to a point while others were not committed at all.

In the same way, most churches see people respond to their goal of reaching the lost for Christ with different levels of commitment. Some are deeply committed and invest their time, energy and possessions into reaching people for Christ. Others serve half-heartedly while some are completely uncommitted. The chart to the left depicts the different commitment levels that are present in most churches.



**Which level of commitment best reflects where you currently are? Which level best reflects where you would like to be?**

**What levels do you suppose a healthy church should see?**

Our Purpose

Our Beliefs

**Our Strategy**

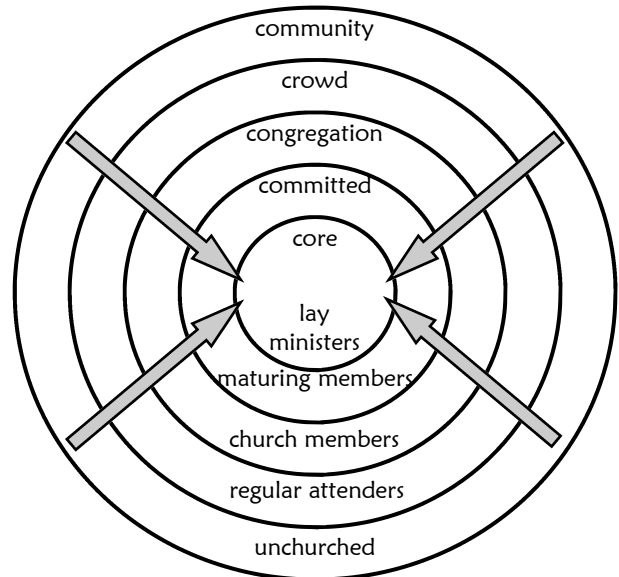
Our Structure

### INTENTIONALLY MOVING PEOPLE TOWARD THE CENTER

Our church's desire is to help each member live a life of deeper commitment to Jesus Christ. We strive to see people move from the outer circles in the diagram to the center. Does that mean our church's goal is to have every person involved in the center? Actually, it isn't. The reason is that those who are in the center are people who are involved in hands-on ministry - ministry that should be reaching the unchurched. These unchurched must then be helped along as they develop a deeper commitment to Christ. At any given time then, there should be people at each level of commitment in a church. The key then is not for a vibrant church to have 100% of its people in the center, but to see consistent movement of people toward the center as those at each level take one step at a time toward becoming ministers.

Sounds easy enough! But exactly how does this happen? How does the church help people understand the need for greater commitment? And once the need is understood, how does the church help people actually become more committed and take each step along the way?

### Moving People Toward Greater Commitment



### Communicating the Opportunity

It's Sunday morning. As the pastor begins his sermon, he shares that once again there is no one to work in the nursery and that a volunteer is needed. In a pleading voice he asks for someone to please fill this need. The sound of the crickets chirping is deafening as everyone looks around and wonders who will be so foolish to volunteer for nursery duty. There's some humor to this story, but there's also some sad truth to it. Why do so many churches struggle to find people to 'work' in the various ministries of the church?

Well, a large part has to do with how the need is communicated. The problem is not that we don't communicate the need (as in this illustration the pastor did just that) - instead, the problem is that we approach serving God as a 'need' or a 'chore' or 'work' instead of what it really is - an opportunity to impact people for eternity! Sure ministry involves hard work and sacrifice. It's not always easy or enjoyable. But the effort is well worth the privilege of being used by God to reach people for Christ.

When we fail to view ministry for what it really is and instead portray it as drudgery, the battle is already lost before it even began! We believe that every ministry within our church has great potential to impact eternity. Therefore we aren't 'sacrificing' as much as we are 'investing'. We aren't 'working' as much as we are 'serving'. We aren't 'volunteering to help in ministry' as much as we are 'taking ownership of ministry'. When people have this understanding of church and ministry, it becomes far more easy to become committed to the cause. Serving and ministering suddenly become joyful!

**How willing would you be to make a sizable financial investment without knowing the risk and possibility of reward?**

## Our Strategy

Would you make the investment if you knew it would produce a great reward?

How does 1 Corinthians 15:58 relate to our serving God?

## The One Purpose of the Church

While it is critically important to present ministry for what it really is, there is actually a more important step that must be taken before that. The cause must be clearly communicated. Why does the church exist in the first place? What is its purpose? Without an understanding of this, it is no wonder why people aren't committed to serving.

There is one, and only one, purpose for the church. Not surprisingly, it is the very same purpose as each person has. Read **John 17:4** to learn what Jesus considered His purpose to be on earth?

What did Jesus' work accomplish?

What does it mean to "glorify God"?

If Christ's purpose was to glorify God, what do you think our purpose should be?

## How We Fulfill Our Purpose

God has called His church to glorify Him. That much is clear. What may not be as clear is how exactly that happens. Just how do we as a church glorify God? We believe that God has provided five ways, or functions, for the church to glorify Him. They are **worship, evangelism, discipleship, ministry** and **fellowship**. God is glorified by our church when we worship Him, tell others of His love, grow in our faith, serve one another and connect with each other. Each function is equally important and essential to achieving our purpose. No church can choose to focus on just three of the functions, or even four, and achieve its purpose—it takes all five. The more we understand our one purpose for existing as a church and how each of the five functions is vital for realizing that purpose, the more apt we will be to see and respond to the opportunities to grow and minister before us. Let's look at each of these five functions a little closer.

## Our Strategy

### 1 Worship

The word ‘worship’ comes from the old English word ‘worthship’. The clue to what worship is can be found in this original word. Worship can be thought of as declaring someone or something’s worth. So, when we worship God, we are declaring His infinite worth. Read **1 Chronicles 16:25** to find out a little about how we are to worship God.

**What are some reasons that God is great and worthy of praise?**

**What does it mean to “fear God above all gods”?**

**How can you better glorify God through worship?**

### 2. Evangelism

Evangelism is telling a person how they can enter into a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Read **Acts 1:8** to see Christ’s instructions for His followers to be His witnesses.

**What four places did Jesus tell His followers to be witnesses?**

**Based on this, where should we be His witnesses?**

**What concerns do you have about being a witness?**

**How can those concerns be addressed?**

## Our Strategy

How can you better glorify God as His witness?

### **3. Discipleship**

A disciple is a 'learner' so discipleship is the process of a person growing in his faith. Read **Ephesians 4:11-13** to see what we should be striving for in our faith.

**What kind of "knowledge" of the Son of God do you think we should have (v. 13)?**

**What will a mature man look like (v. 13)?**

**Do you suppose we can ever reach this?**

**How can you better glorify God as a disciple?**

### **4. Ministry**

Ministry can be thought of as serving and can occur in church and outside of church. Read **1 Corinthians 12:4-7** to see what the key is to successful ministry.

**Who is your ability to minister based upon (v. 7)?**

**Many people believe they are incapable of being used by God. How does this passage answer that concern?**

How can you better glorify God through ministry?

### 5. Fellowship

Fellowship is often thought of as having fun (or for Baptists it is often associated with eating!). That's not quite the case. Fellowship may involve fun (and yes food), but that is not all it is. Read **Hebrews 10:19-25** to see what fellowship is really all about.

**What kind of relationship can we have with God because of Jesus (v. 22)?**

**What kind of relationship should we have with other believers (v. 24-25)?**

**Who is emphasized in our relationship with each other in these verses?**

How can you better glorify God through fellowship?

# Our Structure

Most of the furniture that you buy today comes disassembled in a box for you to put together in your leisure time. Assuming you can find three friends to help you haul the behemoth box into your home, the first task you have to complete is to open the box and sort through the various parts (all conveniently letter-coded) and hardware (most of which you have never seen before in your life). Some of the parts are easy to figure out how they will be used. Some other parts aren't quite as clear. Then there are other parts that you have no idea how they will factor into your piece of furniture. Most of the time at this point you stop scratching your head and pull out that wonderful piece of literature and artwork known as the 'instruction manual' and proceed directly to step 1.

Have you ever tried to assemble furniture like this without the instructions? Or have you ever tried to put furniture together that didn't have very good instructions? It is quite difficult isn't it? Although all of the parts and hardware you need to assemble your new desk are right there in front of you - and although you knew what the finished product looked like - if it wasn't for those instructions, you would never have a functioning desk! The instructions are key because they help you to see the relation between all of the parts - how they fit together to function as one desk.

Our final session is kind of like an 'instruction manual' for our church. In this session we will examine several parts of the church to see their relationship with one another and how each helps make-up our church as a whole. We begin first by examining three important partnerships our church is in.

Our Purpose

Our Beliefs

Our Strategy

Our Structure

## THREE PRIMARY PARTNERSHIPS

The first thing that we have to understand about the partnerships that our church is in, is that our church is completely autonomous. This means that our church is free to hold the doctrines our church believes are Biblical and to conduct our church the way we feel is best. None of the organizations that we are in partnership with us has any right to mandate we believe a certain doctrine or act a certain way (however, the vast majority of churches in these partnerships believe very similar doctrines and act in very similar ways). Furthermore, none of these agencies have a say in staffing matters, financial matters or any other church matter.

What advantage is there in being in these partnerships then? The greatest reason for our participation in these partnerships is to give our church the ability to accomplish ministry that we could never dream of doing on our own. Because of our partnerships, our congregation is able to take part in sending missionaries around the world, producing resources that impact thousands of people and planting new churches in the spiritually darkest areas known to man.

We do this in two ways. First, through our support of the Cooperative Program. This is a program established by Southern Baptists where financial resources are pulled together and allocated for these ministry projects. A percentage of our overall church budget goes directly to this effort. For more information about the Cooperative Program, visit [www.cpmiissions.net](http://www.cpmiissions.net). The second way we participate in these partnerships is by going. There are always ways for teams from individual churches to participate in short-term missions trips and projects in the United States and around the world. Let's take a moment to examine each of these partnerships.

## Our Structure

### The Southern Baptist Convention

Since it was formed in 1845, the Southern Baptist Convention has grown to include over 42,000 churches and 16 million members in the United States. The Southern Baptist Convention sponsors about 5,000 missionaries in the United States, Canada, Guam and the Caribbean as well as over 5,000 missionaries who serve in 153 nations around the world.

The term 'Southern Baptist Convention' refers to the organization as well as the annual meeting held each June. For more information about the Southern Baptist Convention, visit [www.sbc.net](http://www.sbc.net).

### The Florida Baptist Convention

The Florida Baptist Convention is one of 41 state conventions. Formed on November 20, 1854, the Florida Baptist Convention is comprised of 2,796 churches and missions and over one million members. Worship services are held in 21 different languages in Florida Baptist churches each week. For more information about the Florida Baptist Convention, visit [www.flbaptist.org](http://www.flbaptist.org).

### The Harmony Baptist Association

The Harmony Baptist Association is one of about 1,200 local associations and consists of 25 churches in Alachua, Gilchrest and Levy counties. For more information about the Harmony Baptist Association, visit [www.harmonyassociation.com](http://www.harmonyassociation.com).

## FBC CHIEFLAND LEADERSHIP

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As we said, the partnerships that we are in have no bearing on how the church runs on a day-to-day basis. Instead, that is taken care of by the leadership of the church - both staff and members. Let's look at how this leadership team works together to carry-out the purpose of FBC Chiefland.

### Pastoral Staff

In some churches, the pastor and staff rule over the congregation with an iron fist. Every single decision must be cleared by them. If they want something done, it will happen. If they don't want it done, then it won't. In other churches, the pastors are simply hired help. It is their job to do all the work of the church. They are the evangelists. They are the visitation team. They are the ones who do the will of the church.

Neither of these two extremes is the staff that will help a church be successful in bringing glory to God. It is true that a pastoral staff has been given authority to make important decisions. They need to be involved in leading the church - but not alone. They need to do this in conjunction with the other church leaders. And it is true that a pastoral staff should have the mindset of being servants. But they are not just servants, they are servant-leaders.

So what should the pastoral staff be? According to **Ephesians 4:11-13**, perhaps the most important function they can have is that of an equipper. The staff should have the goal of equipping each and every church member for ministry. They do this by preparing them for their individual ministry, empowering them to perform it and encouraging them as they do it.

### Deacons

Deacons were first appointed as servants of the church in **Acts 6**. Their qualifications are explained in **1 Timothy 3**. While the Bible gives us a clear understanding of who can and cannot be a deacon, it is not as clear concerning the role of the deacons in a church. Just as pastoral staffs operate differently from church-to-church, so do deacons. In some churches, the deacons act as the primary decision-makers in the church and

## Our Structure

handle all of the church business and affairs. In other churches, appointing deacons is merely a way to honor or pay respect to key church members. Still in other churches, the deacons are the ones who distribute the Lord's Supper and pass out bulletins. Sometimes they are called-on to visit the sick or conduct "family ministry" - staying in touch with individuals and families in the church. Then there are times when the deacons are called on to be advisors to the staff and other church leadership.

At FBC Chiefland, the deacons perform a little of everything mentioned above with the exception of conducting the business of the church. The deacon body at our church is comprised of men who are spiritual leaders in our congregation. Their duties include serving the Lord's Supper and conducting family ministry but their most important ministry is to our staff. The deacons serve as a team of advisors and encouragers to the pastoral staff giving them a group to talk about important decisions or issues that need to be addressed.

## Committees

Our church has a number of committees which are designed to take the leadership in individual areas of ministry within the church. These committees are designed to represent the church body as a whole in making decisions in their areas as well as to plan and organize ministry. Committee members are elected by the church.

There are two types of committees - 'standing' and 'annual'. Standing committees are comprised of members who are voted on. These members serve on the committee for three years before rotating off. The 22 standing committees of the church are:

Baptism	Benevolent
Children	Evangelism
Greeters	Hospitality
Hostess	Library
Membership	Music
Nursery	Prayer
Property	Publicity
Recreation	Senior Adult
Shower	Social Issues
Sound and Video	Student
Transportation	Trustees

Annual committees are comprised of some members of standing committees who automatically serve on an annual committee and other members who are voted to the committee. The four annual committees of the church are:

Nominating	Personnel
Advisory	Finance

In addition, we have a few 'less formal' committees such as Counting, Flowers, Ushers and Wedding that are comprised of people who are involved in those ministry areas and do not require being officially recognized by the church.

## Ministry Teams

Not all of the ministries in the church are led by a committee. In fact, most don't have direct committee leadership. Instead, these ministries are led by men, women and students who are passionate in serving God through an individual ministry in the church. These ministry teams operate under the leadership of the church

staff or a committee to give them guidance and direction as needed. Some of the ministry teams in our church include children's music programs, student ministry programs, senior adult ministry, children's ministry, education ministry and the kitchen crew.

## STRUCTURE OF THE CHURCH MINISTRY PROGRAMS

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If you wanted to abuse and lose people in church ministry, it's actually quite easy. Here's a proven, three-step method for destroying any excitement and success in ministry:

### 1) Don't use the person right.

This can easily be done by asking a person to participate in a ministry only to have them standing on the side feeling unneeded or by giving them a menial task to perform. Another strategy is to plug the person into the ministry that the church needs filled at the time without considering the person's gifts, skills and interest. This is a sure way to turn ministry into a chore and to sap all of the enjoyment and meaning out of it.

Conversely, if you want the person to experience joy and fulfillment in ministry, you need to match them to the right ministry and help them be a vital part of it. This means helping the person determine their spiritual giftedness and helping them understand how they could be used to make a difference in existing ministries or even to develop new ministries that God has placed on their heart.

### 2.) Don't give them ownership of the ministry.

If the person somehow slips through the cracks and actually ends up in a ministry that he enjoys and where he is actually making a difference, there is a back-up plan. The second strategy is to not give them ownership of the ministry. Instead, have someone else (a committee or staff member or church vote) make each and every decision. Make the person jump through every hoop imaginable to get anything done and take away any freedom or flexibility from the person in making even the smallest change or improvement in the ministry. It shouldn't be too long until his new excitement in being involved in the ministry turns to frustration and anger.

On the other hand, if you want the person to continue to think of creative ways to improve the ministry and to continue to enjoy it, give him some ownership to make decisions. Important and major decisions can still be funneled through staff or other leadership, but most of the day-to-day decisions can, and should, be made by the people who God has called to serve in that individual ministry.

### 3.) Don't train and equip them to be successful in the ministry.

If both of the first two approaches fail to drive the person out of the ministry, then the third strategy is guaranteed to accomplish this. Few things can be as frustrating as not being properly trained and equipped to carry-out a ministry. There's nothing more demoralizing than putting a person in a ministry and then not positioning him to succeed. Without ongoing training and equipping, it won't take long for the person to question his effectiveness and usefulness. Let them flounder. Let them struggle. It won't take long for them to quit.

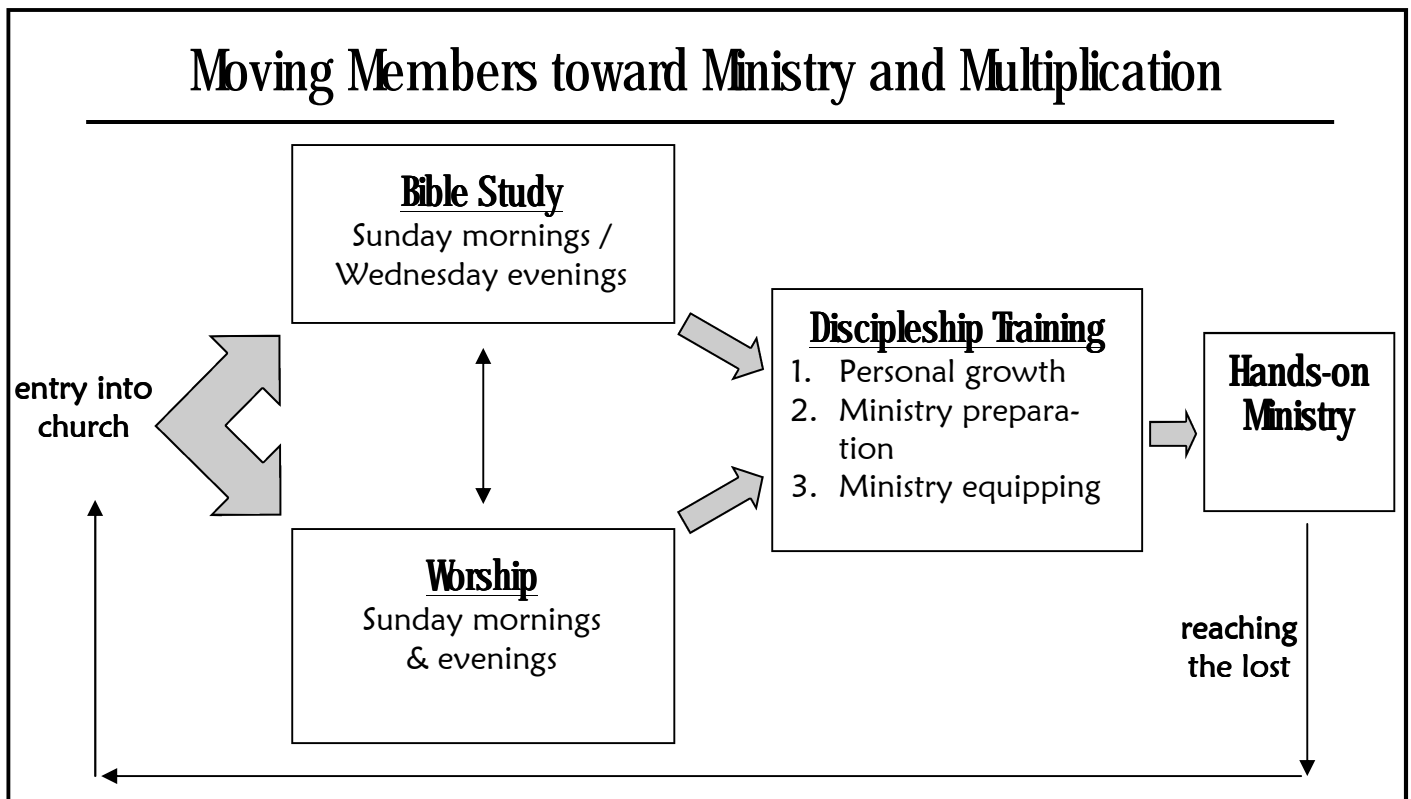
If, however, you want the person to succeed in ministry as he grows in his own faith and expand his eternal impact, then provide meaningful training and equip him to fully carry-out the ministry before him. Teach them in how to grow closer to Christ on their own and how they can be His more capable servant. Train them what it means to be a servant-leader and how they can truly surrender their life to Christ. Equip them with strategies, ideas, tools and supplies to carry-out the ministry. Follow-up with them regularly to make any needed adjustments or changes to the ministry or to see if God is still calling them to minister in that particular area.

It's really that simple. If you want to see people joyfully, willingly, effectively serving Christ, then match them with the right ministry (even if it means one that the church doesn't currently have), give them ownership of the ministry they have been called by God to serve in, and train them to do it right. If you don't want to ex-

## Our Structure

perience a church like this, it's even easier - don't do any of those things and it is guaranteed that people will not experience thriving ministry.

Needless to say, FBC Chiefland is designed to maximize every member's ministry. The key platform for accomplishing this is our discipleship ministry. This is where members can learn their spiritual gifts, find the ministry God has called them to, grow in their faith, receive training and much more. The chart below shows how Bible Study and Worship are designed to feed people into discipleship training. As members attend Bible Study and Worship, they should experience a growing desire to make a difference with their life. Discipleship Training is where they can move from having that desire to finding how to do it. Then they step into a hands-on ministry of the church that impacts people for Christ, involves them in the Bible Study and Worship ministries of the church to see them desire to invest their life in eternity as well.



## HANDLING CHURCH BUSINESS

While many of the daily decisions the church has to make can be handled by the church staff or lay leadership, there are other decisions that are made by the entire church body. These decisions (such as approving the church budget and calling new staff) are made during church business meetings.

You can tell a lot about a church by observing how it conducts a business meeting. Some can get downright ugly! Our view of business meetings is simple. Everyone should feel free to express their opinion, but no one is free to be ugly about it. Thankfully, our meetings reflect this belief.

Church business meetings can be thought of in two categories - regular and special meetings. In regular meetings, church committees and organizations have an opportunity to make a report to the church, old business is discussed updating the church on any progress concerning the issue and the floor is open to new business. All church members are free to (and encouraged to) participate in church business meetings and vote as they see fit. Voting is most often done by raised hand or written ballot.

## Our Structure

Special business meetings (or called business meetings) are a little different from the regular scheduled ones. Most of these special meetings are called so that one specific item of business may be addressed. Some of these special business meetings allow for discussion of the item, while others (such as budget vote) simply offer a chance to vote on a previously discussed item of business.