



CITY FELLOWSHIP
BAPTIST CHURCH

PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY

HOW WE DO MINISTRY

OUR PARTICIPATION IN THE MISSION OF CHRIST

City Fellowship's *philosophy of ministry* can be understood as follows:

- A. ***Communion of the Saints*** – As defined in the *Members Covenant* (Appendix A)
- B. ***Relocation of the Saints*** – As defined in the “*Great Commission*”...

Matthew 28:18-20 (ESV)

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

At City Fellowship we feel called to carry out this charge by applying to our ministry a principle we call “relocation”, which pastor and author John Perkins defines as “moving into a community in such a way that it’s needs become my needs”. We believe that this principle is about your relationships as well as your zip code. Consider the example of Jesus:

Luke 15:1-2 (ESV)

Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. ²And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them."

In the ancient Middle East, eating with a person was a symbol of communion. The Pharisees are dismayed because Jesus is building a community of faith that they have no reference for. In most religions, you get cleaned up in order to enter into communion. With Christ you come into communion with Him by faith and then you are conformed to His image as you become His disciple. A change in belief always precedes a change in behavior.

It seems then, that Jesus intends for the Gospel to be heard and seen in how Christians live, how they live together AND how they live together as part of their larger community.

John 13:35 (ESV)

By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

How can people see our love for one another unless they are around us? Unfortunately, in Christian circles we often do what is very normal for all human communities to do: we circle the wagons, and enjoy our own company. In this sense “Fellowship” could be defined as friendship based upon a common interest. However, *Christian* fellowship is centered around this Jesus who ate with tax collectors and sinners.

Luke 6:32-33 (ESV)

"If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. ³³And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same.

And so our philosophy is simple: Relocate your life in some way that overlaps with people who are “outside of your camp”. Cross the usual boundaries that separate us into man-made communities. Boundaries like race, culture, economics and education. These boundaries are quite real for those outside of Christ. But according to Ephesians 2 this is not the case for those who belong to Christ.

Ephesians 2:14-19 (ESV)

For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, ¹⁶and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. ¹⁷And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,

Change where you shop. Consider what part of town you live in. Consider carefully where your kids will be in school. These are all natural areas where our lives can overlap with those outside our usual circles. Relocate your life and make friends, real friends, with those you find there. And then when you get together with your Christian brothers and sisters, invite your new friends along. In this way the community of faith takes on the responsibility to evangelize your neighbors.

Already we have seen the power of God in this simple idea, not only in our city, but in the world at large. It is our desire to send and support missionaries who practice the principle of relocation

both across the world and across town. For this is what all of us in the church are... Missionaries. As believers in Jesus, it is no longer a question of *if* you are called to the mission field, but simply a matter of *where* your mission field is. And wherever that mission field may be, we all share a common mission: To speak and live the gospel together... For the sake of God's Glory and the good of the nations.

Ultimately, the fundamental *call* in the Christian faith is the calling one hears when the still small voice of our Savior whispers, "come unto me all who are weary and heavy laden, and I shall give you rest". And if you have truly answered *that* call, then you have been called to live in communion with other believers.

Now the question is whether or not City Fellowship is the specific place where you are meant to live out your calling. We look forward to seeing what the Lord will do.

May God richly bless you as you seek to follow Him.

MEMBERS COVENANT

(APPENDIX A)

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God (Romans 8:14) to receive Jesus Christ (John 1:12) as our Lord and Savior (2 Peter 3:18), and on the profession of our faith (Hebrews 10:23), having been baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19), we do now, in the presence of God and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ (Romans 12:5).

We engage, therefore, by the Holy Spirit to:

1. Consider others more important than ourselves by letting the mind of Christ dwell richly within us. Let us genuinely love one another with brotherly affection and outdo one another in showing honor. (Romans 12:10; Philippians 2:3-8; James 4:11)
2. Be humble, tenderhearted and forgiving towards one another, seeking always to maintain peace, harmony and unity without delay. We strive always to be slow to take offense and ready for reconciliation. (Romans 12:16; Ephesians 4:32; 1 Peter 5:5; 1 Thessalonians 5:13; Matthew 5:25; 18:15)
3. Refuse to complain and grumble against one another choosing instead to be patient, admonishing the idle, encouraging the fainthearted, and helping the weak. (James 5:9; 1 Thessalonians 5:11)
4. Hold fast with one another to the confession of our hope by not forsaking regular assembly. Whether meeting corporately, in small groups or for individual discipleship, we commit to stir one another up to love and good works all the more as we see the day of our Lord approaching. (Hebrews 10:23-25, Acts 2:46)
5. Bear the burdens of one another and serve each other with love. Let us not close our heart to a brother in need, but give to him as to the Lord. We do this so that we may demonstrate the love of Christ in deed and in truth. (1 John 3:16-18, Galatians 6:2, Matthew 25:40, Galatians 5:13)

6. Faithfully lift one another up in prayer asking the Lord to fill us with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom, that we might bear fruit in every good work and endure in patience with joy, giving thanks in all things to the father. (James 3:17, 1 Corinthians 1:4-9, Colossians 1:9-14, Philippians 1:27)
7. Live in a manner worthy of the Gospel, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, remembering that we have been buried with Christ in baptism and raised with him to walk in a new and holy life. (Romans 12:2, Romans 6:1-4, Romans 8:5)
8. To passionately preach the good news in our homes, our work places, our city and all nations, earnestly desiring that none should perish but that all would come to repentance and salvation. (Acts 20:24, Romans 1:16, 1 Corinthians 1:17, 1 Corinthians 9:16)
9. Steward faithfully the resources that God has given us; using our time, talents, finances and spiritual gifts to glorify God and edify the body. We resolve, by grace, to cheerfully, sacrificially, and consistently support the ministry and mission of City Fellowship. (2 Corinthians 9:7, Mark 12:41-44)
10. Labor to make the service of our leaders a joy and not a burden, submitting to the teaching of the elders and the discipline of the congregation with thanksgiving, believing that on the last day an accounting will be required of those charged with the oversight of souls. (Hebrews 13:17, Matthew 18:15)
11. Submit to the authority of the scriptures as the final arbiter on all issues. (Psalm 119; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21)

May the love of God the Father, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.