

# COURSE CONTENTS

The **Hope Church Discovery Course** guides you to discover your redemptive purpose and live the life God created for you. The Course is made up of four steps that equip you to know God, connect to Him and His Church, discover your purpose, and serve others.

## Step **ONE**: Know Him and Follow Him

Learn the spiritual journey that God has for each of us: to follow Jesus.

## Step **TWO**: Connect to Him and His Family

Explore the ministry of Hope Church, and find out how to connect with our church.

## Step **THREE**: Discover Purpose

Discover your personality and gifts and see how they indicate your purpose in life and your best fit in ministry.

## Step **FOUR**: Commit to His church Ownership

Become an "owner" at Hope Church. Connect to the opportunities available at Hope Church so that you can live out your purpose by using your gifts to serve others.

**DISCOVERY**

**STEP**

**01**

## KNOW HIM AND FOLLOW HIM

### OUR PRAYER FOR YOU:

"I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people." Ephesians 1:17-18

"I ask the God of our Master, Jesus Christ, the God of glory—to make you intelligent and discerning in knowing him personally, your eyes focused and clear, so that you can see exactly what it is he is calling you to do, grasp the immensity of this glorious way of life he has for his followers."

Ephesians 1:17-18 Message

### SIN SEPARATES US FROM GOD

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you.'" Matthew 7:21-23

*Sin breaks our close relationship with God. It causes us to fear God and try to live our lives outside of His will.*

"It's your sins that have cut you off from God. Because of your sins, he has turned away and will not listen anymore."

Isaiah 59:2

**DISCOVERY**

# WHAT IS SIN?

If sin separates us from God then we need to know what it is in order to avoid it?  
How does the Bible define it?

The Old Testament was written in Hebrew and New Testament in Greek. The Hebrew translations of the Greek words for "sin" revolve largely around two major concepts. The first is transgression. To transgress means "to step across" or "to go beyond a set boundary or limit". This concept can be compared to a rugby field with lines defining the boundaries within which the game is played. When a player crosses over those boundary lines, they have committed a "transgression" and have gone out of bounds. Limits are set that define the playing area, and players are to stay within the limits of that area.

Most other translations of "sin" in the Bible involve a second concept, "to miss the mark." Again, to use a sports analogy, if a player aims for the goal and misses, how many points does he get? None. He missed the goal, missed the mark at which he was aiming.

This concept of heading in a direction along a path and leaving the path and not reaching the destination is what sin is.

If we transgress, which means to cross over a set boundary or limit, then we must have a boundary or limit to cross over. If we miss the mark, we must have a mark, target or standard to miss. Sin is to transgress those boundaries God has set for us or to miss the standard and target He set for us.

Various scriptures in the Bible define the boundaries and standards God has set for us. They define the playing field on which we are to live our lives. They also define the goal we are to aim for. These are not arbitrary do's and don'ts. Instead they show the way God lives. They show the principles by which He lives and the same standard and purpose He expects us to live by and for.

When we leave His plan for our lives and choose to live our lives by our own standards and purposes and by what we think is right in our own eyes, we sin.

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"

Romans 3:23

"The wages of sin is death, BUT the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans

6:23

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\_\_\_\_\_ has sinned and the result of that sin is eternal separation from God that results in death. This death is physical, spiritual and eternal.

“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this:

While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

Romans 5:8

“God is on one side and all people are on the other side, and Christ Jesus is between them to bring them together, by giving His life for all mankind.” - 1 Timothy 2:5-6 TLB

God has already done His part to restore our relationship to Him. He took the initiative. Now He waits for each of us to individually repent.

## **WHAT IS REPENTANCE?**

When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:37-38

“Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out”

Acts 3:19

When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, “So then, even to Gentiles God has granted repentance that leads to life.”

Acts 11:18

In the Bible, the word “repent” means “to change one’s mind.” The Bible also tells us that true repentance will result in a change of actions. Acts 26:20 says, “I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds.”

*Repentance therefore is a change of mind that results in a change of action.*

To repent, in relation to salvation, is to change your mind in regard to Jesus Christ, to recognize that He is both Lord and Christ. To admit that you have missed the mark, sinned, and lived for a purpose contrary to the one He created you for. That you have strayed from the path and that you choose to return to live as He desires and for His purpose and not your own.

**Repentance and faith** can be understood as “two sides of the same coin.” It is impossible to place your faith in Jesus Christ as the Savior without first changing your mind about who He is and what He has done. Biblical repentance, in relation to salvation, is changing your mind from rejection of Christ to faith in Christ.

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” Ephesians 2:8-10

“Can we boast, then, that we have done anything to be accepted by God? No, because our acquittal is not based on obeying the law. It is based on faith. So we are made right with God through faith and not by obeying the law. After all, is God the God of the Jews only? Isn’t he also the God of the Gentiles? Of course he is. There is only one God, and he makes people right with himself only by faith, whether they are Jews or Gentiles.” Romans 3:27-30 NLT

Placing your faith in Christ and repenting will change your belief in such a way that the result will be a change in behavior.

“Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness. But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin. No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.” 1 John 3:4-6

## **HOW DO I BECOME A CHRISTIAN**

- 1.** \_\_\_\_\_ that God has not been first place in our life, and ask Him to forgive your sins.

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”

1 John 1:9

- 2.** \_\_\_\_\_ that Jesus died to pay for your sins and that He rose from the dead and is alive today.

“If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved.” Romans 10:9-10 NLT

“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name [Jesus] under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.”

Acts 4:12

“We believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.”

1 Thessalonians 4:14

**3.** \_\_\_\_\_ God’s free gift of salvation. Don’t try to earn it.

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.” Ephesians 2:8-9

Our relationship with God is not restored by anything we do, but on the basis of what Jesus already did for us.

**4.** \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus to come into your life and be the Lord of your Life.

“But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God.”

John 1:12-13 (NLT)

**5.** \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus day by day by choosing to submit to His will and not your own.

“Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.”

John 12:26

**You can take these steps by praying a simple prayer of commitment to God:**

“Dear Jesus, thank you for creating me and for loving me even when I’ve ignored you and gone my own way. I realize I need you in my life, and I’m sorry for my sins. I ask you to forgive me. Thank you for dying on the cross for me. As much as I know how, I want to follow You from now on. Please come into my life and make me a new person inside. I accept your free gift of salvation. Please help me to follow you now as a Christian.”

“Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

Romans 10:13

# WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE GIVE OUR LIVES TO CHRIST?

## 1. We are forgiven from all our sins.

"You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins. He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross." Colossians 2:13-14

No matter what we have done, God forgives us and gives us a fresh start.

## 2. We become a new creation.

"This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!" 2 Corinthians 5:17

We are a brand new spiritual creation. All that was attached to our old life no longer counts, and debt/curse or consequence because of previous actions no longer counts against us.

## 3. We are taken from the Kingdom of darkness to the Kingdom of Light.

"For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, who purchased our freedom and forgave our sins." Colossians 1:13-14

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. Romans 8:1

When a person is born again, they don't have to be delivered—they are delivered. God has delivered us from the power of darkness and translated us into the Kingdom of His Son. The believer's responsibility is to renew their mind in the Word of God, give no place to the devil by separating themselves from sin and temptation, and resist the devil in the authority of the Name of Jesus. The Holy Spirit will give the believer the power and help they need to overcome any sin, addiction, or depression.

## 4. We are adopted as His Children and become part of his family.

"4 But when the right time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, subject to the law. 5 God sent him to buy freedom for us who were slaves to the law, so that he could adopt us as his very own children. 6 And because we are his children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, prompting us to call out, "Abba, Father." 7 Now you are no longer a slave but God's own child. And since you are his child, God has made you his heir." Galatians 4:4-7



## 5. The Holy Spirit comes to live inside of us.

“And when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own\* by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago. The Spirit is God’s guarantee that he will give us the inheritance he promised and that he has purchased us to be his own people. He did this so we would praise and glorify him.”

Ephesians 1:13-14

When we give our lives to God, at the point of salvation, God comes to live inside of us through the person of Holy Spirit.

## **CHRISTIANITY IS ABOUT RELATIONSHIP AND NOT RELIGION.**

I can try to \_\_\_\_\_ or I can receive what has \_\_\_\_\_.

I can try to earn \_\_\_\_\_ or I can receive \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

Romans 5:8

I can obey out of \_\_\_\_\_ or I can obey out of \_\_\_\_\_.

“If you love me, you will obey my commands.”

John 14:15 NCV

# WATER BAPTISM

## **A. Water baptism is an important step in your Christian walk.**

### **IT IS A PRIORITY FOR ALL WITHOUT EXCLUSION.**

Water baptism is not a rather off-beat option for Christians who attend certain types of churches like a Baptist or a Pentecostal church, but is an important part of every Christian's destiny in God. Before His ascension to heaven, Jesus gave His disciples special instructions to disciple the nations of the world. Baptism is a vital part of the process of making people disciples of Christ.

"Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit." -Matthew 28:19 NL

### **IT SHOULD TAKE PLACE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.**

The New Testament record of water baptism indicates that new Christians were baptised as soon as possible after their salvation. E.g. the Ethiopian Eunuch was baptised in the first stretch of water he came to after he had given his life to Christ. (Acts 8: 35-39) People did not wait until they were ready i.e. had achieved a certain level of holiness or perfection. Another example of immediate baptism was the Philippian jailor and his family. The family was baptised at night straight after they had given their lives to Christ and fixed Paul's wounds. (Acts 16: 31-33)

## **B. Water baptism is not infant baptism or 'sprinkling'.**

### **IT IS NOT THE SAME AS THE CHURCH TRADITION OF "CHRISTENING" INFANTS.**

Before discussing the important aspects of water baptism, let us clear up certain misunderstandings and confusion. Some people mistakenly believe that they have fulfilled Christ's requirement to be baptised if they were "christened" or "sprinkled" as an infant. They rely on the fact that they were "christened" and then "confirmed" at a later stage as proof of their acceptance by God as His children. The truth is that no scriptural support can be found for either of these institutions.

Baptism follows a 'mature' decision to accept Christ into your life. Before you are baptised you must have repented of your sin and made a conscious decision to accept Jesus as your Saviour. You should have invited Him to become your Lord and you no longer live a lifestyle of deliberate sin. A baby or young child cannot make this decision. Having said this, there is no age restriction when it comes to water baptism. The child's parents should pray before making a decision to allow their child to be baptised and must be satisfied that their child is old enough to fully understand both salvation and water baptism.

## **C. Water baptism is full immersion in water.**

### **THE GREEK WORD USED IN SCRIPTURE DESCRIBES FULL IMMERSION.**

The word 'baptise' comes from the Greek word "baptizo" which means to dip under, dip in, sink, immerse, plunge, cover in liquid. To be baptised means to be fully immersed in water.

### **THE EXPERIENCES OF BIBLE CHARACTERS CONFIRM FULL IMMERSION BAPTISM.**

The description of both Jesus' and the Ethiopian Eunuch's baptism refers to them going down into the water and then coming up out of the water.

(Matthew 3: 16; Acts 8: 38-39) Water was not sprinkled on them.

### **OUR PRACTICE.**

When you are baptised in our church, we dip you into the water and bring you straight back up again. This is called full immersion baptism. Today, people get baptised in rivers, in the sea, in swimming pools and in baptismal fonts in church buildings; any place where there is enough water to fully immerse the person who is being baptised.

## **D. Who should get baptised?**

### **ALL TRUE BELIEVERS.**

Baptism is available to any believer who has received eternal life through repentance of sin and a saving faith in Jesus Christ. (Acts 2: 38)

### **THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN THEIR HEART AND CONFESS PUBLICLY.**

In Romans 10:9-10 we read that exercising the faith that leads to salvation has a two-fold requirement: a heart belief that Jesus is your Saviour and Lord and a public confession of faith in Christ. For this reason we ask all people who are going to be baptised to first make a public confession of their faith in Christ. This may be recorded on a video which is shown to the congregation before the actual baptism or take the form of a live testimony before the church congregation.

### **THOSE WHO BELIEVE THE GOSPEL MESSAGE.**

Philip, the evangelist, baptised people who believed the Good News about the Kingdom. (Acts 8:12) Also, many Corinthians heard the gospel message from Paul and were baptised. (Acts 18: 7-8)

## **E. The meaning of baptism. (It is symbolic of many things)**

### **IT DOES NOT PROVIDE SALVATION.**

Ephesians 2:8-9 makes it clear that a man is saved by grace through faith, without works (including baptism). I.e. there are no actions, rituals or good things that will please God and earn salvation. So, if you do not believe that Jesus died for your sins and truly repent of them, the only thing that will happen to you is that you will get wet!

### **IT IS A SYMBOL OF FORGIVENESS OF SIN.**

John the Baptist gave the believers baptism its basic meaning when he baptised people in the Jordan River. In Luke 3:3 we read that John instructed the people who followed him to be baptised to show that they had repented and turned to God to receive forgiveness of sins.

## **IT IS A SYMBOL OF NEW PURPOSE.**

Baptism symbolises the truth that you are crossing over from a life of wandering aimlessly and serving self into a life of great purpose, serving God. Jesus travelled from Galilee to the Jordan River to be baptised by John because the Jordan River was a national symbol of one of the most significant moments in Jewish history: the moment that the Israelites crossed over from the wilderness, and all it represented, into the Promised Land. (Matthew 3:13)

NB. We receive a brand new purpose for our lives when we enter God's kingdom.

## **IT SYMBOLISES EVERY CHRISTIAN'S SPIRITUAL UNION WITH CHRIST IN HIS DEATH, BURIAL AND RESURRECTION TO NEW LIFE.**

Christ's death, burial and resurrection speak of the most amazing achievements in the history of the universe. If we can grasp and understand that God has destined us, His children, to share in these achievements, our lives will never be the same again. This is discussed in Romans 6:3-8:

- We identify with Christ's death when we go under the water. Not only are our sins forgiven

but our past is no longer held against us. Our sins have been nailed to the cross and are now forgotten by God. The old life dies or is extinguished.

### **● WE IDENTIFY WITH CHRIST'S BURIAL.**

The water is symbolic of the grave and for that reason must cover us completely during the baptism. Just as Christ's physical body was buried, so our sinful nature or habitual way of sinning was buried forever when we gave our lives to Christ. Sin loses its power inside of us and we are no longer a slave to it, as described in Romans 7:14-20. When someone is held under water for a very brief moment this action symbolises the truth that everything relating to the old sinful life is gone forever – by faith.

## ● WE IDENTIFY WITH CHRIST'S RESURRECTION.

In His grace and mercy, God allows us to identify with Jesus' resurrection from the dead and ascension to heaven. We are "raised up" into a new spiritual relationship with God - with a new nature and life focus. We have immediate access to God and are able to exercise God's power and authority in our ministry. This is symbolised by the "coming up and out" of the baptismal waters. Because we have been raised to new life, we should direct our focus upwards to the throne of God and think about things that relate to the heavenly Kingdom such as overcoming the attack of the evil one, extending the Kingdom of God and building the church in every community - from a position of authority and spiritual strength. -

Colossians 3:1-2

## **BAPTISM IS A PUBLIC DECLARATION.**

Baptism is a triumphant, public declaration that we are disciples of Jesus Christ and live our lives according to His instructions. It declares to the community not only that we have received eternal life, but that we have submitted ourselves to the "Lordship" of Christ and are committed to His service, notwithstanding trials and difficulties.

## **F. Why should we be baptised?**

### **IT IS A COMMAND IN THE BIBLE.**

In the "Great Commission" Jesus instructed, not suggested, that believers be baptised. Why is it vitally important to be obedient? If anyone is going successfully grow as an obedient follower of Jesus, he must surely be willing to submit to the very first act of obedience that is required of a follower of Jesus? I.e. if a person is disobedient in the first point of the new Christian Life, he is more likely to refuse to obey other Biblical instructions that come his way in his Christian life.

### **JESUS HIMSELF WAS BAPTISED.**

Jesus, himself, provided the perfect example of the importance of being baptised. His baptism is mentioned in three of the four Gospels. (Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22) John the Baptist was embarrassed at being asked by Jesus to baptise Him but Jesus insisted on going through with it, despite John's embarrassment. NB. Jesus was not baptised because He had repented of sin but as a demonstration of God's approval of John's method of baptism. It was an act to fulfill all righteousness in the sight of God. So, by being baptised, Jesus identified Himself with all believers, who have no righteousness of their own, but have now received His righteousness. -2 Corinthians 5:21

New Testament believers everywhere obeyed this command and practiced the ordinance of adult baptism.

Read Acts 2:35; Acts 8:38-39; Acts 9:18 and Acts 10:47-48. The apostle Paul gave his life to Christ whilst on the Damascus Road but he was blinded during his interaction with Jesus. The moment he received his sight back, he got up and was baptised.

## **Conclusion**

Do not delay if you have not yet been baptised in water.

It is a very exciting step in your Christian experience which always brings the blessing of God. It is a triumphant confirmation that the old life has truly passed away and has been replaced by a new, satisfying, everlasting life.

(2 Corinthians 5:17; John 1:12- 13; John 4:13-14). You will declare to everyone that sin no longer has a hold over your life and that you mean business with God! -Romans 6:11-14

It is surely a significant moment in your spiritual development!

**STEP**

**02**



## CONNECT WITH GOD AND HIS FAMILY

"[I pray]...that the eyes of your heart be enlightened [focused and clear]."

Ephesians 1:17-18

"Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed." James 5:16

Explore the ministry of Hope Church, and find out how to connect with our church.

### OUR HOPE FOR YOU

Today our hope is to help you learn and put into practice what we believe are four essential habits of ever follower of Jesus. It is through these habits that we develop a deep relationship with Christ.

"So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness." Colossians 2:6-7

### UNDERSTANDING BIBLICAL CHRISTIANITY

"And for an entire year they met with the church and taught considerable numbers; and the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch." Acts 11:26 (NASB)

Before followers of Jesus were called "Christians", they were known as disciples. As disciples, we develop a deep relationship with Christ through:

#### BIBLE STUDY AND PRAYER

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching ... and to prayer."

Acts 2:42

#### FELLOWSHIP WITH OTHER BELIEVERS

"They devoted themselves to...fellowship."

Acts 2:42

**DISCOVERY**

## LIVING A SPIRIT-LED LIFE

"Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the Apostles." Acts 2:43

### GIVING OF OURSELVES

"They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need"

Acts 2:45

## HABIT ONE: BIBLE READING & PRAYER

"The whole Bible was given to us by inspiration from God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives; it straightens us out and helps us do what is right. It is God's way of making us well prepared at every point, fully equipped to do good to everyone." 2

Timothy 3:16-17 (LB)

A vibrant relationship with God is sustained through Bible study and prayer.

## HOW DO I GET MORE FROM MY BIBLE?

***I must \_\_\_\_\_ its authority.***

We believe that the Holy Bible, and only the Bible, is the authoritative Word of God. It alone is the final authority in determining all doctrinal truths. In its original writing, it is inspired, infallible and inerrant.

\_\_\_\_\_ God's Word with an open heart.

"The earth is filled with your love, Lord; teach me your decrees."

Psalms 119:64

\_\_\_\_\_ to God's word with obedience.

"Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says."

James 1:22

***I must \_\_\_\_\_ its truths.***

\_\_\_\_\_ God's Word.

"Faith comes by hearing the word of God."

Romans 10:17

\_\_\_\_\_ God's Word.

"Happy is the one who reads this book ... and obeys what is written in it!"

Revelation 1:3 (GN)

\_\_\_\_\_ God's Word.

"They accepted the message eagerly and studied the Scriptures every day."

Acts 17:11 (Ph)

\_\_\_\_\_ God's Word.

"Guard my words as your most precious possession. Write them down, and also keep them deep within your heart." Proverbs 7:2-3 (LB)

\_\_\_\_\_ on God's Word.

"(Those) who are always meditating on His Laws ... are like trees along a river bank bearing fruit ... they never wither and whatever they do prospers." Psalm 1:2-3 (LB)

***I must \_\_\_\_\_ its principles.***

"Once you know these things you will be blessed if you do them."

John 13:17

*Gather one truth from your reading to reflect on.  
Record what you learn in a journal or share it with someone.*

"Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says." James 1:22

### **Talking with God**

"Always be joyful. Never stop praying."

1 Thessalonians 5:16-17(NLT)

Jesus exemplified a personal relationship with God through prayer that gave Him great strength. Every person who has ever been effective in service for God has developed this habit. The only way to be a healthy Christian is to spend time with God daily through prayer.

**In my daily prayer time, I am:**

\_\_\_\_\_ devotion to God.

“(Hezekiah) was successful, because everything he did ... he did in a spirit of complete devotion to his God.” 2 Chronicles 31:21 (GN)

\_\_\_\_\_ direction from God.

“Show me the path where I should go, O Lord; point out the right road for me to walk. Lead me.” Psalm 25:4-5 (LB)

\_\_\_\_\_ in my relationship with God.

“Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.” John 17:25-26

**Use the model Jesus gave us.**

“One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When He finished, one of his disciples said to him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray.’” Luke 11:1

**This, then, is how you should pray:**

“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one, for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.” Matthew 6:9-13

Connect with God \_\_\_\_\_

“Our Father in heaven”

Run to \_\_\_\_\_

“Hallowed be your name”

Pray \_\_\_\_\_ first.

“Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven”

Depend on Him for \_\_\_\_\_

"Give us today our daily bread"

Keep your \_\_\_\_\_ with God and people.

"Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors"

\_\_\_\_\_ against the enemy.

"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."

\_\_\_\_\_ in God's ability.

"For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever."

## **HABIT TWO: FELLOWSHIP WITH OTHER BELIEVERS**

Let us not give up the habit of meeting together, as some are doing. Instead, let us encourage one another." Hebrews 10:25 (GN)

God never intended for us to go through life alone. Throughout the Bible, we see the importance of being in community. **In fact, authentic life-change happens in the context of relationships.**

At Hope Church, we believe our church must grow LARGER and SMALLER at the same time.

"They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved." Acts 2:46-47

"(They met) day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house."  
Acts 5:42

"You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house."  
Acts 20:20

How can our church grow larger yet maintain close relationships?

Every person needs to be a part of a \_\_\_\_\_.

## WHY ARE LIFE GROUPS (SMALL GROUPS) IMPORTANT?

Life Groups provide opportunities for:

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*I need people to strengthen and balance the Word of God in my life.*

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*I need people who really know me.*

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*I need people to pray for me personally.*

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*I need people who will protect me.*

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*I need people with whom I can share my story.*

"So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples." John

13:34-35 (NLT)

## HOW DO I GET CONNECTED WITH A LIFE GROUP?

### **1. Find a group**

Find a Life group online at [www.hopechurch.org.za/get-involved/life-groups/](http://www.hopechurch.org.za/get-involved/life-groups/) or visit the information desk during a Sunday service.

### **2. Commit for a season**

New groups start every term. All Life Groups are open to new members throughout the year.

### **3. Experience a life change**

You'll never fully experience all that Hope Church has to offer until you connect in a Life group! Small groups were vital to the first century church's growth, and they are just as vital now.

## HABIT THREE:

## LIVING A SPIRIT-LED LIFE

"May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all."

2 Corinthians 13:14

Having close relationships with other people is only part of God's plan for our lives. He desires to be our most intimate friend.

### WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

**RUWACH** – a wind, breath, a violent exhalation, blast of breath.

Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. Genesis 1:2

**PNEUMA** – a current of air, blast of breath, a strong breeze.

"The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life." John 6:63 (NIV 1984)

The Holy Spirit is a \_\_\_\_\_

"I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever."

John 14:16 (NASB)

The Third Person in the \_\_\_\_\_

"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you." John 14:26 (NASB)

### THE HOLY SPIRIT'S ROLE IN OUR LIVES

"Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, "Which," He said, "you heard of from Me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now...you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.""

Acts 1:4-8 (NASB)

The Holy Spirit **enables** us to know God's:

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"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever." John 14:16 (KJV)

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"But now I am going to Him who sent Me; and none of you asks Me, 'Where are You going?' But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. "But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment." John 16:5-8 (NASB)

The Holy Spirit **empowers** us to live with Christ like:

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"For the Lord is the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—who is the Spirit— makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image." 2 Corinthians 3:17-18(NLT)

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control."  
Galatians 5:22-23 (NASB)

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"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8

The Holy Spirit **equips** us with:

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“There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit... Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.” 1 Corinthians 12:4-11

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“In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below... And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” Acts 2:17-21

\_\_\_\_\_ for my life.  
\_\_\_\_\_ to see the next steps.  
\_\_\_\_\_ to effect an eternal result.

### **HOW DO I LIVE A SPIRIT-LED LIFE?**

**Remove** all \_\_\_\_\_.

“Peter replied, ‘Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’” Acts 2:38

**Request** the \_\_\_\_\_.

“Now suppose one of your fathers is asked by his son for a fish; he will not give him a snake instead of a fish, will he? Or if he is asked for an egg, he will not give him a scorpion, will he? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?” Luke 11:11-13 (NASB)

**Receive** Him \_\_\_\_\_.

“Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.”

Peter 4:10

**Relate** to Him \_\_\_\_\_.

"The amazing grace of the Master, Jesus Christ, the extravagant love of God, the intimate friendship of the Holy Spirit, be with all of you."  
2 Corinthians 13:14 (Message)

**Release** your \_\_\_\_\_ with confidence.

"Since you are eager to have spiritual gifts, try to excel in gifts that build up the church." 1  
Corinthians 14:12

## **HABIT FOUR: GIVING OF OURSELVES**

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."  
John 3:16

The Gospel is the ultimate demonstration of God's generous nature towards mankind.  
The Bible consistently teaches that God blesses us so that we may bless others.

### **AREAS OF GIVING**

Give of our \_\_\_\_\_.

"Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil." Ephesians 5:15-16 (NASB)

Give of our \_\_\_\_\_.

"If your gift is... giving, give generously." Romans 12:8 (NLT)

"Yes, you should tithe, but do not neglect the more important things"  
Matthew 23:23 (NLT)

### **BENEFITS OF GIVING**

**1.** Giving draws us \_\_\_\_\_ to God.

"Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Matthew 6:21

**2.** Giving is the remedy to \_\_\_\_\_.

“Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to be generous and willing to share. In this way they may take hold of the life that is truly life.” 1 Timothy 6:17-19

**3.** Giving strengthens our \_\_\_\_\_.

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding... Honor the Lord by giving him the first part of your income, and he will fill your barns to overflowing.” Prov. 3:5, 9-10

“Give and it will be given to you... For with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.”  
Luke 6:38

**4.** Giving is an investment in \_\_\_\_\_

“Give happily to those in need, and always be ready to share whatever God has given you. By doing this, you will be storing up real treasure for yourselves in heaven - it is the only safe investment for eternity!” 1 Timothy 6:18-19 (LB)

**BIBLICAL GENEROSITY IS:**

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“For if the willingness is there, your gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one doesn’t have.”  
2 Corinthians 8:12

“Each one should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion.”  
2 Corinthians 9:7a

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“...for God loves a cheerful giver!”  
2 Corinthians 9:7b

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“They gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service.” 2 Corinthians 8:3-4

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“Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly; and whoever sows generously also will reap generously.”

2 Corinthians 9:6

“They gave themselves first to the Lord.”

2 Corinthians 8:5

## **ESSENTIAL HABITS OF A HEALTHY BELIEVER**

Personally and Corporately

“But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.”

Psalm 33:11

“For when David had served God’s purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep.”

Acts 13:36

**Bible Reading and Prayer**

**Fellowship with Others**

**Living a Spirit-led Life**

**Giving of Ourselves**

**DISCOVERY**

**STEP**

**03**

## DISCOVER PURPOSE

"[I pray]...that you may know the hope to which he has called you."

Ephesians 1:17-18

"We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us."

Romans 12:6

"All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it."

1 Corinthians 12:27 NLT

*God has a plan for YOU.*

God made you for a \_\_\_\_\_. Our prayer for you is that you will discover the reason He made you and step into His purposes for your life.

## FOUR KEYS TO DISCOVERING YOUR PURPOSE

### KEY #01:

### IT'S NOT ABOUT YOU

The purpose of your life is far greater than your own personal fulfillment, your piece of mind, even your happiness. If you want to know why you were born you must begin with God. You were made by God and for His purpose.

Unfortunately we often ask self-centered questions like, "What are my goals, my ambitions, my dreams for my future?" By doing this we will never live a fulfilled life.

"For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

Ephesians 2:10

We were made to do \_\_\_\_\_.

Our individual purpose can only be realized when we understand that our part fits into His overall plan for the world.

We should rather be asking questions like, "What are God's goals, what are His dreams and plans for the future and how do I fit into them?"

"**Missio dei**" is a Latin Christian theological term that can be translated as the "**sending of God**" or the "**mission of God**". Since sin and death entered the world in the Garden of Eden, God has been on a mission to rescue mankind. His plan has been to form a willing redemptive people that would be His hands, His feet and His voice in order to carry out His redemptive plan to save a lost and dying world. This is the meta-narrative (main story) of the Bible. Although throughout the Bible numerous smaller stories of individuals and groups are told, they all find their place in this over-arching story.

## KEY #02: YOUR PART OF THE BODY

"The Lord had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you.<sup>2</sup> "I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. <sup>3</sup> I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you". Genesis 12:1-3

"Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." Exodus 19:5-6

One of the Theological terms used to describe a part of this concept is the term "Priesthood of all Believers". God has chosen us, his followers to carry out His work on earth. His intention was that we do this **together**.

We were made to do Gods work \_\_\_\_\_.

"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light." 1 Peter 2:9

God is on a mission to seek and save the lost.  
The reason why the church exists is **so that others may live**.

The church is not a club or a social gathering to entertain Christians, but a movement of God's people for His purpose. This purpose is to bring life and hope to a lost and dying world.

"His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Ephesians 3:10-11

*The church is not man's idea, but God's eternal plan.*

Unfortunately there are many incorrect ideas and forms of what the church is meant to be.

"Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that, if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth."

1 Timothy 3:14-15

"Christ is also the head of the church, which is his body..."

Colossians 1:18

**According to these two verses the church is:**

### **"God's household"**

A place where His family gathers and live

### **"Church"**

In the original Greek language that the New Testament was written in, the word "**ekklesia**" means the gathering of the citizens of a city or country for a particular purpose (church). For the Christian this means the "**gathering of the redeemed**" (those that have accepted Christ). This gathering is more than just "two or more gathered in His name". The Bible describes certain minimum requirements before any gathering can be defined as a church. Some of these include the presence of Biblical leadership, preaching, discipline, ordinances and mission.

### **"Pillar and foundation of truth" in society.**

This basically means that God's intention is that the church be the light bearers, the holders of truth, the vehicle through which He intends to bring His message to the world.



## **“His Body”**

We are all part of His body, each having our own function and design however each only finding its purpose when it is connected to and working with the rest of the Body. For example, an eye or toe can only work when it is connected and is useless on its own. In the same way we can only truly function and find our purpose as we intentionally connect to the rest of the body. (1 Corinthians 12:12-31)

## **KEY #03: GOD MADE YOU UNIQUELY**

Our hope is that you take a step towards understanding how your uniquely designed personality, coupled with the spiritual gifts, talents, passions and experiences help reveal a fulfilling path to your destiny.

Proverbs 25:2 says “it is God’s privilege to conceal things and our privilege to discover them.”

Together, let’s discover all that God has planned for our generation and make a positive difference for the Kingdom.

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.”

Ephesians 2:10 (NASB)

“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father.” John 14:12 (NASB)

## **YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS**

“Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant.” 1 Corinthians 12:1

### **SPIRITUAL GIFTS ARE NOT**

#### **1. \_\_\_\_\_**

We all have natural abilities that we’ve learned from those around us regardless of Christian faith. We are all called to have character and our gifts should produce the nature of Jesus Christ in each person. A person should not say he has the “gift of peace” when we are all encouraged to develop that characteristic. Spiritual gifts offer opportunities for us to exemplify Christ.

## 2. \_\_\_\_\_

Spiritual gifts often lead to titles or positions but a person may have the gift without the role or the role without the gift. Regardless, we should serve whenever we are given the opportunity. Working in the area of your gifting will allow you to “be” the person that God has called you to be rather than just “doing” good things.

## 3. \_\_\_\_\_

Spiritual gifts are endowments given by God to His people for accomplishing His purpose on the earth.

*Spiritual gifts are given for the glory of God.*

“Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts... try to excel in gifts that build up the church.” 1 Corinthians 14:1

### **HOW DO I RECEIVE SPIRITUAL GIFTS?**

- 1.** Accept Jesus Christ as Lord of your life.
- 2.** Acquire faith and truth in the area of spiritual gifts.
- 3.** Apply yourself to learning about spiritual gifts.
- 4.** Ask for the Lord to give you spiritual gifts.

Every believer in Jesus has been granted abilities that are empowered by the Holy Spirit. We are all born with various talents, but spiritual gifts are given to us when we become a Christian. The seeds of those gifts are often evident from birth, but the Holy Spirit empowers believers for ministry in supernatural ways.

It is possible to overrate spiritual gifts when try to discover our purpose. We can fail to examine the other aspects of how God has shaped us for His purposes. He has also given us passions, talents, a unique personality, and both positive and negative experiences from which to draw. It is also possible to underrate spiritual gifts by allowing our feelings of personal inadequacy to convince us that we couldn't possibly be “gifted” even though the Bible explicitly says that we are.

**DISCOVERY**

## KEY #04:

# GOD GUIDES A MOVING SHIP

**Move.** One of the most important keys to discovering your purpose, after praying, is to start.

It's like the rudder on a ship. It only can only change the direction of a ship if the ship is moving. So even if you start in the wrong direction, movement it key to finding you place in His purpose.

Take your next step and find somewhere to start volunteering in the church.

### TALK TO WISE BELIEVERS

Often the best way to determine how we are shaped to serve is to ask other believers who have had an opportunity to observe our lives and who can usually affirm things about us that we may not realize ourselves. I also think we serve best alongside others in a mutually sharpening relationship.

### ANSWER THE BIG "WHAT IF" QUESTION

If you could do anything for God knowing that resources wouldn't be a problem and with a guarantee of success, what would it be? Usually how we answer that question can propel us in the right direction. Don't stress about what your gift is, jump into something that appeals to you.

### JUMP IN AND GET YOUR FEET WET

In other words, begin serving. At Hope Church make it easy to get out of a particular ministry role once we're in it, we ask that you commit for at least one term to try and find your place . You are able to serve in a variety of areas until we discover that place that really fits with who you are. You will grow through this process of "trial and error" as you understand yourself better.

God has shaped you for significance and service. So launch out today, get started, and be flexible along the way allowing God to tweak your plans until you find that sweet, satisfying, kingdom-expanding and Christ-exalting niche for which you are divinely wired.

Your next step is to become an owner at Hope Church and to start volunteering. In this way you will discover your purpose.

"[I pray]...that you may grasp the immensity of this glorious way of life he has for his followers [in his holy people]."

Ephesians 1:17-18

"This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete." John 15:8, 11

"God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another."

1 Peter 4:10 NLT

**DISCOVERY**

**STEP**

**04**

## PURPOSE

*Our purpose is to reach people that are far from God & help them become fully devoted followers of Jesus. We do this by building a dynamic church in George that starts new churches & supports the Zambia Project.*

We exist SO OTHERS MAY LIVE!

### 1. TO BUILD A DYNAMIC CHURCH IN GEORGE.

We believe that a strong, growing and healthy church can ultimately be measured under 5 categories.

“**The Purpose Driven Life**” by Rick Warren addresses these in detail if you would like to understand them further.

#### WORSHIP

- This is primarily done personally.
- I.e. a healthy church is made up of healthy people that are personally and privately committed to spiritual disciplines and obedience to God.
- So we will encourage and equip, but if it doesn't start with that initial submission and desire to obey, please and honour God, there is nothing that the church can do.
- Worship is probably ultimately the culmination of the next four categories.

#### FELLOWSHIP

- You cannot grow in your love for God without growing in your love for people.
- God created us to live in community, as a body, encouraging and strengthening one another.
- Therefore, we continue in our endeavor to create opportunities for people to connect and grow in relationships through Life Groups, serving together, courses, missions trips, etc.

- NB! We try to facilitate the development of relationships, but we cannot guarantee them. This will happen partly in the extent that each individual is willing to take advantage of the opportunities.

## **DISCIPLESHIP**

- Growing to be like Christ
- Again, much of this is done in private and is often not restricted to one formula. Much of discipleship happens as we respond to life and its various challenges.
- We're not aware of too many pleasant ways to grow. That is, we grow in an area as we are challenged / tested in that area. Obviously value is also found in rest periods of encouragement, etc. We also grow through risk, having our faith and obedience tested.
- Our responsibility is to make available opportunities for equipping you for life, e.g. sermons and Life Groups.
  - Growth is also facilitated through spiritual disciplines.
- Ultimately, though, growth will come through the application of what you learn and through obedience to God and His Word.

## **SERVICE**

- We believe that every believer has gifts that need to be discovered, developed and deployed.
- We should all help carry some part of the load according to our gifts and current circumstances, e.g.:
  - Time available;
  - Responsibilities;
  - Spiritual maturity.
- Serving is the giving of our time, talents and finances

## **EVANGELISM**

- You'll hear more about this under the other legs of our vision.

## 2. OUR APPROACH TO COMMUNITY

### UPLIFTMENT IS LOCAL CHURCHES.

"The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners."

Isaiah 61:1

"He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God." Proverbs 14:31

"He defended the cause of the poor and needy, and so all went well. Is that not what it means to know me?" declares the LORD."

Jeremiah 22:16

"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. 39And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

Matthew 22:36-40

## 3. STARTING NEW CHURCHES.

We plan to plant churches in the Southern Cape & beyond.

## 4. WE SUPPORT THE ZAMBIA PROJECT

### THE GREAT COMMISSION

Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Matthew 28:16-20

*"The Great Commission is not an option to consider, but a command to obey." - Hudson Tyler*



We believe that every believer has a role to play in reaching people that have never heard the truth about Jesus Christ. We provide opportunities for you to do this through getting involved with the work in Western Zambia.

## **VALUES**

### **1. EVERY PERSON IS VALUABLE**

Every person is valuable to God and therefore valuable to us. "A Person is still a person no matter how small." Dr Seuss

(Matt. 18:14; Matt. 25:45; 2 Peter 3:9)

### **2. TEAM**

"Team" is God's design for effective ministry. We do not compete, we complete. God didn't give all the gifts to any one person. It is vital that we work together in unity, complementing each other for God's plan to be accomplished. Every member is a minister that has gifts that need to be discovered, developed and deployed.

(Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; Psalm 133:1; Eph. 4:7-16; 1 Peter 2:4-9)

### **3. SERVANT LEADERSHIP**

We believe that core servant-leadership is to help others achieve their destiny in God. Because of this we will endeavor to identify and train emerging leaders who are fully committed to Christ and who will reach their generation with the Gospel.

(2 Timothy 2:2; 1 Timothy 3:1; Titus 1:5-9; Psalm 78:6, 7)

### **4. GENEROSITY**

God's desire for us is that we are generous on any and every occasion. We are blessed to bless. This includes our time, talent and treasure.

(2 Corinthians 9:10-11)

### **5. AUTHENTICITY**

Reflecting Christ in everyday life. We need to be who we say we are. In order for this to happen we need to walk in the light with one another and commit to a lifestyle of consistent spiritual growth with honest accountability. Therefore, discipleship through small groups (Life Groups), accountability, and open honesty is critical to maturing in our faith.

(1 John 1:5-10; Mark 12:29-31; Acts 2:44-47; 1 Peter 2:2; 1 Timothy 4:7, 8; Proverbs 27:17)

## **6. FAMILY**

We believe that the best gift any member of the church can bring is a strong marriage and a loving God-honoring family! We believe in the Godly priority that family comes before our ministry. We do not sacrifice our family on the altar of our ministry, but we also do not sacrifice our ministry on the altar of our family. The church is also a family and we are committed to coming together as a family of believers.

(Colossians 3:18-21; Ephesians 5:21-33)

## **7. COMMUNITY**

Relationship before ministry. We believe that genuine love and caring relationships are key to every endeavor and central to what it means to be the Church.

(1 Peter 3:8, 9; 1 Corinthians 13:8; Romans 16:17; Ephesians 4:3)

## **8. EXCELLENCE**

We believe that God is worthy of our very best. This is not perfection, but doing our best with what we've got and consistently looking for ways to improve.

(Psalm 78:72; Daniel 5:12; Colossians 3:17; Ecclesiastes 10:10)

## **9. RELEVANCE**

Being culturally relevant while remaining doctrinally pure. Everything about us says something about us and God. With this in mind, we believe that a simple presentation of Jesus Christ communicated in a relevant way will transform lives.

(1 Corinthians 9:22, 23; Acts 17:22-34)

## **10. FUN**

We laugh often. Fun opens the heart and refreshes the soul.

"A cheerful heart is good medicine."

Proverbs 17:22

(Psalm 126:2-3 NIV; Ecclesiastes 8:15)

# STYLE

Our highest goal as Christians is to obey and please God. Nothing pleases God more than seeing lost people saved from eternal damnation and being reconciled to him. (Luke 15) Therefore, in everything we do in our Sunday services, we aim to be as inclusive of visitors as possible. Although we are unapologetic about our message, we want visitors to be able to understand, enjoy and relate to it as much as possible.

We believe that one of our greatest acts of worship to God is helping lost people relate to Him.

Matthew 5 commands us to be salt and light to the world. We don't want the "light" of our church to be dimmed by anything unnecessary, e.g. outdated music, a superior tone in preaching, low standards of presentation, etc. Rather we aim to constantly improve our "light" and help facilitate people coming to God through the following:

- We want to develop a culture of genuine welcome, warmth and acceptance.  
We encourage every member to be "others-centered" on Sundays;
  - Relaxed and casual approach to dress and delivery of messages;
    - Preaching on relevant issues;
    - Contemporary relevant music;
      - Sense of humour;
- Hope Kids uses all means available to help children enjoy themselves and receive the message, i.e. wide range of pre-service activities, multi-media for teaching, relevant curriculum, relevant music, etc.
- The leadership style is one of team. Paul and Marinette are the senior leaders, yet they do not dominate every ministry, the pulpit or every decision made. Rather they work to raise up competent and effective leaders in different departments, the governing of the church and the running of services. We believe that leadership is an act of service not status.
- Similarly, our style of care is not restricted to Paul, Marinette and our full time staff. Life Groups are our primary means of caring for members in our church. Each Life Group Leader has been trained to care for their group. Matters that require more qualified attention are passed on to the Area Leader or further as is appropriate.

# OWNERSHIP

We believe that it is essential for every believer to be planted and rooted in a specific local church. - Psalm 92:12-15

Our desire is for owners not to simply be names on a database, but to be the core of Hope Church.

But God made our bodies with many parts, and he has put each part just where he wants it. What a strange thing a body would be if it had only one part! Yes, there are many parts, but only one body. The eye can never say to the hand, "I don't need you." The head can't say to the feet, "I don't need you." This makes for harmony among the members, so that all the members care for each other equally. If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it, and if one part is honored, all the parts are glad.

1 Corinthians 12:18-26

At Hope Church we believe that we can only experience the above kind of community, care and partnership with some form of commitment.

"Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ's body. We are all parts of his one body, and each of us has different work to do. And since we are all one body in Christ, we belong to each other, and each of us needs all the others. God has given each of us the ability to do certain things well.

Romans 12:4-6

## Why commit to a local church?

You will benefit from commitment in 2 ways:

- You will experience deeper community through commitment and consistency (deep relationships are not formed overnight).
- You are able to contribute to God's vision for the church. You are able to help take ownership, help carry the load and make your unique contribution.

## PHILOSOPHY OF VOLUNTEERISM

Purpose of full time ministers

He (Jesus) is the one who gave these gifts to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ, until we come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature and full grown in the Lord, measuring up to the full stature of Christ.

Under his direction, the whole body is fitted together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love. Ephesians 4:11-13 & 16

Full time ministers need to equip God's people to do His work and build up the church.

Therefore, we don't attempt to do all the work, e.g. our role is to raise up counselors and Life Group leaders to do the pastoring, not limiting our care to the amount that one pastor can do.

Hope Church will achieve its God-given purpose in proportion to its owners functioning as God meant them to.

We encourage owners to serve according to their passion, gifts, style and circumstances. But we also believe that for the most part a person will identify those things as they begin to serve and give themselves to different needs.

## **STATEMENT OF BELIEFS**

You will be provided with a copy of our Statement of Beliefs.

We have put a fence around our core doctrinal non-negotiables. Apart from those core doctrinal essentials, there are, however, many areas of faith and practice on which intelligent and godly believers hold different views. Owners of Hope Church are free to hold their own opinions and engage in respectful dialogue as long as they are not disruptive to the body. The following attitudes or behaviors, however, would signal a larger problem:

- Attempts to win over others / "crusading" for their viewpoint;
  - Divisiveness/disruptive behavior ;
- Holding to a position with such intensity that they will simply be unable to submit to the policies, decisions and leadership of the church.

There is a difference between failing in an area of temptation and repenting, versus choosing to live with a particular habit or sinful lifestyle e.g.:

- Pre-marital sexual relationship;
- Living a homosexual lifestyle;
- Pursuing criminal interests;
- Doing nothing to break an addiction.

It is important to note that our objective in discipline is always restoration!

## **EXPECTATIONS OF OWNERS**

- Must be born-again.
- Must exhibit fruit of one who is growing in a personal relationship with Christ (John 15).
- Must be in full agreement with our "statement of beliefs" (i.e. the non-negotiables).
  - Must be baptized.

"Those who accepted his message were baptized"

Acts 2:41

"Simon himself believed and was baptized."

Acts 8:13

"But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God ... they were baptized, both men and women."

Acts 8:12

- Must be committed to maintaining unity.
- Must be committed to church attendance, and Life Group as far as personal circumstances will allow.
  - Must support the church financially.
- Minors are accepted as owners if the parent's requests it, but if older than 18 they have to attend the ownership class themselves.

# HOW WE ARE GOVERNED

Hope Church has a full time Pastoral Team, including our Senior Pastors, who shepherd and lead our church. They take overall spiritual responsibility for our church. We also have a Board of Trustees who takes legal financial responsibility for our church. Both the members of our Pastoral Team and Board of Trustees lead Life Groups and volunteer in various capacities. We are grateful for their selfless service. Hope Church George is part of the Assemblies of God group as well as ARC, an Association of Related Churches within Southern Africa.

## GIVING FINANCIALLY

We believe in giving financially to the church, missions, and other needs for the following reasons:

### **1. It works towards breaking the mindset and stronghold of stinginess.**

For the love of money is at the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows." 1 Timothy 6:10

### **2. It shows faith in God.**

"He did it so you would never think that it was your own strength and energy that made you wealthy. Always remember that it is the LORD your God who gives you power to become rich, and he does it to fulfill the covenant he made with your ancestors."

Deut. 8:17-18

### **3. It shows obedience to God.**

"Should people cheat God? Yet you have cheated me! "But you ask, 'What do you mean? When did we ever cheat you?'" You have cheated me of the tithes and offerings due to me. You are under a curse, for your whole nation has been cheating me. Bring all the tithes into the storehouse so there will be enough food in my Temple. If you do," says the LORD Almighty, "I will open the windows of heaven for you. I will pour out a blessing so great you won't have enough room to take it in! Try it!

Let me prove it to you! Malachi 3:8-10

"How terrible it will be for you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are careful to tithe even the tiniest part of your income, but you ignore the important things of the law— justice, mercy, and faith. You should tithe, yes, but you should not leave undone the more important things. Matt 23:23

#### **4. It is God's plan to finance and mobilise ministry (you help build the kingdom).**

As much as the church is God's plan to be His hands and feet to and convey His message of hope to the world, tithes and offerings of God's people are His plan to finance it. Without the income the church receives from tithes and offerings, we would have to close shop.

The commitments of our people make it possible to take care of the monthly operating costs involved in growing a strong local church that ministers to our community. As our members give over and above those commitments, this enables us to give to missions and social projects.

Bottom line: the extent to which Christians give to well managed ministries, is generally the extent to which ministry takes place.

#### **5. You store up treasures in heaven.**

"Don't store up treasures here on earth, where they can be eaten by moths and get rusty, and where thieves break in and steal. Store your treasures in heaven, where they will never become moth-eaten or rusty and where they will be safe from thieves. Wherever your treasure is, there your heart and thoughts will also be.

Matthew 16:19-21

"Don't hoard treasure down here where it gets eaten by moths and corroded by rust or--worse!--stolen by burglars. Stockpile treasure in heaven, where it's safe from moth and rust and burglars. It's obvious, isn't it? The place where your treasure is, is the place you will most want to be, and end up being. MSG

But when you give to someone, don't tell your left hand what your right hand is doing. Give your gifts in secret, and your Father, who knows all secrets, will reward you. Matthew 6:3

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will



also reap generously. 7Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 2 Corinthians 9:6

The finance team oversees and manages the finances. We have external auditors that complete an annual audit.

“It is possible to give freely and become more wealthy, but those who are stingy will lose everything. The generous prosper and are satisfied; those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed.”  
Proverbs 11:24-25

## **HOW TO LEAVE THE CHURCH**

### **Good reasons for leaving the church:**

- Geographical relocation;
- Clear leading from God to join another church;
- Planting a church as a team from this church.

### **Reasons not to leave the church:**

- Hurts and offences;
  - Rebellion;
- Misunderstandings.

Rather we encourage you to work through the issues in a Biblical way. At least get advice from a leader that you trust. If it's the leader that has hurt you legitimately then address the situation accordingly.

As a matter of courtesy though, please inform us if you are going to leave.

**DISCOVERY**

DISCOVERY

# STATEMENT OF BELIEF

# STATEMENT OF BELIEFS

## **The Bible**

We believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God and is the only standard against which all things - books, prophecies, and sermons etc. - must be compared.

(2 Timothy 3:14-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21)

## **God**

There is only one true God, who has revealed himself as the eternally, self-existent "I Am", the creator of heaven and earth and the redeemer of mankind.

God is revealed as a 'Godhead', which is eternally co-equal and co-existent in three persons, not three Gods but one, not one person but three. They are the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

(Genesis 1:26; Mark 12:29; Matthew 28:19)

## **The Deity of Jesus Christ**

We believe that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. We uphold His absolute deity as well as His complete humanity. That is, in one person Jesus was fully God and fully man.

(Luke 1:30-35; John 1:1; Hebrews 2:9-16 and 1:5-12; Philippians 2:5-8)

## **The Resurrection**

- We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ was resurrected bodily from the dead and then ascended into heaven where he is now seated at the right hand of God the Father. He holds the position of absolute power and authority.

(Romans 8:34; Mark 12:36; 14:62; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, 20; Luke 22:69; Hebrews 8:1)

- We believe in the bodily resurrection of the human dead.

(1 Corinthians 15:12-19, 35-49; Revelation 20:11-15)

## **The Lordship of Christ**

We believe that Jesus Christ is the lord of everything and has been appointed as the head of the Church.

(Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:15-16; Colossians 1:18, 24)

## **The Second Advent of Christ**

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ will re-appear on earth in physical form in all his glory, majesty and power. This will be the Second Coming of Christ and is the "blessed hope" of the Church.

(Matthew 24:30; Luke 21:27; 1 Corinthians 15:15-53; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; Revelation 22:7; 1:7; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)

## **The Fall of Man**

Every living individual has sinned and is guilty before God. Mankind, by nature, is depraved and incapable of saving his soul through efforts of his own.

(Romans 3:10; Ephesians 2:8-10)

## **Redemption**

Through Jesus Christ mankind receives forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

- It must be noted that salvation is only found in Jesus. (John 14:6; Acts 4:12)
- Salvation is obtained because God loved us so much that He gave His only Son to die for us. (John 3:16)
  - Christ's death on the Cross has achieved the following:
    - Reconciliation to God (Romans 5:10)
    - Redemption through Christ's blood (Ephesians 1:7)
    - Justification i.e. 'being declared innocent' (Romans 3:24)

Salvation is received by us:

- Repentance which means turning from sin to God, a change of heart, attitude, thinking and lifestyle (Acts 2:38; 17:30)
- The exercise of faith, which is trusting in Jesus alone for salvation. Without faith it is impossible to please God! (Hebrews 11:6; John 5:24; Romans 5:1)
  - Accepting it as a free gift from God – Salvation is never deserved or earned. (Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:4-7)

## **The New Birth**

We cannot enter God's kingdom or receive eternal life without the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit who "creates us anew" and "baptizes" or places us into the Body of Christ.

(John 3:5-6; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 Corinthians 12:13; 1 Peter 1:22-25)

## **The Church**

We believe that the true Church consists of the whole community of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, who by faith have had their sins forgiven and have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit. We recognize that the true Church is not confined to any one local church or denomination.

(Hebrews 12:22-24; 1 John 1:7; Ephesians 3:3-10; 1 Corinthians 1:9; 10:32)

## **Baptism by Immersion**

We believe in the baptism by full immersion of all believers. We do not baptize infants but only people old enough to understand repentance and the implications of making Jesus Saviour and Lord. Baptism follows repentance and new birth.

(Matthew 28:19; 3:13-17; Acts 2:38-41; 10:47; Hebrews 10:22; 1 Peter 3:21)

**The Breaking of Bread - Holy Communion** We believe in the regular Breaking of Bread as commanded by our Lord Jesus Christ and as practiced by the early church.

(1 Corinthians 10:16-17; 11:23-32; Acts 20:7)

## **Justification and Sanctification**

- Justification is a gracious act of God whereby He declares that a person is no longer guilty of sin, and thus condemned, but instead is righteous before Him. It is entirely an act of God and takes place at the time of repentance/regeneration. Based not on our actions, but on our new standing with God, He declares every new Christian to be righteous in His sight.

(Romans 3: 21-26)

- Sanctification - To "sanctify" means to "make holy or sacred". It refers to the believer's progressive separation from sin and dedication to God and a holy lifestyle. Every Christian experiences the on-going process of becoming Christ-like, which begins at the new birth and continues until death. (Hebrews 12:14; Matthew 5:48; 1 Peter 1:16; Philippians 3:11-14; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24).

## **Righteous and holy living**

For many modern Christians the topic of holy living is not the most popular doctrine in the Bible. They love to hear of God's grace, mercy and great power to perform miracles but shy away from the instructions to live a righteous and holy life. The reason being that it is difficult to live a holy life! We struggle to overcome sin throughout our lives on earth. (Romans 7:7-25). It is, however, very important that we understand God's balance on this subject.

First we should know that, by character, God is righteous and holy. It is therefore not surprising that God instructed Moses to tell the nation of Israel, "Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy." (Leviticus 19: 2) The apostle Paul said that we are "called" to be holy (1 Corinthians 1: 2). On the other hand the Scripture also emphasizes that no human being can ever be perfect and if we insist that we don't sin then we make God out to be a liar. How can we balance God's requirement that we be holy with the reality that we can never be perfect? We must regularly examine our hearts and lives and confess our sins, on the understanding that God completely forgives us. (1 John 1:8-10)

Our part doesn't end there because the power of the Cross of Jesus enables us to break the power of sin and strive to live victorious lives. We are expected to "hunger and thirst after righteousness" (Matthew 5:6) and to seek God's kingdom and his righteousness before anything else in life. (Matthew 6:33) We are required to "flee" from sinful activities and to "pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness." (1 Timothy 6:11) Paul describes righteous and holy living as a deliberate "putting off" of the old nature and a "putting on" of the new spiritual nature. (Colossians 3:1-17)

We, therefore, have an expectation that our members will do their best to live holy lives that are separate from the evil that is prevalent in the world. We would like to emphasise the Biblical requirement to live sexually pure lives. In 1 Corinthians 6:13-20 Paul informs the church that all sexual immorality is sin against the body, which is the temple of the Holy Spirit. The Greek word *porneia* is used in the New Testament to describe sexual immorality. (The King James Version uses the old English word "fornication.") This word *porneia* is used in the New Testament to describe four situations:

1. Voluntary sexual intercourse of an unmarried person with someone of the opposite sex.
2. Adultery – the involvement of a married person in sexual intercourse outside of the marriage.
3. Prostitution
4. Various forms of sexual deviancy or sinfulness.

In 1 Corinthians chapter 5 Paul instructed the church to excommunicate a man who refused to repent and abandon an immoral sexual relationship. He explained that it is an expectation of the church to "judge" such a person and then to have nothing to do with him – unless or until there is a change of heart and repentance.

It is therefore a Biblical role of our local church leadership to investigate allegations of sexual immorality amongst members, to counsel the guilty and assist them to confess the sin and repent. A steadfast refusal to co-operate in this regard will lead to the revoking of that person's membership of the local assembly.

### **Unmarried people living together**

It is important to also discuss the difficult issue of an unmarried couple living together in the same home. Our leadership team has given close attention to this matter because it is so prevalent in our community. We recognize that it can be a very sensitive issue because many unmarried couples have bought homes together before their salvation and may not be ready or willing to commit to marriage.

This problem is compounded when only one of the couple has made a commitment to Christ. Nevertheless, we have made what some may believe to be a hard decision concerning couples living together. (Here we are not referring to unattached men and women boarding in the same house or establishment.) We have decided not take unmarried people into ownership whilst they are living together, and will expect all existing owners to refrain from entering into such an arrangement. However, we welcome everyone to attend our services and encourage all to join a Life Group.

Some folk feel insulted and take exception to this requirement. They believe that it is none of our business, that we have no right or reason to think the worst of them as they are now Christians and we should have the love and grace to accept an undertaking that they will abstain from sexual relations and will sleep in separate bedrooms. Certainly, these contentions have a plausible ring to them as no one likes to feel that the church is condemning them, especially if they are doing their best to live a holy life.

Nevertheless, it is not sound practice for unmarried Christians in love with each other to live together. I will mention three reasons:

1. It makes it difficult, if not almost impossible, to resist temptation on a consistent basis, especially if the couple has already had sexual relations. It is, in fact, the exact opposite of the Scriptural instruction to “flee” from sexual immorality.

(1 Corinthians 6:18; 2 Timothy 2:22)

2. No matter how we might argue otherwise, it creates an appearance or suspicion of evil. 1 Thessalonians 5:22 in the King James Version says, “Abstain from all appearance of evil.” The Message version puts it this way, “Throw out anything tainted with evil.” In a world of increasing spiritual darkness, where every element of Biblical truth has been abandoned, the church, as never before, has to be the light and salt of the world (Matthew 5:13-16). In this symbolism “salt” represents the ability and function of the church to preserve the community from surrendering to corruption and destruction. Jesus bluntly states that if salt loses its saltiness it is useless and must be thrown away, thus confirming that the church has no option but to be proper salt in every community in which a local assembly has been established. Jesus ended this discussion by commanding us to make sure that the world sees our good deeds so that God may be praised! All of this is difficult if Christian, unmarried couples compromise their testimony by living together.

3. Thirdly, even if a couple living together is actually abstaining from sexual immorality, the fact of them living together will probably cause other Christians with a weak conscience to stumble in their faith and maybe fall away from Christianity. This aspect of Christian responsibility is discussed by Paul in 1 Corinthians 10:23-33. Even if what we do is not actually sinful, Paul correctly says that, “not everything is constructive” (verse 23). God expects us to seek the good of others instead of always our own good (verse 24).

## **Homosexuality**

The issue of homosexuality is another sensitive matter that has been hotly debated for some time in various church circles so we need to clarify our standpoint on the subject. We believe that Scripture forbids homosexual relations. It is a sexual perversion and is therefore sinful in the sight of God. In 1 Corinthians 6: 9-10 those who practice homosexuality are referred to as “the wicked” and “homosexual offenders.” Paul made a clear statement that they “will not inherit the kingdom of God.” Also, in speaking of homosexuality in Romans 1:26-27 he described it as “indecent acts” and refers to homosexuals as receiving “the due penalty for their perversion.”



In Leviticus 18:22 the Old Testament described sexual intercourse with someone of the same gender as “detestable.”

Whilst we regard homosexual activity in the same light as other sexual immorality, it does not mean that homosexuals should be rejected and vilified by the church. The church must love them, pray for them and encourage them to give their lives to Christ. We must offer all the help that they need to deal with life’s issues, resist temptation and overcome this problem in God’s strength.

## **Marriage**

The biblical doctrine of marriage has become increasingly important in the Twenty First century because of the sharp increase in dysfunctional families and divorce.

What is marriage?

- Marriage is the union of a man and a woman in which God mysteriously makes two different people one flesh.  
(Ephesians 5:31-32)
- Marriage is ordained by God and is not a secular, social institution of man’s creation and is therefore subject to God’s requirements and standards.  
(Genesis 2:22-24)
- Marriage is not just a contract but is an unconditional covenant of God’s design and therefore should last until the spouses are separated by death. i.e. This covenant is more solemn, more binding and more permanent than any legal contract.
  - Marriage is a relationship between a man and a woman intended by God to be a monogamous relationship therefore adultery is a sin (Exodus 20:14). Members are expected to avoid all relationships, activities and situations that might place the purity of the marriage at risk or give their spouses reason to believe that the sanctity of the marriage has been or might be destroyed.  
(1 Thessalonians 5:22)
  - Marriage is mankind’s primary human relationship and takes precedence over church relationships, ministry and work expectations. God created marriage long before he created tribes, nations or the church. There is a logical expectation that each married member will live a life and adopt a lifestyle that will protect the honour, dignity, purpose and soundness of the marriage.
  - Marriage is intended for the procreation of children and is the foundation on which godly children should be nurtured and raised into stable adulthood. Both parents have the responsibility to meet the primary needs of their children. The church will do its best to support families where the breadwinners are unemployed and will assist them to find employment. However, the deliberate refusal or neglect to provide for one’s family is a denial of faith.  
(Proverbs 22:6; Deuteronomy 4:9; Ephesians 6:1; 1 Timothy 5:8)
- Marriage is governed and maintained by mutual love, respect and submission as is intended to satisfy the needs to love and be loved, for deep friendship, sharing, companionship, protection, support and for spiritual and emotional development.  
(Ephesians 5: 21-33; 1 Peter 3:1-7)

## Divorce

Divorce is a complex issue because of the various factors involved in each divorce but there are basic principles in Scripture that govern the church's approach to divorce.

- The key principle is that once a couple marry they are bound together until death and should not be separated by a divorce. In Mark 10:9 Jesus said, "What God has joined together, let man not separate."
- God opposes divorce because it is a breach of the marriage covenant. In fact, God hates divorce. Whilst God may allow divorce in certain circumstances, he will never encourage or promote it.  
(Malachi 2:14-16)
- God opposes divorce because of the devastating, long-term effect it has on the spouses and particularly the children of the union. Jesus strongly cautioned adults not to do anything that may cause a child to sin! Parents cannot avoid accountability for what happens to their children during and after the divorce. (Malachi 2:15; Matthew 18: 2-6)
- If a couple divorces, the duty to provide and care for children of the marriage remains as strong as it was during the marriage, notwithstanding a further marriage. The statement in 1 Timothy 5:8 that a person who does not provide for his immediate family has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever holds true for all divorcees. There is a serious expectation that all members will provide for their children from previous marriages to the very best of their ability and to actively care for them as best as the divorce conditions allow.
- God accepts that governments and authorities have provided mechanisms for divorce and, in fact, allowed Moses to grant certificates of divorce (Mark 10:4). That is, God does not force people to continue to love each other and stay married if they are determined to obtain a divorce. Similarly, this assembly leadership has no jurisdiction to compel its members to remain in a marriage. We can only offer advice, encouragement and support. However, the church leadership may, after discussion, consultation and prayer, impose Biblical discipline if the circumstances warrant or necessitate it.
- Jesus made the point that divorce is the result of the "hardening of hearts" (Mark 10:5). That is, divorce is caused by sinfulness. The primary sins that cause divorce are a failure to obey the second most important commandment in Scripture to love your neighbour as yourself and the failure to apply God's standard of love found in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8.
- The only Biblical ground for divorce is marital unfaithfulness.  
(Matthew 5:32)
- The church concedes that in certain circumstances, severe abuse and extreme sinfulness can make it dangerous or impossible for a spouse to remain in a marriage. Furthermore, circumstances in a marriage may also render it dangerous or totally inappropriate for children to continue to be raised in that marriage. The offended spouse should proceed with a divorce only after exhausting all reasonable remedies available to solve the marriage problems.
- The approach of the assembly leadership to marriage breakdown:
  1. Because of the priority and importance of marriage, the church leadership accepts responsibility to do all within its power to preserve and invigorate marriages through teaching, counsel and encouragement.

2. We strongly recommend that our members seek help and counsel before their marriage problems become severe or irreparable. If the members do not have someone to assist in sorting out marriage problems, we are prepared to arrange for counselling either within or without the local church, all of which will be confidential.
3. If a crisis occurs in a marriage and a spouse expresses an intention to get divorced, we will require the couple to first seek help, prayer and counsel before proceeding to end the marriage.
4. In the event of a divorce, the church leadership expects to be allowed to monitor and assist with the dissolution of the marriage to make sure that the interests of the children are protected and the break-up is effected in a fair and godly manner.

### **Baptism with the Holy Spirit**

We believe that Jesus Christ baptizes Christians with the Holy Spirit, and that this baptism, which is a distinct experience from the new birth, is promised to every believer.

(Matthew 3:11; Acts 10:44-46; 8:14-17; 11:14-16; 2:32-33; 15:7-9)

### **Spiritual Gifts**

We believe that God never removed the gifts of the Spirit, referred to in 1 Corinthians chapters 12 to 14, and that whenever the Holy Spirit moves upon the Church in power, He gives spiritual gifts to everyone as He chooses.

(1 Corinthians 12:4-11; Romans 12:4-12)

### **Divine healing and Miracles**

We believe that today God still performs miracles of the nature that is recorded in the Scriptures. He heals the sick just as He did in the days of the early church and Christians are still given the gift of healing and the gift of working miracles in order to impact the lives of people and bring glory to God.

(John 14:12; Mark 16:16-18; Matthew 8:16-17; 1 Corinthians 12:9-10; James 5:14-15)

### **Priesthood of all Believers**

Each individual believer has full and equal access to God through our Lord Jesus Christ, as a believer-priest and can freely communicate with God as he pleases without having to go through the medium of another person.

(1 Peter 2:1-9; Revelation 5:9-10; 1:6)

### **The Ministries**

The ascended Christ has given various ministries to the church, and each of these exists for the strengthening of and building up of the body of believers. These ministry gifts are described in Ephesians 4:1 and 1 Corinthians 12:28.

## **Judgment**

We believe that God will judge both the living and the dead. The believers will appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, not for condemnation but for the testing of their works and the receiving of rewards. The unbelievers and those who professed Christianity but rebelled against the will of God shall appear before the final "White Throne" judgment and thereafter will be consigned to the Lake of Fire forever.

(Matthew 7:21-23; John 5:24, 28-29; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 20:11-15)

**DISCOVERY**

# DISCOVERY

GOD HAS A  
**GREAT PLAN**  
FOR YOUR LIFE!

JEREMIAH 29:11

**HOPE**  
CHURCH

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