

MEMBERSHIP ORIENTATION

Our Purpose

Why Grace Fellowship Exists:

1. Matthew 22:36-40 - To love God and our neighbor
2. Matthew 28:18-20 - To make disciples of Jesus Christ

Our Values

How Members of Grace Fellowship Live Out Our Purpose:

- **Stand Fast in Grace** - We are saved by grace, humbly walk in grace, freely give His grace, and "grace will lead us home."
- **Strive for Unity** - We work together in love for the sake of the Gospel.
- **Walk in Trust** - We tell one another the truth in love and do what we say.
- **Display Christ-like Character** as demonstrated in the Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22).
- **Intentionally Equip** members to live fruitful, Christ-centered lives that overflow into those around them.
- **Be a Catalyst** for partnership between local churches to be Jesus to the world.
- **We Work Together by Consensus** - We are one family that never uses parliamentary procedure as a weapon.
- **We Attack Problems, Not People**

Our Plan ("The Way Today")

How We Make Disciples of Jesus and Train Ministry Leaders:

Every Church needs a plan to Encourage and Equip people to become Disciples of Jesus and another plan to Train Ministry Leaders. Without a plan, any church can be so distracted by other ministries and activities that Discipleship and Training Leaders may never even occur.

Discipleship Track - we ENCOURAGE and EQUIP every Member and Regular Attender to:

- Worship the Lord - Weekly with the Church and with Daily Devotions
- Read and Study the Bible - Participate in a Weekly Bible Study
- Discover and Use Your God-Given Gifts and Passion - Spiritual Gifts, Talents, and Treasure
- Actively Participate as a Volunteer in a Ministry

Ministry Leader Track - we EXPECT every Ministry Leader to:

- Fully Participate in the Discipleship Track
- Actively Participate in your Ministry
- Continue to Grow your Ministry
- Train and Mentor the Members of your Ministry

Our Care (“Deacon Family Ministry”)

How We Provide Spiritual and Benevolent Care:

Our Deacons and Family Ministers assist our Pastors in providing care for our Members and Regular Attenders by:

- Getting to know them.
- Sharing the Gospel with them.
- Providing general spiritual guidance.
- Finding out when they are going through difficult times (spiritually, physically, in their relationships, general situation, etc.). And especially in times of crisis.
- And encourage them to experience Christian fellowship within the church.

Our Beliefs

What Members of Grace Fellowship Believe

- We affirm that the Holy Bible is God's inspired Word and the sole basis for our beliefs. We regard the scriptures of the Holy Bible as authoritative in all matters of faith, practice, and truth.
- WE BELIEVE the Bible to be inspired (God-breathed). WE BELIEVE there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
- WE BELIEVE in the deity of Jesus Christ (*and His humanity*).
- WE BELIEVE in the absolute necessity of the Holy Spirit to open our eyes to realize our need for salvation,
- WE BELIEVE in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit, by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a Godly life
- WE BELIEVE in the resurrection
- WE BELIEVE in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ

Our Distinctive Southern Baptist Beliefs

- 1. GOD’S SOVEREIGNTY AND MAN’S FREE WILL** - We believe that God has the power to do anything He might want to do but that God does not do anything to violate a person’s free will. For example, we believe that every person is so lost in sin (actual sins and sinful nature) that it is only by the power of God’s Grace by Faith that we can respond to Christ’s offer of Salvation, but that response (to accept or reject Salvation) is still an individual, personal decision. See John 3:16 and Romans 10:9-13.
- 2. ETERNAL SECURITY** (Preservation of the Saints, Eternal Security, Enduring to the End) - We believe that the power of Salvation rests completely in Jesus’ Death on the Cross for sin (the Atonement). We cannot add to or take away from Christ’s sacrificial gift. Thus, anyone who is genuinely Born Again (Saved) may be assured that their salvation is secure. However, those who turn their backs on God and refuse to live as faithful disciples of Christ grieve God’s heart or demonstrate that they were never truly Born Again. See 1 Peter 1:3-5, 2 Timothy 1:12, and Romans 8:38-39.

Grace Fellowship's Distinctive Beliefs

From the beginning of Grace Fellowship, the Church Body has felt called to be a bit different than other Baptist Churches. Because of this calling, we are unafraid to be the Church Family God calls us to be. The best example of this is how women have and continue to hold key leadership roles in the Church. Both women and men serve on the Leadership Team, lead ministries, teach classes, and serve as Deacons. We do this because we believe that the Bible clearly shows women in leadership roles, but we understand that not everyone agrees with this. See Exodus 15:20, Judges 4-5, Acts 9:36, Acts 18:26, Acts 21:8-9, Romans 16:1-2, 7, 1 Corinthians 1:11, Philippians 4:2-3, Colossians 4:15, Philemon 1:2,

How Are New Members Received Into Grace Fellowship?

Persons who have given evidence of regeneration by the Spirit of God (new birth, born-again), and have been scripturally baptized by immersion, who subscribe to the Church Covenant and Statement of Faith, and agreed to abide by the church Covenant, Statement of Faith, Constitution and Bylaws of this Church may apply for membership by one of the following ways:

1. By baptism upon profession of faith in Christ as Savior.
2. By letter from a church of like faith and order.
3. By statement of faith and baptism by immersion when no letter is obtained.

Our Polity

How Grace Fellowship Operates

The Church Body (The Members of the Church / Business Meetings):

The government of this Church is under the authority of the body of believers who compose it, owing allegiance only to its head and founder, the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe in the right of each member of the Church to have a voice in its government, plans, and discipline. Persons duly received by the members of this Church shall constitute its membership. This Church is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation common among Baptist churches. All internal groups created and empowered by this Church shall report to and be accountable to this church. The government of this Church shall be congregational in form.

(CHURCH CONSTITUTION, Article VI: POLITY).

Grace Fellowship holds **Business Meetings** on the third Wednesday of each uneven month of the year. Still, the Church may call a special business meeting to take care of any urgent business at any time, provided an announcement is made by the Moderator or the Church Leadership Team as to the time and purpose of the meeting in two Sunday services. The time, place, and specific purpose of the meeting must be stated. Only the stated business topic(s) can be acted upon at the said meeting. Those members present and voting shall constitute a quorum at a regular or special business meeting. All business considered by the Church Body is decided by a majority vote of the members present and voting unless otherwise specified in the Constitution and its By-laws. Business Meetings are conducted under parliamentary procedures as outlined by Robert's Rules of Order.

The **Pastor** is the Overseer and Shepherd of the Church. He has the responsibility to lead the congregation and is expected to delegate appropriate responsibilities to others to ensure the work of the church is done consistently. The Pastor is responsible for all worship services of Grace Fellowship Baptist Church and shall give personal direction to the total ministry of the Church in the manner described in 1 Peter 5: 2-3. Through the preaching and teaching of the Bible, he shall equip the Church for ministry as described in Ephesians 4: 12. The Pastor is the Moderator at all Business Meetings of the Church, the Chairman of the Leadership Team, an ex-officio member of all organizations and committees, appoints the Nominating Team, and may call a special meeting of any organization or committee whenever such need arises.

Deacons are spiritual leaders of high Christian character (1 Timothy 3:8ff), who function in a servant role on behalf of the Church. Deacons assist the Pastor in carrying out the work of the ministry.

The Trustees hold in trust the church property, are the legal representatives of the Church, and are responsible for the care of all church property as well as ensuring adequate insurance coverage.

The **Clerk** is responsible for keeping an accurate record of all business transactions, preparing the Annual Associational Letter, issuing letters of dismissal as authorized by the Church, and preserving the true history of the church. In addition, the Clerk shall keep an accurate role of the church membership, the dates and methods of admission and dismissal, changing names, correct mailing addresses, and other pertinent information about each member.

The **Church Leadership Team** oversees and provides guidance and direction to ensure the church's organizations and coordinators achieve Church goals and purposes. The Leadership Team oversees the handling of church finances. It prepares and submits an annual budget in November to the church for approval, plans and promotes stewardship, approves money counters, and sees that an annual financial review is performed. The Church Leadership Team also outlines the church calendar of activities ensuring that no conflicts of scheduling occur. In addition, the Church Leadership Team serves as the Pastor's advisor, and as a body to which the Pastor can bring concerns. Each member of the Church Leadership Team is accountable to each fellow member, and the Church Leadership Team is accountable to the church body. The Church Leadership Team functions as a formal mediator within the Church and will draw from Matthew 18 as their guide for conflict resolution. All major financial and otherwise decisions are referred to the Church Body for approval.

The **Nominating Team** presents a slate of nominees to the Church for election at the regular business meeting of the church in September. The Nominating Committee is also responsible for submitting nominees for any unfilled offices, following vacancies, and newly created positions.