



WHAT WE BELIEVE

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REDEEMER'S FELLOWSHIP PURPOSE & VALUES

PURPOSE STATEMENT: Because God first loved us, our passion is to grow as wholehearted followers of Christ who love God, one another, and the world.

We will succeed in accomplishing this because:

1. We believe God can do anything and will work in, through and beyond us.
2. We respond by faith in obedience to God's greater plan, and not to our own human direction.
3. We focus our activities on those things that best serve God's purpose for us.
4. We are convinced that God first loved us, and that His love is the model and motivation for our loving Him and others.
5. We depend on the Bible, God's Word, to reveal God and the answers to all life's essential questions; we do not profess to be "know-it-alls," but "know-enoughs."
6. We cultivate dependence and perspective through prayer, and see God do what we cannot.
7. We understand that the change God desires always occurs through His power from the inside out, rather than outward conformity.
8. We emphasize our personal and corporate responsibility to reach and be understandable to unchurched people.
9. We rely on belonging to a community where we can know and are known by other believers, to deliberately cultivate discipleship through relationships.
10. We measure success by our effectiveness in equipping individuals to take responsibility for their own life and faith, and to make a spiritual difference in their spheres of influence by reproducing themselves as disciples of Christ.

REDEEMER'S FELLOWSHIP CONSTITUTION

I. OUR NAME

Our name is Redeemer's Fellowship.

II. OUR PURPOSE

Because God first loved us, our passion is to grow as wholehearted followers of Christ who love God, one another, and the world (Matt. 22:36-40, 28:19-20; Mark 10:21; Luke 15; John 13:34).

III. OUR CONVICTIONS

A. ...ABOUT THE BIBLE

We believe that though God has revealed Himself in many ways throughout history (Heb. 1:1-4), He has made Himself and His will known accurately and adequately through the Bible. According to its own admission, the Bible is God's own Word. God superintended the writers of Scripture in such a way that, using their own personalities and cultural surroundings, they recorded without error God's message to man. Composed by over forty authors over a sixteen-hundred year period, with complete unity and accuracy, reflecting a single divine perspective, the Bible is God's authoritative Word to all people (Psalm 19; Mark 4:1-11; Luke 24:27, 44; John 5:39, 10:35; Acts 1:16; 2Tim. 3:16-17; 2Peter 1:3-4; Heb. 1:1-4, 4:12-13).

B. ...ABOUT GOD

We believe in one eternal, infinite, self-existent, unchanging, sovereign God (Deut. 6:4; Psalm 90:1-2; Dan. 4:34-35; John 5:24), who has revealed Himself as three distinct Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. All three persons are fully God, yet have forever communed equally as only One God (Matt. 28:18-19, Mark 12:29, John 1:14, Acts 5:3-4, 2Cor. 13:14). God is absolutely holy, completely righteous, always loving, full of glory. He is the creator of all that has or will exist, and is the source of all life (Gen. 1:1, John 1:1-5).

C. ...ABOUT JESUS CHRIST

We believe that Jesus Christ is both fully God and fully human (Heb. 1:3, 2:14-18; John 1:1-3). We believe He was born of a virgin, that He lived a perfect life, that He died on a cross as a payment for the sins of all people, that He actually rose from the dead and ascended into heaven (Matt. 1:16, Heb. 4:15, Acts 13:26-40). We believe that one day He will return to earth to rescue His followers, punish those who oppose Him, and reign over heaven and earth (2Thess. 1).

D. ...ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe that the Holy Spirit (whose name appropriately describes both His character and His essence) possesses the characteristics of a person rather than an impersonal force. He has intelligence (1Cor. 2:10-11), feelings (Eph. 4:30), and a will (1Cor. 12:11). As a person, He can be lied to (Acts 5:3), outraged (Heb. 10:29), or worshiped and revered (Ps. 51:11). Yet, the Spirit is Himself fully God, and is called such by the writers of Scripture (Acts 5:3-4, 1Cor. 6:11), and is associated with the Father and the Son (Matt. 28:19, 2Cor. 13:14). The Holy Spirit is now restraining sin and rebellion against God in the world (2Thess. 2:6-7), as well as convicting individuals of their guilt and need for Christ (John 15:5-11). We believe that all Christians are baptized and indwelt by the Holy Spirit at the moment we believe in Christ (1Cor. 12:13), and that we are empowered, guided, instructed and changed by the Spirit as we yield our lives to Him (1Cor. 6:19; Rom. 8:9; Eph. 5:18). We believe that the Spirit sovereignly gives each believer gifts for the strengthening and encouraging of the Church, and that all gifts are at His disposal to give to whomever and whenever He desires (1Cor. 12:11; 1Pet. 4:10).

E. ...ABOUT HUMAN BEINGS

We believe that all people are created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27), but having been born alienated from God, all have done wrong and gone wrong (Isaiah 53:6; Eph. 2:1-3). We believe that all of us have earned eternal separation from God, and that not one of us is able to save ourselves from this fate through our own efforts (Eph. 2:8-9).

F. ...ABOUT SALVATION

We believe that we can be rescued from death and given the gift of an eternal relationship with God only by putting our faith in Jesus Christ—that is, by trusting in His death for us as a full payment for all our sins, and in His resurrection as proof that He is the Lord of all (1Cor. 15:1-8; Rom. 5:8; Matt.

20:28; 1John 2:2). By Christ alone can we be reconciled to God (2Cor. 5:19-22; Rom. 5:10). We believe that eternal life is a free and irrevocable gift, graciously given only by God to whomever believes in Christ. Those who believe, God completely, instantly and forever forgives, and credits to their account the righteousness of Christ (Eph. 2:8-9, 2Tim. 2:8-10). Believers in Christ are secure in the promise of God that they will most certainly go to heaven (John 5:24,10:27-30; Rom. 8:38-39; 1John 5:11-13).

G. ...ABOUT THE CHURCH

We believe that the church is Christ's "body" in today's world, and that it is comprised of all genuine Christians—those who have put their trust in Christ (Acts 11:21-26; 1Cor. 1:2). Jesus is the head of His body, the shepherd of His flock, who has supremacy in everything in the Church (John 10:11-15; Eph. 1:22; Col. 1:18). We recognize many local expressions of the Church, and believe that Redeemer's is but one small part of the whole Church, consisting of all believers not only on earth but also in heaven. The Church exists to glorify and worship God, to build itself up in the faith, and to reach out with the Good News to a lost world (Eph. 1:6, 12, 14; 4:12-13; Matt. 28:19-20).

H. ...ABOUT ORDINANCES

We recognize two continuing ordinances which Jesus commanded and the early church practiced: Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

We believe that Jesus instituted baptism as the means of publicly professing faith in Him, and that, although baptism has no power to save, it is the first step of obedience expected of every believer in Christ (Rom. 1:16; 1Cor. 1:17; Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:38).

We believe that Jesus instituted the practice of the Lord's Supper to help us vividly remember His death for us, and directed us to participate in this act of worship regularly (1Cor. 11:23-26).

I. ...ABOUT ANGELIC BEINGS

We believe that angels are created beings, and though they were originally created holy, some have become evil opponents of God (Job 38:6-7; Mark 12:25). Good angels exist to carry out the will of God, and to serve and protect those who are heirs of salvation (Heb. 1:14). Fallen angels (or "demons") are led by Satan, the arch-enemy of God and man (Matt. 25:41, 12:24). We believe that he is active in the world, seeking to discredit and dishonor God, to deceive all mankind, and to oppose those who seek to do God's will (Gen. 3:1-7; John

10:10; 1Thess. 2:18, 3:5; 1Peter 5:8). We believe that Satan's doom was sealed when Jesus died and was raised, and that our power over him rests in our submission to Christ, His Spirit and His Word (Matt. 4:1-11; Eph. 6:17; 1Peter 5:9; Rev. 12:11).

J. ...ABOUT THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

The Christian life is meant to be one full of joy, freedom, love, peace, wonder, and every other good thing in God (Gal. 5:22-23). We believe that as we delight ourselves in God, we will find our deepest fulfillment in life. As followers of Jesus, we are called to a life of Spirit-empowered obedience, and that when we disobey, we will experience God's loving discipline (Matt. 18:15-20; Gal. 6:1; Heb. 12:4-13). We also believe that God gives every Christian spiritual gifts as He decides, through which God clearly works, and which believers are to use to strengthen the Church and display His love and power in the world (1Cor. 12:1-11; 1Peter 4:10).

K. ...ABOUT MARRIAGE AND SEXUALITY

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complimentary genders together reflect the image and nature of God (Gen. 1:26-27). Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture (Gen. 2:18-25). We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur between a man and a woman who are married to each other (1Cor. 6:18, 7:2-5; Heb. 13:4). Further, no sexual activity should occur outside of a marriage.

We believe that any form of sexual activity outside of marriage (including adultery, sex between consenting but unmarried partners, homosexual or bisexual behavior, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God (Matthew 15:18-20; 1Cor. 6:9-10).

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect and dignity, as those made in the image and likeness of God (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31). Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated, and are not in accord with Scripture, nor the convictions of Redeemer's Fellowship.

L. ...ABOUT FUTURE EVENTS

We believe that Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly, in fulfillment of prophecy, to save His own, redeem Israel, and judge the earth (Acts 1:11; 2Thess. 1:6-10; Isaiah 63; Rom. 11:25-26). Though the timing is disputed among believers, the fact of the rapture is indisputable (1Cor. 15:50-55; 1Thess. 4:13-18). We affirm that though we as believers are destined for trouble and persecution (1Thess. 3:3-4; 2Tim. 3:12), we will never experience any of God's wrath (1Thess. 1:10, 5:9; 2Thess. 1:5-10). We believe that both heaven and hell are real, and that every person will spend forever either in joyful fellowship with God, or in agonizing separation from God, based on their response to Jesus Christ in this life (Rev. 19:20, 20:10-15, 21:1-22:5).

IV. OUR CHURCH GOVERNMENT

A. AUTHORITY

We recognize that Jesus Christ is the Head over all things, including the church (Eph. 1:22, 4:15; Col. 1:18); as such, He is our ultimate authority, who expresses His will through the Bible, which is our guide for essential matters in this life (2Tim. 3:16-17). Although we are an autonomous church subject to no other higher ecclesiastical authority, Redeemer's seeks to cooperate with other churches who submit to and honor Christ and His Word.

B. LEADERSHIP

In submission to our Chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ, and in accordance with His Word, a plurality of Elders provide leadership for the church (Acts 20:28-35; Titus 1:5; 1Tim. 5:17; 1Peter 5:1-4).

V. CHURCH OFFICERS

A. ELDERS

1. Qualifications

Every Elder must demonstrate evidence of five qualifications:

- Biblical maturity, which involves the holding to sound doctrine, and the ability to teach and defend it (Acts 6:4, 20:20, 27, 32; 1Tim. 3:6, 5:17; Titus 1:9)
- Commitment to Christ and His Church (Acts 20:22-24)

- Quality of Life as described by Spirit-filled behavior and characteristics of an Elder (Gal. 5:22-23; 1Tim. 3:2-6; Titus 1:6-8, 1Peter 5:3)
- Desire or willingness to serve Christ and His Church (1Tim. 3:1; 1Peter 5:2)
- Reputation which is blameless both in the Church and in the world (1Tim. 3:2, 7; Titus 1:6)

Further, an Elder must be a member of Redeemer's, in agreement with the purpose, philosophy, doctrinal statement, Constitution and declared positions of Redeemer's.

2. Selection

The Elders recognize qualified men (1Tim. 3:2) whom the Holy Spirit has raised up as overseers (Acts 20:28), and commissions them to serve as Elders in this church (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5). The number of Elders may vary according to the qualified men available.

3. Responsibilities

The ultimate responsibility of Elders is to seek the mind of Christ and lead the church in following Christ (Acts 6:4, 20:28). Specific responsibilities include the following:

- Model godliness and Christlikeness (1Peter 5:2-3)
- Devote themselves to prayer and study of the Word (Acts 6:4)
- Teach the Scriptures (Acts 20:21, 27; 1Tim. 3:2, 4:13, 5:17)
- Shepherd believers in the church (1Peter 5:2; Acts 20:28)
- Admonish with love those who are disobedient to the Scriptures (2Tim. 2:24-26; 1Cor. 5)
- Guard the church from false teaching (Acts 20:28-30; Titus 1:9-11)
- Provide direction and management for the church (1Tim. 3:5, 5:17)

4. Decision-making

All formal Elder decisions are to be made on the basis of consensus. In areas where conflict of interest is an issue, an Elder may excuse himself or may be directed by the other Elders to be excused for that issue.

5. The Lead Pastor as an Elder

It is assumed that the Lead Pastor shall be a functioning Elder, but shall have neither more authority nor less authority than other Elders. No other paid staff member shall serve as an Elder, since all paid staff members are answerable to the Lead Pastor.

6. Removal

Elders continue serving until they voluntarily resign from the position, ask for a leave of absence, or until they are removed by the other Elders for disciplinary reasons, or find themselves in disagreement with the stated positions of Redeemer's (1Tim. 5:17-25; 1Cor. 5:1-13).

B. MINISTRY LEADERS

1. Qualifications

Ministry Leaders function as deacons or deaconesses at Redeemer's. Every Ministry Leader must be a member of Redeemer's, and qualified in accordance with 1Timothy 3:8-13.

2. Selection

Ministry Leaders are gifted by God and serve in the church (Acts 6:1-7). The number may vary as needs and qualified candidates dictate.

3. Responsibilities

Both men and women Ministry Leaders serve in a variety of ways to strengthen the ministry of the church (Acts 6:5; Rom. 16:1). They serve under the direction of the Elders.

4. Removal

Ministry Leaders continue serving until they voluntarily resign from their responsibility, or until they are removed by the Elders for disciplinary reasons (1Tim. 5:17-25; 1Cor. 5:1-13).

C. MEMBERS AND MEMBERSHIP

We believe that a person becomes a member of the Body of Christ, the Church, when they personally put their trust in Jesus as their Savior (Eph 1;13,22), and thus receive the gifts of complete forgiveness, and new life through the Holy Spirit. The Spirit who indwells every believer connects each believer to one another, and all believers to Christ, the Head of the Body. Becoming a member of the Body of Christ is a supernatural work of God alone, not the work of any human effort or institution (1Cor 12:12-13, 27).

We also believe that to function as Christ intended, each person should commit

himself to a local church, submitting to its leadership and participating in its mission.

A person becomes a member of Redeemer's Fellowship when they intentionally sign a covenant stating they will pursue five marks of a member:

1. Acknowledge Christ:

We expect every member to have initially responded to the Gospel in repentance and faith, and to have identified with Christ in baptism. Further, we expect every member throughout their life to openly confess Christ as His disciple before a watching world (Matt. 10:32, 28:19-20; Acts 14:21-22).

2. Belong to a Community Group:

We expect each member to connect with a small group to create Christian community where discipleship happens (which we call, "a Community Group"). The group experience should foster love, transparency, accountability, a sense of belonging, mutual edification, and the intentional pursuit of Christlikeness (Acts 2:42-47).

3. Contribute Time, Energy and Resources:

We expect every member to use what God has entrusted to them as good managers to help fulfill Redeemer's purpose and mission, as well as Christ's broader mission in the world (Matt. 25:14-30; Eph. 5:15-17; 1Peter 4:9-11).

4. Develop Christian Maturity:

We expect each member over time to grow in grace and the knowledge of Christ; to evidence the fruit of the Spirit; and to intentionally pursue the goal of Christian maturity as they walk the path of life (Gal. 5:22-23; Col. 1:28-29; 2Peter 3:18).

5. Embrace Our Vision and Values:

We expect every member to submit to the authority of the Elders, and to understand and embrace our purpose and philosophy, and our core convictions as expressed in this Constitution (Hebrews 13:17).

Each person's covenant of membership must be renewed annually, or as often as the Elders designate.

VI. RESTORATIVE CHURCH DISCIPLINE

A. BIBLICAL JUSTIFICATION AND PURPOSE

The Bible clearly teaches that there is a process of discipline for the church by its own members with the intent of securing the repentance and reconciliation of offending members. It is to be used in the case of defiant sins, such as rebellion against legitimate authority (2Thess. 3:6-15), deviousness (Rom. 16:17-18; Titus 3:10), unrepentant casual sex (1Cor. 5:1-10), persistent greed, drunkenness, slander, dishonesty, or idolatry (1Cor. 5:11-13), teaching doctrines opposed to the historic Christian faith (1Tim. 1:20), and hypocritical leadership (1Tim. 5:20). When there is a refusal to repent of his sin, the member may be declared out of fellowship with the church by the Elders after the proper Biblical steps have been followed (e.g. Matt. 18:15-20; 1Cor. 5:1-13; Titus 3:10-11). After all efforts at reconciliation have been exhausted by reasonable means, the Elders may decide to make a public declaration to inform the congregation about the discipline, and the removal of membership of this person by the Elders. This may be done at a church service and/or by letter to the church body. The intent is to withdraw Christian support and fellowship to hasten repentance. Being “out of fellowship” means that contacts with the disciplined person should be directed at encouraging him to acknowledge his departure from Biblical faith and experience, and to repent of his sin and defiance, and be reconciled both to the Lord and to the church congregation (1Cor. 5:5-13; Matt. 18:18; Gal. 6:1; 1Tim. 5:20; Rom. 16:17-19; 2Thess. 3:6, 14-15; 2Cor. 2:5-11).

B. IMPLICATIONS

Any person who is declared to be out of fellowship with this church may not exercise any rights or privileges as a member of the church body. Although any person at any time for any reason may declare that he is no longer a member of Redeemer’s, if the declaration occurs at a time when the member is at any point involved in the church discipline process, the Elders reserve the right for a period of ninety (90) days to withhold action on the request, during which time the church can continue the restorative process and communicate with the church or other churches regarding the matter.

C. RESTORATION

A member declared by the Elders to be out of fellowship with the church may be restored to full fellowship by appearing before the Elders and demonstrating evidence of repentance and a desire to be reconciled with the church (Gal. 6:1; 2Cor. 2:5-8; Eph. 4:32). Evidence of repentance is shown by confession to the Lord, asking forgiveness of the parties sinned against, and providing restitution if

appropriate (Matt. 18:15-20; Luke 3:8-14, 17:3-4; 1John 1:9), and recommitting to the expectations of a member.

VII. RIGHTS

Redeemer's Fellowship is a voluntary association and its premises are private property under the jurisdiction of the Elders. Although functioning members are granted privileges in the church to attend all services, functions, social gatherings and business meetings and attenders are welcome at all events not specifically restricted to members, the church reserves the right to revoke any and all rights or privileges granted to attenders or members in the interest of preserving a unity and purity of the body of believers or as a result of church discipline. Accordingly, a member who is declared to be out of fellowship with the church may not exercise any rights or privileges of membership in the church body.

