

## DISCOVERING CHURCH MEMBERSHIP (CLASS 101)

### I. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Discovering Church Membership (Class 101). The purpose of this class is to give a basic introduction of church membership. The topics are:

- Salvation
- Two Church Ordinances:
  - Baptism
  - Lord's Supper
- The Church- defined
- The Church- its purpose
- The Church- how it functions
- Responsibilities of Church Membership
- Brief History of Victory Baptist Church
- The Southern Baptist Convention
- The Church Structure

### II. SALVATION

**MATT. 28:19** "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Jesus wants you to become a disciple. There are four things you need to know to become a disciple or lead someone to commit to Jesus.

#### 1. GOD LOVES YOU

**ROM. 5:8** "God demonstrated His love towards us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

God loves you and wants you to **GO TO HEAVEN**. The proof of God's love is found in giving Jesus to die for our sins.

**JOHN 10:10** "I have come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." Jesus says I did not come to keep you from joy. I have come to give you joy.

#### 2. YOU HAVE A SIN PROBLEM

**ROM.3:23** "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." What is sin? Sin is doing anything contrary to what God wants us to do. It is breaking His commandments. "All have sinned" means you have sinned; I have sinned. There is no exception. Sin separates us from God. Sin brings spiritual death. Sin brings condemnation and eternal judgment in hell. It is impossible for God to allow sin into heaven. God loves you but He is just and will punish for sin.

**JAMES 2:13** "For judgment is without mercy." Then we have a dilemma. How can a sinful person enter Heaven, when God allows no sin?

### 3. JESUS IS THE SOLUTION

**ROM.6:23** " For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Because of our sin we deserve death and hell, but because God loves us He sent Jesus to forgive us of our sin. Whenever we break mans laws, we pay. Whenever you break God's laws, you pay Jesus has already paid our sin penalty.

**JOHN 14:6** "Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." Jesus does not say I am one way: He is the only way.

### 4. YOU NEED TO ASK JESUS TO SAVE YOU

**ROM.10:9** " If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, believe in your heart that God has raised Jesus from the dead, you will be saved." If you have not invited Jesus into your heart to be your Savior, you need to do it today. God wants you to be saved. Salvation is available to you, but you must receive it. Pray to Jesus right now and ask Him to forgive you of your sins and become your Savior. Pray the sinner's prayer.

**ROM. 10:13** "Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

### 5. ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

Once you're saved you're always saved. The Bible teaches the doctrine of the security of the believer.

**I JOHN 5:13** "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God."

**JOHN 10:28** " And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish: neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand."

**REV.3:20** " Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him and he will be with Me.

**PHIL.1:6** " Being confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ."

**I JOHN 2:19** " They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us."

After a person has been saved, he will want to be obedient to Christ by being baptized. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are two symbolic ordinances in a Southern Baptist church.

## III. BAPTISM

### 1. WHY BE BAPTIZED?

We should be baptized to follow Jesus' example.

**MARK 1:9** "Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan."

In Christ's baptism He identified with us. In our baptism we identify with Him.

We should be baptized because Jesus commanded us to be baptized.

**MATT. 28:19** " Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

Baptism is a matter of obedience. The first act of obedience.

We should be baptized because it demonstrates you are really a Christian.

**ACTS 18:8** "Many...hearing, believed and were baptized."

## 2. THE MEANING OF BAPTISM

**ROM.6:4** "Therefore, we are buried with Him in baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so should we also walk in the newness of life."

Baptism illustrates Christ death, burial and resurrection. It is not a sacrament It is symbolic.

## 3. THE METHOD OF BAPTISM

The word baptism in the Greek is baptizo which literally means to immerse or to dip. The word itself describes baptism by immersion.

**ACTS 8:38-39** " So he commanded the chariot to stand still and both Phillip and the eunuch went down into the water and he baptized him. Now when he came up out of the water..."

Jesus was immersed **MATT.3:16** "Then Jesus, when H e had been baptized, came up immediately out of the water."

**MARTIN LUTHER**, founder of the Lutheran Church, said" I would have those who are baptized, to be entirely immersed, as the word imports and the mystery signifies."

**JOHN CALVIN**, founder of the Presbyterian Church, said," The word baptize signifies immersion. It is certain that immersion was the practice of the ancient church."

**JOHN WESLEY**, founder of the Methodist Church, said, " Buried in Him. alludes to baptizing by immersion. "

## 4. WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

**ACTS 2:41** "Those who believe in His word, were baptized."

**ACTS 8:13** "Simon himself believed and he was baptized"

Every person who has trusted Christ as Savior needs to be baptized.

Have you been baptized as a believer by immersion?

## IV. THE LORD'S SUPPER (I COR. 11:23-33)

### 1. IT IS TIME TO GIVE THANKS

**1 COR.11-24** " And when Jesus had given thanks, he broke the bread and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you."

It is a time to give thanks to God for sending Christ to save us from our sin by dying on the cross.

## 2. IT IS A MEMORIAL

**I COR. 11:25** "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

The Lord's Supper is a time to remember. A time to remember Jesus suffering for our sin on Calvary. The bread is symbolic of Christ's body. The wine is symbolic of His blood.

## 3. HOW OFTEN SHOULD WE TAKE THE LORD'S SUPPER

**I COR. 11:25** "as often as you drink it."

**I COR. 11:26** "For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup"

The Bible does not instruct nor specify the frequency of observing the Lord's Supper. Jesus just said, "as often as you do it."

## 4. IT IS A TIME OF CONFESSION

**I COR. 11:28** "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup."

It is a time of serious examination of our hearts, our relationship to God and others. Whatever is not pleasing to God must be confessed and abandoned. The Lord's Supper is a time to get right with God.

## 5. WHO SHOULD TAKE THE LORD'S SUPPER

**I COR. 11:29** "For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."

What does "in an unworthy manner" mean? We fail to take the cross seriously if we fail to trust Christ as our Savior or refuse obedience in baptism, or fail to be honest with God during the Lord's Supper observance.

## V. DEFINITION OF A CHURCH

### 1. THE CHURCH IS A FELLOWSHIP

**ACTS 2:42** "They continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship." Fellowship is not what the church does. It is what the church is.

**EPH. 4:3** "make every effort to keep the unity of the spirit and the bond of peace"

**ROM. 14:19** "Let us make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification."

Attitudes or activities that causes disunity are contrary to God's will for the church. We are committed to fulfilling God's purpose and vision for the church that leads to unity.

### 2. THE CHURCH IS A FAMILY

**EPH. 2:19** "You are fellow citizens with the saints, and members of the household of God."

God does not say you are like a family. The church is family.

**1 TIM. 5:1-2** "Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort him as a father, the younger men as brothers.

The older women as mothers, the younger as sisters with all purity." We relate to one another as family.

Our spiritual family will last longer than our physical family. God expects you to be a member of a spiritual family. Every Christian needs a church family.

### 3. THE CHURCH IS A BODY

**1 COR. 12:27** "You are the body of Christ, and members individually." The best known analogy of the church is the body. The church is a living organism. The members of the body carry out the function they are designed to do. In the same manner God designed the church body. Discover your spiritual gift and use it to build up the local church body.

### 4. THE CHURCH IS A FLOCK

**JOHN 21:17** "Jesus said to peter the third time, "Simon, do you love me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, and he said to Him, "Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep."

The church as a flock is Jesus favorite description of the church. If the church is a flock, then it is led by a shepherd. The word feed is the Greek word for shepherd which means pastor.

**ACTS 20:17, 28** "Paul called for the elders of the church of Ephesus... Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God."

**HEB.13:17** "Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who would give account. Let them do so with joy, and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you."

## VI. THE CHURCH- IT'S PURPOSE

### THE GREAT COMMANDMENT (MATT. 22:37,38)

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind. This is the first and greatest commandment."

### THE GREAT COMMISSION (MATT. 28:19-20)

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you."

#### 1. WORSHIP

**MATT.4:10** "Worship the Lord your God and serve Him only." First comes worship and encounter with God that leads to serving Him.

**MATT.4:23-24** "The Father seeks worshipers and His worshipers must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

You must be born of the Holy Spirit and be sincere in your worship. Worship is expressing out love and thanksgiving to God.

#### 2. EVANGELISM

**EPH.3:10** "God intends that through the church the manifold wisdom of God be made known."

**ROM. 10:13-14** "Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How will they call upon Him in whom they have not believed. And how shall they believe in whom they have not heard. And how will they hear without a preacher." We must not stop growing as a church until every person in our community knows Christ as Savior. God wants all men everywhere to be saved.

**LUKE 14:23** "The master said to his servant. Go out into the highway and hedges and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled."

### 3. DISCIPLESHIP

**MATT.28:20** "Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you."

**2 Pet.3:18** "Grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." A disciple is a learner who is growing spiritually by committing to the habits that lead to spiritual growth.

### 4. FELLOWSHIP

**MATT.28-19** "Go therefore making disciples of all nations, baptizing them."

**HEB.10:24-25** "In order to stir up love and good works, do not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some." We become a part of local church fellowship by believing and being baptized. We identify with Christ and a local church. Every believer needs a church family for fellowship, encouragement and accountability.

### 5. MINISTRY

**Matt.22:39** "Love your neighbor as yourself."

**MATT.20:28** "I did not come to be served but to serve." Every member is a minister. Every believer is a priest before God.

**JOHN 13:35** "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, that you have love for one another." Jesus met the physical and spiritual needs of others. Find a place of service in the church and use your spiritual gifts and talents.

## VII. CHURCH MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

The Bible speaks of the church universal and the local church. The universal church refers to all believers of every age and is mentioned only four times in the Bible. All other times the word church refers to the local church named in the Bible.

### 1. SALVATION BY FAITH IN CHRIST

**ACTS 2:41,47** "Then those who gladly received the word, were baptized, and that day about three thousand souls were added to them... praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved." Receive, the word, means believe. When they were baptized, they were added to the church, the called out ones.

### 2. BELIEVERS BAPTISM BY IMMERSION

**MATT.28:19** "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them." Baptism is the first act of obedience and identification with Christ. All church members meet these two requirements for membership though they may be called transfer of letter, by statement or profession of faith.

## VII. CHURCH MEMBERSHIP – RESPONSIBILITIES

### 1. ATTEND WORSHIP SERVICES FAITHFULLY

**HEB.10:24-25** "In order to stir up love and good works, do not forsake the assembling of yourselves together." God instructs believers to attend church. Get involved in the full life of the church and you will be blessed the most.

### 2. COMMIT TO HABITS THAT LEAD TO SPIRITUAL GROWTH

**HEB.6:1** "Therefore leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ. Let us go on to maturity." Grow by spending time in prayer and Bible study. Our church goal is to disciple you.

**COL.1:28** "Jesus we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man mature in Christ Jesus." Make a commitment to intentional spiritual growth.

### 3. JOIN A SMALL GROUP IN THE CHURCH

**ACTS 2:42,46-47** "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles teaching, and fellowship in the breaking of bread and prayers. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking of bread from house to house. Praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved." They met in the temple as a large group then broke up into small groups and met in homes. We are committed to growing larger in worship and small in Bible study classes.

### 4. FIND A PLACE TO SERVE IN A CHURCH MINISTRY

**1 PETER 4:10** "As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another." God has given you a spiritual gift to build up the body. God expects you to use it in service. We need you to be serving in the church.

### 5. REACH OUT TO THE LOST

**LIKE 14:23** "Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled." God expects you to be a soul winner. Commit to the habit of talking to people about inviting Christ to come into their lives. Share the Roman road: (Rom.5:8, Rom.3:23, Rom.10:9, Rom.10:13). Most of the people come to a particular church because a friend or family member invited them.

### 6. GIVE A REGULAR TITHE

**Mal.3:10** "Bring all the tithe into the storehouse. That there may be food in My house." We believe in storehouse tithing. Bring all the tithe to the church.

**1 COR.16:2** "On the first day of the week, let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper." Give on Sunday. Give proportionately to what God blesses you. Give ten percent as a minimum.

### 7. GUARD THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH

**EPH 4:3** "Work to keep the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace." God expects you to be a part of the peace-keeping force at the church.

1 COR.3:1-3 "Division, strife and fussing is a sign of spiritual immaturity and walking in the flesh.

1 TIM.6:4-5 "He is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which comes envy, strife, malicious talk, and evil suspicions, useless wrangling of men of corrupt minds and destitute of truth, who supposed that godliness means gain, from such withdraw thyself."

1 TIM.3:5 Warns of those "having a form of godliness but denying the power, and from such people turn away."

2 THES. 3:6 "We command you, brethren in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. That you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the teaching you receive from us. V.14" Do not keep company with him, that he might be ashamed."

MATT.18:15-17 "Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector."

## IX. OUR CHURCH 'S HISTORY- BRIEFLY

On Sunday, June 11, 2000, at 11:00am a group of 108 people from Green Hill Baptist Church met at Mt. Juliet High School. Introductions and welcomes were given by Bill Patton and Bob Lanier. Brother Chuck Wright, a tent revival evangelist and former foreign missionary, was the speaker for the first service. A church, later to be known as Victory Baptist, was organized. With the Lord guiding, Bill Patton was soon introduced to Chuck Groover, a part-time pastor who was teaching at the Mt. Juliet Ninth Grade Annex. During the ensuing weeks, meetings were held regarding the planning and direction of the new church. Brother Groover was asked to speak on June 18, and along with other speakers, he filled the pulpit the next few weeks. The first prayer meeting was held on Wednesday, June 21, with Brother Groover conducting the service.

Hugh Mason volunteered to direct the music and the first choir sang on June 25. There were over 200 attending that service. A potluck meal followed and it was decided then that the church would be called Victory Baptist. Jim Hood was appointed interim moderator, J.B. Copeland interim treasurer, and Debbie Knight interim clerk. Jim Hood, Bob Lanier, and Bill Patton were named trustees.

On Sunday, July 2, 2000, the first church bulletin was given to the congregation. Jimmy Furr brought the message and the first offering was \$22,052.27. Attendance was 176.

Sunday School began on July 9, 2000 under the direction of Alan Hayes. Attendance was 138. The congregation was thankful for a large building in which to meet, even though there was moving from room to room from time to time.

A youth program was started in late July by Bob Lanier and Robert and Jennie Allen.

Charter membership enrollment began on Sunday, July 30, 2000, and continued through November 26 when the church was chartered. Ninety-eight people joined Victory on the first Sunday. At the end of November there were 313 charter members.

Brother Groover began preaching on a regular basis in August. By August 20 attendance was over 300 with 220 in Sunday School. The offerings were averaging \$10,000 per week. On Sunday evening, August 20, Brother Groover shared his testimony and was unanimously called to be interim pastor by a vote of 106 to 0.



On September 10 a picnic was held at Cedar Creek recreation center. Approximately 200 attended and the first baptismal service was held later in the afternoon. Those baptized were Katie Hood, Kalyn Lanier, Jennie Allen, and Donna Copeland.

The Lord continued to lead and charter membership had climbed to 187 by the end of September. On Sunday afternoon, October 8, a second baptism was held at Cedar Creek. Those baptized by Brother Chuck were Chelsey Rodman, Duane Garrett, Glenn Carson, Blake Jenkins, and Allyson Hayes. The occasion was memorable because it was so cold. At the end of October there were 243 members.

On Sunday, November 12, Brother Chuck was called as full-time pastor. The Constitution and By-Laws were adopted at that time. The total membership by December was 318.

On February 18, 2001 the church voted to purchase 30.7 acres on Tate Lane from Mrs. Katherine Freeman for the future home of Victory Baptist Church. The purchase price was \$552,600. On Sunday, March 4, 2001, \$105,000 was given for the purchase of the property. Final payment was made during 2001. At the end of this year membership was 432.

June 10, 2001 marked the first anniversary of Victory Baptist Church. A time of fellowship after the evening worship service was held in the school cafeteria.

The first Vacation Bible School was held June 25-29 for children kindergarten through sixth grade. The first church directory was published in 2001.

The first tent revival was held at the Tate Lane property September 30 through October 3, 2001.

The architect chosen to do plans for the new building was the firm of Kaatz, Binkley, Jones and Morris, Inc. of Mt. Juliet. The Building Committee was elected on May 5, 2002. Members were Troy Clairday, Dulane Garner, Jim Malone, Craig Mulliniks, Wayne Oakley, Patsy Smith, and Danny Stewart.

On Sunday evening, December 15, 2002, the committee presented the master plan and phase one of the planned church home on Tate Lane.

Church membership at the end of 2002 was 454.

A meeting was held in February 2003 to vote on recommendations by the various committees for the building program. Solomon Builders was chosen as the contractor. Financing was provided by Wilson Bank and Trust.

On May 18, 2003 a groundbreaking service was held. This event was celebrated with over 400 in attendance for the morning worship service. Excavation for the building began in August. By the end of 2003 church membership had grown to 493.

Children's church was started in March 2004.

Work continued on the new building during 2004. On June 30 the steeple was placed on the building.

Final preparation was progressing on time and the move-in date was set for November 7, 2004. Members met at Mt. Juliet High School for a short farewell service on that date and traveled to the new facil-

ity on Tate Lane. The first service began at 10:15am. Four people were baptized that day and eleven made decisions. Attendance for the service was 770. Afterward, lunch was enjoyed by most attending. Open house was held on November 27 and on the 28th the building dedication day was celebrated. At the end of December total membership had increased to 578. By the end of 2005 membership increased to 718 and by December 2006 membership was 831.

During 2006 Don Dixon was called as associate pastor, education/administration. In 2007 Jeremy McCrory was to fill the position of minister, youth/missions. Andrew Coleman came as education intern. In 2007 construction was begun on a pavilion. By the end of the year membership had grown to 856. On Sunday, March 2, 2008, Victory started an additional worship service at 8:00am. Also in 2008 Jim Murray was called as part-time minister of music.

Brother Groover was elected president of the Tennessee Baptist Convention Board for 2008-2009. At the end of 2008 church membership had reached 950 and as of December 2009, it had reached 996. In 2010 Andrew Coleman became a full-time staff member as associate pastor/children and pastoral ministries. Also, Jim Murray's position was changed to include work with senior adults in addition to his music responsibilities.

The present membership of Victory Baptist Church is 1035.

## **X. OUR CHURCH AFFILIATION TO THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION**

### **1. OUR AFFILIATION WITH THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST**

We relate on the associational, state and national levels. The Nashville Baptist Association is made up of all the churches in a county. The Tennessee Baptist Convention is made up of all the churches in the State of Tennessee. The Southern Baptist Convention is made up of all the SBC churches in the United States.

### **2. THE PURPOSE OF THE CONVENTION'S ENTITIES**

The NBA exists to provide fellowship, training and communication among local churches. The TBC exists to promote missions in the state, strengthen state churches and work through several institutions. Our 67 colleges belong to the state. Three of them are in Tennessee. They are Carson Newman, Belmont, and Union University. There are three Baptist Hospitals. They are located in Knoxville, Nashville, and Memphis. The state convention also supports children's homes, and adult homes.

SBC exists to promote missions in USA and overseas, training and national efforts. SBC relates to Missions in the USA 4,000, Foreign Missions 4,000. The six seminaries are located in Wake Forest, Louisville, New Orleans, Kansas City, Golden Gate Seminary, California and Fort Worth. The Sunday School board in Nashville is the largest religious publishing house in the world, and is the second largest postal customer in Nashville. The Annuity Board provides retirement, disability and life insurance for staff members of SBC churches.

### **3. THE CONVENTIONS' RELATIONSHIP TO LOCAL CHURCHES**

The typical denomination is related to the local church in terms of pyramid. The Catholic Model is followed by most denominations. The Pope is at the top, he tells Bishops what to do. The Bishop tells the Priests what to do and the Priests tell the church what to do. It is a government from top to bottom. But SBC comes out of a Free Church tradition that is just the opposite. The SBC does not tell the local

church what to do. Rather, it is just the opposite. A local church by sending messengers to the NBA ,TCB and SBC vote and tell the Association, State and SBC what to do. What any of the three do is mandated by us.

#### **4. VOLUNTARY COOPERATION AND GIVING**

Southern Baptist churches are **INDEPENDENT** as independent can be. Nobody tells us what to do or believe. But we realize we can do some things better by cooperating with other churches than we can do alone. We can **TRAIN MINISTERS** better by pooling our resources to support missionaries that have the best professors, teaching and training our church leaders. We can provide better education for Baptist young people by supporting our Baptist colleges. We can **PUBLISH** better literature by gathering the best writers and editors at LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention. We can send more **MISSIONARIES** by cooperating than by each church waiting to get big enough to support one pastor and then one missionary overseas. Together we can do some things better than we can alone.

#### **5. THE COOPERATIVE PROGRAM**

We voluntarily choose to give a tithe to the Conventions cooperative efforts in sending Missionaries, training ministers, Colleges, Hospitals, Children's Homes, and publishing literature as we ask the members to tithe 10%. As a church we tithe on what we receive. We give 11% of our budget to support convention cooperative efforts. We also take up three **ANNUAL OFFERINGS** to support State, National and Overseas Missionaries.

### **XI. OUR CHURCH STRUCTURE**

#### **1. THE PRIESTHOOD OF THE BELIEVER**

The teaching on the priesthood of the Believer is a key to understanding our church.

**I PETER 2:9** Teaches that every believer is a priest before God. You are a minister. You are competent spiritually in terms of decision making and ability to know God's will. The church is autonomous because it is made up of priests. A Baptist church is self- governing, self-supporting and self-propagating.

#### **2. THE ROLE OF THE PASTOR**

What's God's job for the pastor?

**JOHN 21:15-16** Jesus asked **PETER**, do you love me and to feed and lead the flock.

**ACTS 20:17,28** "Paul called the elders of the church at Ephesus. Take heed to yourselves and the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God". Paul says you're overseers and shepherds referring to oversight and leading the church.

**II TIM.5:17-20, I PETER 5:2-4** Jesus is the Chief Shepherd of the church. The Pastor is the undershepherd God has placed in the church to oversee its ministry and the pastor is to lead by example not by lording over people or by being authoritarian or bossy.

Healthy growing churches have members and a pastor who understands the Biblical God given role of the pastor in equipping, teaching, leadership role. One reason that many churches are not doing well is because the membership will not let the pastor lead or the pastor does not accept the role of God's undershepherd, leader of the church.

**HEB. 13:17** “Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch over your souls, as those who must give an account”.

### **3. THE ROLE OF DEACONS**

**ACTS 6:2-4** Pastor should not neglect the study of God’s word to do the work of the church. For the Pastor’s preparation to teach God’s word comes first. The deacon’s role is to take care of feeding the widows so the pastor has time for prayer and ministry of teaching God’s word. The deacons came into existence with the express purpose of assisting the Pastor in spiritual leadership of the church. Churches where Deacons lead instead of the Pastor there is confusion and decline.

### **4. THE ROLE OF COMMITTEE’S**

The church realized everybody cannot be an expert on every subject or issue. The church recognized that decisions spontaneously made from the business meeting floor were not always the best, so committees were formed to really understand and lead out in particular areas of the church such as finance and personnel. Deacons have not been appointed over the finance business, the Finance Committee is. The primary recommending body of the church is a committee, it is not the pastor or Deacons. We work with committees, but they take the need, study it, discuss it, investigate it, sleep on it, and pray about it. The committee agrees on what is best to do, then recommends it to the church in the Business meeting. The rest of us do not know all there is to know. We trust these brothers and sisters to do their best and bring recommendations that are good. This is the procedure of how we have chosen to make decisions. A trust system with committees as the primary recommending body of the church. All together Pastor leading and teaching, Deacons serving and assisting Pastor in leadership, committees study and recommend, all of us working together-God is honored.

## **XII. OUR CHURCH VISION**

### **1. FULFILL GOD’S PURPOSES IN BALANCED MINISTRY**

Some churches focus on one or two aspects of church life. They emphasize one or two things to the point that other equally important purposes of the church are neglected, therefore the whole church suffers because the ministry is not balanced. It does not embrace all five purposes of the church which are Worship, Evangelism, Ministry, Discipleship, and Fellowship. We want to do all five and have a balanced church ministry. It is more stable, more biblical and a healthier church.

### **2. SPIRITUAL GROWTH**

We have a vision for Discipleship. Leading the church to make a personal intentional commitment to grow spiritually. Our disciple making process is visually represented by a baseball diamond. First base: Class 101 on Church Membership, second base: Class 201 on Spiritual Maturity, third base: Class 301 on commitment to Ministry through Spiritual Gifts and fourth base: Class 401 on commitment to Missions and Service.

We also want to lead people into deeper levels of commitment. We seek to lead the uncommitted, unchurched people of our community to become a part of the crowd of attendees who attend this church a few times of year. Then we want to lead that attender to make a commitment to Christ and this church in terms of membership. Then we want each member to commit to grow spiritually. And we want to lead the committed to maturity to become a part of the core of workers in the church serving all

capacities in the church ministries. We have a vision for leading the babes in Christ to become spiritually mature.

### **XIII. OUR CHURCH IS CHANGING**

Size affects how you do church. A small church is different from a large church not only in terms of numbers, but is different in the way it operates, functions and is organized. The size of a church basically dictates how it typically functions. The size church you have grown up in and come out of shapes your expectations of how church should be done.

#### **1. 70 OR LESS IN ATTENDANCE**

A church with seventy or less in attendance makes up 70% of all churches. The small church has a man or woman who calls all the shots. It has a patriarch or matriarch of a large family in the church. These churches are family chapels. They have averaged seventy for years and years and plan to keep it small forever. In the small church everything is decided on the church business meeting floor, everybody has their say in every decision. The minister is a preacher, he speaks on Sunday, visits everybody all the time, and does nothing without the permission of the patriarch or matriarch of the church. People expect him to be there for anything and everything and he is.

#### **2. 70-200 IN ATTENDANCE**

A church between 70-200 in attendance has now become multiple congregations. One person can control and influence about 50 people. There is the youth group, choir group, seniors group, young couples group. A Pastor, Minister of Music, part-time Youth Minister. Decisions are made at the business meeting mostly, but the church is led by a handful of key deacons. The emphasis is on managing the church right, instead of being sure you are doing the right things. More managing less leadership.

#### **3. 200-500 IN ATTENDANCE**

The church is now led by many groups. The committees have become the primary recommending body of the church. Not any one member knows everything, but there is a trust in those who handle a particular ministry or area. The Staff leads out in the ministry of the church. Others are assisting in ministry to the membership also. The Pastor moves from the role of manager to leader of the church.

A Pastor who is good with a small church does terrible with a large church he wants to minister more than lead, because he is not leading and casting the vision the church ends up in chaos. Where the Pastor won't lead there is a leadership vacuum which will be filled by several and there will be division in the church.

#### **4. 500-800 IN ATTENDANCE**

The church has given more and more decision making to the committees who are pre-authorized by the church to make decisions that fall within their area. Now more ministry must be taking place with 800 members. The pastor being one man can't numerically see all the people that need to be seen. A person from a small church used to seeing pastor, is disappointed. Larger church is not for everyone. The church members must look to others as primary caregivers. The pastor does not do any less ministry, it's just that there is more ministry than the pastor can do alone. Victory Baptist Deacon Ministry enables us to provide primary care with deacons, along with the Sunday School teachers and small groups to which

members belong. Pastor continues to lead, but most important is his ability to articulate a vision for the church.

### **5. 800 PLUS IN ATTENDANCE**

Many churches get past 800 and go up to 1000 and settle back down between 700-800. They failed to make the changes that need to take place to move above 800 and keep going up by reaching people for Christ. The church must have a Pastor that communicates a clear vision. Giving the big picture without having to fill in all the details. Committee and other leaders fill in the details in their area of ministry. The lay ministry must develop effective caregivers. The primary caregivers of the church are now small groups. They know the person, there are more of them and can minister much more effectively. Where the church membership is able to minister to its members. Change from CONTROL to growth in structure and equipping Ephesians 4:11-12.