

LET'S GET ACQUAINTED SERIES
GOSPELGRACE101

week #8

UNDERSTANDING OUR MINISTRY

Great Expectations (Part 2)

What can I expect of
the leadership of
Gospel Grace Church?

★ A Commitment to a Team Philosophy of Leadership

The leadership philosophy of Gospel Grace Church can be summed up in the concept of a “team.” This means that while there is certainly accountability and appropriate authority, leadership is shared among godly, qualified men, who have been recognized and appointed by the

congregation as their pastor/elder(s) and deacons. Because we believe the New Testament teaching is the final authority for both our doctrine as well as our practice, Gospel Grace Church is committed to limiting the leadership offices to the two mentioned in the New Testament: Pastor/Elder and Deacon. These offices are to be held by men who meet the biblical qualifications (1 Timothy 3, Titus 1).

You can and should expect that the pastors and deacons at Gospel Grace Church will be men who are faithful and committed to the Word and to the work of God and who meet the moral, spiritual, and ministry qualifications set forth in the New Testament.

★ Led by Pastor/Elder(s)

In our congregation, the lead pastor carries the primary responsibility to feed, lead, and equip the flock through expository preaching of God's Word and casting of vision for the ministry. Serving alongside him is a team of pastor/elder(s) who share the responsibility of leading, shepherding, administering, and carrying out the work of the ministry.

★ Served by Deacons

Deacons are also appointed by the pastor/elder(s) and affirmed by the congregation to serve the body. More information about the function of these offices and the manner in which they will minister at Gospel Grace Church is outlined in the church's constitution.

★ A Commitment to Church Discipline

The following statement summarizes what Gospel Grace Church embraces as a biblical understanding of Church Discipline.

Any member consistently neglectful of his or her duties or guilty of conduct by which the name of our Lord Jesus may be dishonored, and so opposing the welfare of the church, shall be subject to the admonition of the elders and the discipline of the church according to the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17 and the example of Scripture. Church discipline should ordinarily be contemplated after individual private admonition has failed. It can include admonition by the elders or congregation, suspension from communion for a definite period, deposition from office, and/or excommunication. Upon the exercise of Scriptural excommunication, all membership privileges shall be immediately suspended and all tokens of Christian fellowship shall immediately cease until such time as restoration and reconciliation take place. Instruction and examples concerning this can be seen in Matthew 18:15-17; 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15; 1 Timothy 5:19-20; 1 Corinthians 5:4-5. The purpose of such discipline should be for the repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined. It should be for the instruction in righteousness and good of other Christians, as an example to them. It should protect the purity of the church as a whole and the integrity of its witness to non-Christians. Church discipline is supremely for the glory of God by reflecting His holy character. (Excerpt from Article VI of the Gospel Grace Church Constitution)

How does Gospel Grace Church handle the diversity of ideas and opinions that people sometimes bring with them into a church like Gospel Grace Church?

Any church of any size is bound to have a diversity of ideas within its membership. And some of those ideas may be strongly held by some members of the congregation and not by others. Some of these ideas might include whether a member believes it best to homeschool their children or send them to public or private school, adopts particular diets, embraces various forms of entertainment, celebrates or chooses not to celebrate certain holidays, or whether a particular family believes it best to allow or not allow their children to engage in dating relationships. We have determined that such decisions are entirely the prerogative of each person to live their lives out in well-reasoned faith before the Lord (Romans 14:5-6).

We believe that choosing to demonstrate love toward each other in the midst of differences of opinions rather than demanding uniformity brings glory to God and reflects His love toward us (Romans 14). (For more thorough teaching on how we intend to deal with these types of differences in the church, please listen to “*Mutual Acceptance*” and “*Liberty Motivated By Love*”—two sermons preached from Romans 14 by Pastor Lukus Counterman.

*These messages and more can be found at
<http://www.gospelgracechurch.com/resources/sermon-audio>.*

How does Gospel Grace Church handle sensitive cultural issues that face the church?

It is true that churches face challenges that stem from a commitment to encourage its members to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. Because righteous living can never completely be legislated by a list of rules that each member conforms to, we are committed to applying biblical principles to the issues that Gospel Grace Church may face at any time. We desire to practice biblical and Spirit-directed discernment in whatever cultural issues the church may face in any given generation. Let us also clarify that the issues we are referring to are not major doctrinal issues that are core to the Christian faith.

For example, the cultural issues Gospel Grace Church faces today may not be the exact issues it may face ten or fifteen years from now, but the commitment to apply biblical principles that guide our lives and conduct are timeless and require us to make honest applications in changing generations. We intend to embrace balanced, Scripturally-informed decisions in a way that doesn't trample one's liberty while also promoting unity in the body.

What is the next step in the membership process, and what do I need to do to join?

We hope we will soon have the privilege of presenting you to our congregation for membership! Here are four steps that our church has set for a person who desires to become a member.

- ✓ **First, you must take the membership class**, which you have obviously done. So be encouraged, you are more than halfway there!

- ✓ **Second, you must be a believer in Jesus Christ, profess faith in Him as the sole basis for your salvation, have been baptized by immersion following your conversion, and not be under church discipline from another likeminded assembly**. You must also be in agreement with Gospel Grace Church's Statement of Faith (included in both week #5 and #6 in your notebook as well as the Church Constitution).

- ✓ **Third, you will need to fill out a membership form and turn it in to one of the pastors**. We will provide these forms to you at the close of the membership class. To summarize, one of the sections of the membership form asks you to write out your testimony of faith in Jesus Christ and another will ask if you are in agreement with the church's Mission Statement, Statement of Faith, and Core Values, and have read and are willing to submit to the Church Constitution.

- ✓ **Fourth, after you have filled out your membership form, you will meet for a brief meeting with one of the pastors**. This meeting will give us an opportunity to hear

and read how you came to Christ and how He has led you to want to join our church. It will also be a great opportunity for you to ask any questions you may have about Gospel Grace Church and allow us to help identify a place for you to serve the Body. Perhaps in learning more about following the Lord you have come to a realization that you would like to be baptized. We would love to talk with you about how you can take that step of obedience.

Once these steps have been successfully completed, the elders will present you to the congregation for membership.

While our constitution states that a person must be 18 years old to be a voting member, individuals under 18 who meet the qualifications, take the initiative, and desire to take the step of identifying with Gospel Grace Church may pursue church membership.